



# Alex, Approximately

*Jenn Bennett*

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**From the bestselling author of *Night Owls* comes a story of summer, first love and hidden identities . . .**

Bailey “Mink” Rydell has met the boy of her dreams. They share a love of films and talk all day – Alex is perfect. Well, apart from the fact that they’ve never actually met . . . and neither of them knows the other’s real name.

When Bailey moves to sunny California to live with her dad, who happens to live in the same town as Alex, she decides to track him down. But finding someone based on online conversations alone proves harder than Bailey thought, and with her irritating but charismatic (and *potentially* attractive?) colleague Porter Roth distracting her at every turn, will she ever get to meet the mysterious Alex?

‘If you like **Rainbow Rowell**, **Jandy Nelson** and **John Green**, then you are going to want to check out **Jenn Bennett**.’ **Sugarscape**

Praise for *Night Owls* :

'Night Owls is artsy, cool and everything you want a San Francisco adventure to be. Get ready to be swept away' - Maximum Pop

'If you're having John Green withdrawal symptoms then you need this book' - Casey Davoren, Dark Readers

'A sweet, romantic read that will make your heart soar!' - The Bookette

'This book was just amazing, and so far my favourite read of the year, I can't recommend it enough' -

Guardian children's books site, teen reviewer

'This is one of the best books I've read for a very long time' - Bookbag

## Alex, Approximately Details

Date : Published April 6th 2017 by Simon & Schuster Children's UK (first published April 4th 2017)

ISBN :

Author : Jenn Bennett

Format : Kindle Edition 400 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Contemporary, Romance

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## From Reader Review Alex, Approximately for online ebook

**Danielle (Love at First Page) says**

**4.5-5 stars**

Looooooved. YA romance at its finest. Porter is ALL THE SWOONS.

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**Cait • A Page with a View says**

THIS WAS SO ADORABLE. It's basically a YA retelling of You've Got Mail set in California with surfers, pastries, fog, and museums. So that just hit a ton of checks on the list of things I adore.

I loved the characters and thought the whole story would make such a cute movie. But ok... *whyyyyyy* did this book never reference The Shop Around the Corner?!? The two main characters are obsessed with classic films and basically mention every major movie EXCEPT for the actual one that You've Got Mail was based on. The story here felt closer to that original classic, too.

This isn't a complaint or anything... I was just waiting the whole book to watch how The Shop Around the Corner might fit into the quotes at the top of each chapter or basically anything.

Anyways, this is a total fluffy, lighthearted read... ok wait, no. It actually does have heavier stuff, but the main characters roll with life in a way that lets them create their own story. What I mean is it has that rom com feeling where everything is sunshine and glitter afterwards (while still having realistic characters and feeling like the story takes place in reality). And that is exactly what I wanted!!

Thank you to the publisher for sending me an ARC.

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**Tweebs♥? (semi-hiatus) says**

*“And not after, when we’re clinging to each other like the world just fell apart and is slowly clicking back together, piece by piece, breath by breath . . . heartbeat by beautiful heartbeat.”*

(???) (???) (???) (???) (???)

Guys, I had enough of this. I'm on strike. I keep picking up these books that somehow leave me in a messy puddle of **FEELS**.

**what did I do in Life to deserve this???**

**Anyway.**

## A GUIDE TO WHY YOU SHOULD READ THIS 101

1. It's really addictive like oh my gosh *IS THIS WHAT CRACK FEELS LIKE??????*

? \*coughs\* I'm a proud example of this. I'm currently reading 2348932849032 books and I felt guilty that I was neglecting this book. I picked it up and began reading it because **I HAD TO ACCOMPLISH SOME READING ALRIGHT**. I swear, that was the best/worst decision I ever made. It was 11pm and my eyes were 0.000000000001 seconds away from permanently closing AND THEN I got to some part in the book and was like ".....*well, shit.*"

Suddenly, I felt like I had enough energy to power 3 suns because my eyes were wide open  
 aaaaaaaaaaaaaand yeah, I sacrificed my sleep. I'm not even complaining like I just simply couldn't put it  
 down. I had to finish it like what is sleep? **I was hooked.**

## 2. Porter Roth aka mine

? \*swoon\*

? \*swoon\*

? *\*swoon\**

? \*swoon\*

? \*swoon\*

? \*swoon\*

? *\*swoon\**

? \*swoon\*

? \*swoon\*

That is all.

