Lovereading Reader reviews of My Heart & Other Black Holes by Jasmine Warga

Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading members.

Sally Doel

This is an amazing book - a heart-breaking book, but also a book that uplifts at the same time. I am pretty sure that it would make anybody cry - I'm not one to cry easily, but this book had me sobbing in places, but it's hopeful and positive too!

Aysel is determined she is going to take her life after a horrible crime is committed by her father and she feels her life is worthless and is drawn together (after connecting online) with Roman who is her partner in a suicide pact. They agree a date (which is meaningful to Roman) and how they are going to end their lives.

The author takes us through their growing connection with each other - but it's not a predictable 'love' story, or anything like that - it's a story with heavy emotions, but there is humour and reality and I'm very impressed how the author manages to get it 'just right'.

I loved both these characters - they are so human and easily understood, it is easy to relate to them as they are as messed up and have faults like anybody.

It's the sort of book you get engrossed in and can read in one sitting (if time permits), but I had to put it down and come back to it quite often and really looked forward to picking it up again. It's a great debut book from this author and I will definitely look out for more by her (the author's note is very emotional and explains the idea for the book).
Jade Craddock

Jasmine Warga has managed to fit in all those universal themes of teenage life in a remarkably refreshing and brilliant way in her debut novel 'My Heart and Other Black Holes'. **This is a first love, coming of age, teen angst story unlike any other** and the bond forged between central characters Aysel and Roman is all the more momentous and amazing for it being built on the unlikeliest of foundations – suicide partners. There were some issues I had with the novel – that Aysel herself isn’t always the most empathetic of characters and that the pain of her story perhaps doesn’t necessarily feel that tangible – but overall it’s a **poignant, memorable and brave novel with a climactic ending** that feels real and doesn’t give the novel a cheesy finale that would feel out of place in this darkly beautiful, warily hopeful novel.

Roberta Killip

A serious and sensitive, yet hopeful portrayal of teen depression, beautifully written. Deep, moving and romantic all at once. This is a love story, but not your classic romance, all hearts and chocolates. Aysel and Roman are two teens who are brought together by a common goal - suicide. Be careful about reading this book if you suffer or have suffered from depression, as it could be a trigger. Probably all adults with teen kids should read this book as it provides a thought-provoking insight into what can, and does, go through young adults' minds. You don't have to have a tragedy in your life to suffer. A **good book to read as a group and discuss. Very interesting.**

Phylippa Smithson

How on earth to summarise in just a few words the wonder of this book. A deeply profound and troubling reflection on how two young people unite to escape their troubled lives. Absolutely brilliant.

Written in the first person, we follow the lead character, Aysel, a 16 year old student living with her remarried mother and step brother and sister. Her Father is in prison having committed a crime that has impacted everyone in the small community in which she lives. She is left defining her own self as the murderous father’s daughter and her paramount fear is that she has or potentially have, the same capability should her life continue.

**Her determination to end her life rather than face the consequence of finding**
out leads her to sign up for a suicide site that is aimed at finding a partner to help the individual go through with the act. And so she meets 17 year old Roman, a noted basketball player whose life loses all meaning with the loss of his younger, and adored, sister.

As the two grow to know each other, they sense a growing chemistry. Could this be the catalyst that leads them into nothingness, or is there something that suddenly brings sense to their troubled and confused minds.

This book truly stopped me in my tracks. Forced me to think how tragic a life must be to even contemplate wanting to take your own life. It also left me recognising that we should never take for granted that changes in the behaviour of loved ones should be left alone, no matter how tough it might be to prise open the truth.

Absolutely brilliant writing.

Alex Hetherington

This novel is an interchangeable sphere that you could view from a million different angles and still poke a new emotion and uncover something new

Is this novel about depression, suicide with a slice of retribution? Well yes but all of these are heavy and carry a lot of weight with them. It’s not enough to just pick those out because it is about the little pixels that formulate ones heart and soul. This novel manages to collect those issues and present them in such a profound way. The story follows two teenagers, Aysel and Roman, who have found each other online and form a partnership. They both have different reasons to end their life and they will unite to do it together. It is an incredibly fragile subject to tread on, when you have authors such as Matthew Quick, a fellow Australian doing so with such ease with ‘The Good Luck Of Right Now’.

The book is told through Aysel’s voice and she ponders so many questions throughout the book, placed on such young shoulders, we see the world from a very dark place. They are right questions to ponder, it brings more out of our characters within her interactions with Roman and the surrounding characters.

It has the ability to go to new places and view things in different ways, to ask the big questions and do so with such amazing characters on a journey is a testament to the author and what can come of all the black holes and hearts in this world.

http://boyleststalkaboutbooks281.blogspot.co.uk/2014/12/my-heart-other-black-holes-by-jasmine.html
Emma Halford

An unusual, moving story with no easy answers. I loved the subtlety of Warga’s writing and the contrast between how Aysel thought others perceived her and how they really thought.

This is a really well written debut novel, skilfully portraying the angst encountered by many teenagers, even without the problems that Aysel and Roman are facing. I loved the contrast between how Aysel thought of herself, and thought others felt about her and the reality of how they actually perceived and behaved toward her.

The sadness never becomes mawkish and there are no easy answers. Both Aysel and Roman undergo changes in their mind-set but the ending avoids a trite, simplistic conclusion and treats both the characters and the reader with respect.

Twitter: @CorBlastMe

Stacie

If you think this is just your average teenage suicide story then think again. Jasmine Warga's compelling debut novel is guaranteed to have you laughing, close to tears and feeling glorious.

Aysel is a teenage girl who’s dad snapped 3 years ago and ended up doing something very stupid, he is still paying for it and it seems like so is Aysel. Roman is popular, freakishly good at basketball, has lots of friends and a bright future, but can't be here past April 7th. The pair meet through a website called Smooth Passages and decide to embark on the next step together, that way no one can flake out.

At first glance you might be expecting just another story about two teenagers who are a little bit sad and decided that suicide was the best option. But then you start to read it and slowly you start to warm to Aysel and Roman, soon their reasons for wanting to opt out begin to surface and though you may not agree with them, you can understand why life would be too hard to live. Soon you find yourself mentally begging them to change their minds and see what’s in front of them.

The best thing about this book is how I never expected to walk away so emotional, it hit me in feelings I didn't even know I had. The characters were relatable and honest, the back story was just enough to help you understand their choices and what life was like before the depression. The book is about so much
more than death. It's about acceptance, friends, family and new things. I really do hope everyone enjoys it as much as I do because not only is it a debut novel but it’s something sadly the author loosely had experience with and I for one can't wait to read more by her.

Twitter: @snapex

Bethany Dimmock

*I loved this book; once I’d started reading, I couldn’t stop.*

Warga delves into the solitude of the human mind through Aysel and her suicide partner, Roman, a story which evolves through spells of humour and despair. This novel is moving, honest and most of all, human.

Rather than a novel about the characters’ obsessions with death, it told more about human existence. Warga manages to combine moments of complete desperation with hope and optimism – a theme that continues until the very last page.

On finishing this book, I found myself asking why there aren’t more novels that tell of important issues like depression, Aysel’s ‘black slug’, in this accessible way.

*This is an outstanding debut novel. Warga has an exceptional talent for raw and real storytelling, and I hope there is more to come.*

Twitter: @BethanyAmber94

Eloise Glynn

*I can’t quite put into words how much I loved this book. You wouldn’t expect a book about teenage suicide to be so uplifting and hopeful, but it is, just as much as it is heart-breaking. A must read.*

I can't quite put into words how much I loved this book. You wouldn't expect a book about teenage suicide to be so uplifting and hopeful, but it is, just as much as it is heart-breaking. An absolutely beautiful story, with wonderfully written characters. One of my favourite reads of 2014, highly recommend everyone to read this book.
Victoria Halliday

Enjoyable young adult novel about teenagers dealing with grief.