Carry on.

### **3. Duhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh, like I have to add "Characters"**

? Can I just start off by saying, Bailey's Dad is the bomb dot com. Her dad is so laid back and so cool. I loved their relationship like awwwwwwwwwwwwwwww. This just reminds me of my own dad. So, I'm going to kindly excuse myself and find my dad to squeeze the living daylight out of him.

? Our MC, Bailey, is what you call an evader. You know those types of people where you're like, "*Where the heck did they disappear off to????*". She experienced a difficult past that led to her developing trust issues. She is trash for old films and literally knows every damn reference. Like this girl can look at a water bottle and reference it to some film that came out in 1955. Her fashion taste is pretty much inspired by the actresses in the old films. For example: *Audrey Hepburn!!*

? I liked Bailey's friend, Grace.....I lied, I tolerated her. She's that type of friend where you'd tell her something and you'd hear it come out of someone else's mouth. Like no. What's been told to you, stays with you. Besides that, I found her pretty cool, friendly, and very nice. Also, I liked the fact that she was British and I kept reading her parts in this really posh accent.

**\*clears throat\***

Urrmmmmmm.....excuse me? Do you by any chance know where the loo is????

Too far? Yeah?? Okay :(

#### 4. Retelling of "You've Got Mail"

? If you haven't watched the movie then I don't think we can friends. Go away.

...

Alright, you may come back **BUT** I'll list reasons why you should watch it.

1) there is no reason

2) watch

3) it

4) you punk

You'd have a better understanding but if you don't want to then \*sniffle\*, it's alright. We can be friends again.

? When I heard it was a retelling, I was like "Ouuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu, me is definitely interested like please sign me upppppppp!!!"

? **Confession:** I watched the movie right after I finished the book. Sue me.

#### 5. It tackles some pretty concerning issues and dare I say, handles it perfectly.

? I just really really really liked how the author was able to touch base with these certain issues and bring it to light. *What do we face in this book* ???? Sex, drugs, trauma, and many more.

? To me, she didn't go over board. She just handled it like a pro.

?(?\_?)

? I loved how the characters were able to overcome their own barriers and spread their wings.

#### 6. This idiot.....

? Read the book and you'd understand this (>??)☹

#### 7. My brain is done.

? I think I covered everything.

? Go read this

? Bye

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## **Sana says**

Okay I've heard so much about this book and how it's a YA, cute ass retelling of You've Got Mail and I reallllly wanted to read it. But like,,,, I never watched you've got mail UNTIL I DECIDED TO READ THIS BOOK.

Anyways, I watched the movie then I read the book and I thought the movie was much better.

This is honestly cute and all, but not a memorable read.

Just a small list of things I liked:

- P O R T E R
- He can come marry me like YUM.
- GIRLS DONT HATE EACH OTHER AND THEY HAVE AWESOME FRIENDSHIPS.
- I think her name was Grace I forgot it's been a week.
- The MC's dad is the cutest human to ever exist.

QUESTIONS/DISLIKES:

- What was the deal with that drug addict kid?? I really wanted to learn more about his character.
- the MC's mom is like not even there once the mc moves
- The story was really bland and uninteresting at some points and nothing exciting was really happening.
- The romance was kind of meh I'm sorry.

Overall, this was not a bad read, but not really the greatest thing either. I know I rated this 4 stars but in reality it's a 3.5 and I'm knocking it down to 3 stars because it was just meh cuteness.

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UPDATE: I just finished watching YOU'VE GOT MAIL AND AHAHAHAHA OH MY GOD SOMEONE FANGIRL WITH ME. I'm so frigging ready to read this book now.

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uhhhhh what is You've Got Mail??

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## **nick says**

4.5/5

There are just certain YA books that absolutely blow me away with how readable they are. Jenn Bennett's The Anatomical Shape of a Heart was one of those books for me. I didn't think it was possible for the author to write another book even better than that one, but Jenn Bennett completely wowed me with Alex, Approximately. It's the sort of book that is so hard to put down that you decide to forego all your chores, and in the end, you don't even care, because reading the book was an indescribable experience. I have lots to say about Alex, Approximately, but I'm not going to reveal everything, because there elements of the book you have to experience all on your own. So here are 5 reasons why this book worked for me.