‘My Heart and Other Black Holes’, by Jasmine Warga, is an enjoyable young adult novel about two teenagers dealing with grief. Told in the form of diary entries from one of the two central characters, Aysel, this is the story of two teenagers who have made a pact to suicide together. The story gradually reveals why each of the teenagers wants to die, while at the same time, their connection with one another grows stronger and stronger. Ultimately, this poses the question of whether the bond between the two of them will be enough to keep them alive. With this subject matter, this had the potential to be a hard read. It was, however, a pleasure. Looking forward to reading this author’s future work.

Seeta Maharaj

This book tells the story of Aysel and Roman who embark upon a ‘suicide friendship’. The two principal characters come from different backgrounds. The author describes their powerful insight of each other united because of their common objective in wishing to commit suicide.

I felt initially that this book proved to be a simplistic read for teenagers because of the ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ principle. However, as the story theme developed it became obvious that this was not the case. In fact, what develops is a heart-felt love story between two young adults, because of the underlying theme of depression.

It is an amazing work because it highlights the emotional intensity that young people go through during their ‘rites of passage’ – weathering the ‘ups’ and ‘downs’ of their backgrounds, their interactions within society, and fundamentally the perception of themselves. I would recommend this book for this reason and was quite partial to the ending of the book.

Suzanne Beney

A fantastic read, that I would highly recommend.

The theme of depression and suicide is not one that you’d automatically think of as being upbeat and enthralling, but this book was just that.

Written from a teenager’s perspective, the story addresses just how hopeless
depression can be until you find someone or something that makes life seem worthwhile.

The descriptive writing style was perfectly pitched for the teenage narrator and made the book come to life. It wasn’t dark and depressing, but nor did it make the subject matter a laughing matter.

A fantastic read, that I would highly recommend.

Debbie

Pure emotion. A heart wrenching, tear jerking, rollercoaster of emotion that had me gripping the pages and wanting more.

I am so so pleased that suicide is being talked about more, especially in YA. As a teenager, I sought out these kind of books, but they were few and far between.

Aysel (whose name I still can’t figure out how to pronounce) thinks she deserves to die. Daughter of a murderer, she is scared she will follow the footsteps of her father. To solve the problem before it’s too late, she must commit suicide. And what better way to do it than with someone you’ve met off the internet?

Cue Roman. Once Aysel and Roman meet, they agree a date, and from that moment on, are on countdown making final plans for their last living day on earth. Suicide pacts and the use of the Internet hasn’t really been talked about much, so I’m pleased it surfaced in this one.

Both of them have withdrawn from the world, convinced it would be better to be elsewhere than living in it. And yet, Aysel is shown glimpses of hope that lead her down a journey, where she tries to figure out why her father did what he did, and whether she is destined to do the same.

And boy what a journey it is! I felt like I really connected with Aysel’s voice, and I was just hooked. Straight away the writing tugged on my heart strings, and I just wanted to cuddle Roman. I loved the way that Aysel questioned the universe, and she was just so relatable. The way she withdrew from other people. Learning to blend into the background.

And that build up to the end! Oh god. It stole my breath away, and had me physically gripping the book, praying it was all going to work out. Tugging at emotional heartstrings? More like wrenching! A raw, telescopic view of the depths of despair a teenager can face. Pure emotion.

Follow Debbie on Twitter: @SnugglingonSofa
Linda Hill

Two teenagers in America using a website to find a suicide buddy does not seem a very promising starting point for a novel, but 'My Heart and Other Black Holes' is a terrific read. Anyone (and probably every one of us at some point) who has suffered a bout of depression, however fleeting, will find resonance in this story.

Set in small town America, Turkish heritage Aysel meets Roman and they agree to commit suicide together on April 7th. Jasmine Warga skilfully reveals their reasons, their passions and their demons so that the reader is devastated at the thought of their deaths. Interwoven to the story are themes of physics, art, literature and music as well as family relationships, love and the nature of guilt giving elements that add to the richness of the narrative and appeal to a range of reader interests.

As a debut novel, 'My Heart and Other Black Holes' is highly skilful and a book that touches the reader's emotions on many levels. I can't recommend it highly enough, it's a young adult book that is relevant to readers of any age. All human life - and death - is there between its pages.

Follow Linda on Twitter: @Lindahill50Hill