## BAILEY'S REALNESS

It's not often that I discover a heroine is very much like me, but I was glad to see lots of my teenage self in Bailey. Now, I'm not a film-buff like Bailey was, but there were aspects of her characterization that I think a lot of teen girls will recognize. She's a breath of fresh air with how perfectly flawed she was. She makes mistakes, she learns from her mistakes and she apologizes for her mistakes. Bailey was also quite an emotional girl, which I 100% related to. She has a lot going on with her family, but despite it all, she was a strong girl who stayed true to herself throughout *Alex, Approximately*. If you enjoy books with strong character development and growth, you will very likely connect on a deep level to Bailey and her story.

## PORTER'S SWOONINESS (I KNOW NOT A REAL WORD)

Good gosh does Jenn Bennett know how to write YA boys who are delectable! I was expecting Porter to be a great guy, but I was still surprised by how much I wound up loving him. He was charming, flirty and genuine in his kindness. The way he pursues Bailey totally had my heart fluttering all over the place. His devotion to his family, his cocky attitude and his love for surfing made him all the more attractive to me. Porter was so much more than just a surfer and I loved that he possessed so much depth. You'll be left wondering where on earth you can find a boy as swoony as Porter once you're done reading the book!

## THE VIBRANT BEACH SETTING & THE MUSEUM THAT COMES TO LIFE

I love anything that has a coastal beach setting because it reminds me home. Bailey has just moved in to her dad's place in California, and a lot of her growth is focused around this setting. I loved the descriptions of the locales, locals, food, and the activities that she pursued while she was there. The museum that she finds work in was also beautifully written. It was quirky, charming, and had a very entertaining staff that had me smiling and laughing. I wish that I had somewhere as cool as The Cavern Palace to work at as a teen.

## RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE FLAWED, MESSY AND MEANINGFUL

As with the characters and the setting, the relationships in *Alex, Approximately* were also a highlight for me. I particularly loved Bailey's bond with her father. It's a little complicated, but also full of love and respect for each other. There were so many great scenes of the two of them talking and expressing their feelings to each other. I loved that they were respectful even when they might not have agreed with each other. Bailey also meets an awesome friend in Grace. I really loved Grace, and I thought she made for an awesome sidekick, who was a rock for Bailey a lot of times. More awesome girl friendships, please!

## A ROMANCE THAT IS DELICIOUSLY ROMANTIC & SEX POSITIVE

To say that I loved the development of the romance between Bailey & Porter would be a severe understatement. I thought it was absolutely perfect, and I loved how it had a bit of a hate-to-love feel to it in the beginning. Bailey and Porter didn't see eye to eye at first, but he slowly broke down her defenses and soon enough, even she couldn't resist his charms. There were some seriously swoony moments in the book, but the scenes I loved the best were the ones of the two of them talking and emotionally connecting with each other. The chemistry felt real and tangible, and it was just the sort of romance that left me with a sappy grin on my face. Part of the romance also developed through emails and texts (which I LOVED), and made it extra special. As with *The Anatomical Shape of a Heart*, *Alex, Approximately* was also sex-positive. There aren't explicit sex scenes or anything, but there are discussions of sex between the two protagonists before they jump into bed together. I was also ridiculously pleased at the mention of Bailey masturbating. I think there's notion that bringing yourself to pleasure is sinful, especially for young women, so it was refreshing to have a YA book show it positively.

As you can probably tell from all my praise, I'm wildly obsessed with this book and I can't wait for the rest of the world to pick *Alex, Approximately* up and find a story that's full of heart, swoons and smiles. I'm ready for Jenn Bennett's next!

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## Warda says

I mean, I couldn't stop grinning and feeling things about this book!

I love Jenn Bennett. Definitely one of my favourite contemporary authors now.

Bailey was relatable as hell. Especially her way of avoiding shit and not being able to confront her own feelings.

I loved that she was into movies, dressed quirky, her relationship with her dad and how she slowly started to open up and accept her flaws.

Porter, dear god. Why are fictional boys so damn swoon-worthy? I was getting flustered because of that boy.

I wish some of the things she touched upon, i.e. Davey and his drug abuse, Porter's family, Bailey's relationship with her mom, was expanded on more. I think it would've added more meat to the story and made the characters even more tangible.

But, I wanted cuteness and I was overloaded with that. Love is magic, people.

(This'll only last for a short while till I'm back to my cynical old-me, this-world-sucks-no-men-will-ever-live-up-to-fictional-men-like-ever self).

### Pre-reading feels.

Someone said that this is a YA retelling of *You've Got Mail*.

I'm ready to die with cuteness overload.

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## Alienor ✕ French Frowner ✕ says

**1.5 stars to 2 stars.** Oh boy, how dense can a person be? SPOILER ALERT : *Very*. But we'll get back to that. Ultimately, Alex, Approximately reminded me why I didn't do *so-called* "cute" YA romance anymore, being that whole annoying package and all :

1) **The plot lacked substance.** Or, rather, I feel like I've been misled, because somehow I thought that I'd get a)funny online convos, b)some kind of TENSION with the slow realization that appearances can be deceptive, perhaps the characters actually **FINDING OUT THE TRUTH OR SOMETHING.**

No such luck! First there are barely any interactions between Alex (Porter) and Mink (Bailey) online, and they're not what I'd call witty or entertaining. *Yawn*. Secondly it dragged so. *much*. and there's only so much horny, teenage sappy romance I can take. And that's all I got! With such a stereotypical love interest! Whaaaat.



You wouldn't believe how tired I got of those "beautiful curls" and that "slow grin" of his. I just. I mean.  
DEAR GOD.

2) **I didn't care for the *Not Like Other Girls* act that Bailey played on full speed.** God, I didn't care for her, period. Indeed there was something really grating about her voice, something I can't pinpoint exactly but that made me wish I'd DNF early. PERHAPS HER PRETENSION. WHO KNOWS.

3) As it's too often the case, **important issues are completely thrown off a cliff for the sake of the romance, and I'm not here for that** : in Alex, Approximately, we have Davy, Porter's ex-best friend, who's got chronic pain since a surfing injuring and who starts doing drugs. Yet nobody helps him. Nobody. His addiction to source pills then heroine is treated like something that can go away "if only he'd be willing" and he's basically characterized as a villain. Sure, he does shitty things and I'm not saying that he should be let off the hook, **BUT I was shocked at the amount of victim blaming going on there.** And then Porter is some kind of hero because he fights this guy and puts him in the hospital? All while Bailey's thinking things like, *oh, he'll need pain medication, that's just lovely, given his addiction* and ARGGGG give me a fucking BREAK.

But I'm supposed to be okay with that because "*Davy* is such an embarrassment." Right. What a decent friend you make, Porter.

4) Then there's this time when Bailey's dad tells her that she's a great detective and EXCUSE ME WHILE I CHOKES ON MY DRINK?? **She just wanders around, oblivious?**

I'm calling this girl Bailey from now on alright

Oh, and she has that cute little notion that there are different kinds of stalking and that everything is about intent and hmmm that's not how it works?

5) I'm not sure that I'm comfortable with the way the ""trust"" conversations unfolded because somehow their trust looks very much like "you must tell me everything at all time" and what happened to keeping some kind of secret garden? Is that not allowed anymore?

6) Don't believe people that tell you that Porter and Bailey's relationship is a hate-to-love romance because a) they ""hated"" each other for about ten minutes (more like Porter being a prick for absolutely no reasons, but moving on) and b) their hormones got the memo almost instantly : ME LIKEY (are you cringing at this sentence? Because I did). HAVE TO TOUCH. LET'S HOLD HANDS. **I was bored out of my mind, can you tell?**

7) The writing was average and just not that compelling.

The only reasons I didn't go with one star are :

- there is diversity : Bailey's friend, Grace, whose parents are from Nigeria ; Porter's mum is biracial (Chinese and Polynesian) (also she rocks, I love her) ; Porter's dad is disabled ;
- the talk about consent before sex ;
- the last ten pages in which we finally get to see what I'd been waiting for during the whole thing, yes yes yes despite the stupid drama, I enjoyed it, at least something HAPPENED, *god*.

All in all, I think that's fair to say that **I don't get the appeal.** I just don't.

*For more of my reviews, please visit:*

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## **Christy says**

**4.5 stars!!**

The one guy Bailey Rydell can't stand is actually the boy of her dreams—she just doesn't know it yet.

*Alex, Approximately* is the second book I've read from Jenn Bennett and I think I loved it even more than the first. Both of this author's YA novels have been huge wins for me. I hope she continues to write more of these charming, heart felt, and addicting coming of age stories!

Bailey Rydell moves across the country to live with her dad. She has a thing for old movies and is in an on-line group for like minded others. That is where she meets Alex. She's never met Alex, but she's got a bit of a crush on the guy. And he's from the same town her dad lives in. Once she's there, she does everything she can to find Alex (aside from telling him she is in California) and while doing all that, she meets Porter.

Porter is not a guy that Bailey would normally go for. He's a surfer, he's a bit cocky, stubborn, and all around just not her type. At least, that's what she thinks at first. It's plain to see that even though these two are opposites in a lot of ways, there are sparks between them. This leaves Bailey conflicted. Porter, the real guy she's falling for, or Alex, her online friend she's liked for a long time. This may be even more complicated than we know...

Porter was an amazing character. I loved everything about him. Though I had a hunch about the twist in this book, it didn't make it any less fantastic when it was revealed. I wasn't surprised, but I loved it all the same. Bailey was also a great character. Honestly, there wasn't much I didn't like about this book. It was all around pretty wonderful. I listened to the audio book and enjoyed the narration as well. One of my top favorite YA books I've read this year and one I'd highly recommend!

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## **Heather 'Bookables' says**

LOVED this! 4.5/ 5

One of my new favorite contemporaries!

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**may ❀ says**

**Buddy read** with the walking spoiler and the walking spoiler jr.

I swear, I don't think a *You've Got Mail* retelling CAN go wrong.

**Reasons Why this Book is the Greatest™**

- It's a YOU'VE GOT MAIL RETELLING
- Bailey is relatable as hell
- IT'S GENUINELY FUNNY
- Porter Roth owns my heart
- #FRIENDSHIP
- Bailey's dad
- Porter Roth's face
- I'M TRASH
- IT'S SO ADDICTIVE YOU CANT STOP READING
- OR SQUEALING
- HONESTLY
- DO YOURSELF A FAVOUR AND READ THE BOOK

I want to spend the rest of my life searching for *You've Got Mail* retellings and reading them. I will be MORE than content with my life.

GAHHHH, IT'S SO PERFECT!!!!!!!!!!

You know when a book has EVERYTHING that could possibly make it perfect and it's CHARMING and HILARIOUS and RELATABLE and SWOONWORTHY????!! Yeah, that's this book.

Kids, let me give you my honest, genuine advice:

Love yourselves and read the bloody book!!

5 fricken stars and all the heart eyes in the world!!!

~~~~~

I've been waiting for this book since late 2015 and the wait WAS. SO. WORTH. IT.

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**l a i n e y says**

Bailey Rydell is an evader.

Me: Oh dear, 'reliability' = 0 → 100% in 3 seconds flat.

Speaking as someone who in high school have literally run away from who she was currently in 'relationship' with. And this happened more times than I cared to share, suffice to say my friends were utterly baffled. It was *très complicated*, let us say. And I may or may not still be that girl when it comes to relationships but I digress ....

Alex, approximately: super cute & funny YA contemporary with flowing first person narrative writing starring Bailey Rydell, the Artful Dogder & the extra adorable surfer boy named Porter Roth who sometimes more adorkable, but I'll take both, you can keep the change! I loved Bailey's voice a great deal and that's why the book was so enjoyable to me.

{{ **The Scene Stealer Awards** goes to *\*drum rolls\** **Pete Rydell** for being the cutest geeky Dad ever! }}

The characters, the writing, the romance all very engaging - there was not a time I thought it boring, which believe you me, not an easy thing to pull off. So, bravo Jenn Bennett whose works I've just now sampled.

*I get a little flustered but not enough to stop wanting the moon muffins.*

? Loads of food appreciation in the book which means A.) bye-bye my diet plan. and/or B.) google is my friend (life of a foreigner...) Whatthefhell is 'moon muffin' anyway? And who do I have to date to get some?! (Sadly for me, the answer of course is Porter....)

***I'm so ready. I am Mink.  
Hear me roar.***

rating: ★★★★★½

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**Chelsea ♥Peril Please♥ says**

Maybe Walt Whitman was right. We all really do contradict ourselves and contain multitudes.  
How do we even figure out who we really are?

I'm not going to lie-I'd much rather be writing about a book I've read closer to this moment, but if I don't go back and write reviews for all the books I've read-and loved-in the past few months, it will make me CRAZY

(Well, crazier than usual...). Alex, Approximately was one of those books that you read quickly-but not like your typical YA contemp-you don't just read it and cut through it and, once finished, never look back. No, **this book was one of those that you devour**, inhale every word....and just, I don't know, *exhale* slowly in a contented breath. **It's a book that not only makes you giddy and happy, but makes warmth radiate from the inside out.** It fills your heart with something akin to true love-*believable* true love-and you can't quite let it go.

“Bailey, I spend most of my days looking at you through that tiny square screen up there. I’m just grateful to be in the same room. And the fact that you’ll even let me touch you at all is the freaking miracle of the century. So whatever you want or don’t want from me, all you have to do is ask. Okay?”

Now, I'm not a moron. The chances of this book happening in real life are nill and none-I just meant that **the progression of the romance not only felt natural**, but light-hearted and full of **something I'm not sure I feel very often anymore** when I read. And, fun as this book was, it was heavy in all the right places.

But despite all that . . . look what he did. Look what he did. For me? And he’s sitting here, in pain, falling apart, and all he’s worried about is that I’m sorry I gave him my number and don’t want to go out on a date with him?

In true YA fashion, though, it wasn't without it's pitfalls. Let's be honest here: Not many girls would miss the obvious signs that Porter Roth was, in fact, online Alex. It was clear as day. And I did think that if there was a problem with this book, it'd be Mink. **She was a tad naive for my tastes**...but I never felt full-on annoyance, which seems to be a recurring theme lately on all the books I choose to pick up. With what little time I have to read, I'm just not as forgiving as I used to be.

A couple of yards before we hit the ground, he speaks up in a voice so quiet, I can barely hear him. “What I said the other day about you having champagne tastes?” He pauses for a moment. Mr. Reyes is smiling, waiting to unhitch our bar. “I just wanted you to know that I like the way you dress. I like your style. . . . I think it’s sexy as hell.”

And Porter-I just loved him so so much. Sweet, funny, a tad asshole-ish....but **absolutely loyal to the core**. He gets his heart broken. He would do anything for Mink. He even has the sweetest apology scene. And, ya know, he can be a tad alpha-male which, hey, I love me a good 'defending my lady' scene -\*whispers\* There were 3 (holds up the non-existent but ever useful three finger emoji). PLUS, he is a tad wittier than our dear main character-I'll say that much...though, he got a little clearer sign, I'll admit.

He kisses my forehead. "Know what I'm scared of?"

"What?"

"That I like you way too much, and I'm afraid once you get to know me, you're going to realize that you can do lots better, and you're going to break my heart and leave me for someone classier."

And I seem to be LOVING this type of book right now (is it a trope? I don't want to toss that word around unnecessarily)-the one where people meet online or in letters (Punk 57, Letters to the Lost, Eliza and Her Monsters, and others I'm forgetting like a moron) and then meet in person, hit it off, and don't realize they are the same person. I can't help it-I'm a **hopeless romantic** and these seem to be hitting all the right buttons for me this year. **Note: 2017, the year of the YA Romance cyber stalkers.** See: Chelsea totally buying into this melodrama-and LOVING IT.

If we're meant to be, and he's the person I imagine him to be, then things will all work out fine. He'll be wonderful, and by the end of the summer, we'll be crazy in love, watching North by Northwest at the film festival on the beach, and I'll have my hands all over him. Which is what I spend a lot of my free time imagining myself doing to his virtual body, the lucky boy.

And, frankly, I liked Bailey's voice. She was funny, sarcastic, and I found that I related to her quite a bit when it came to her sarcasm. She was snarky and quick-witted. Whadya guna do? :P

..."Like a horse, you know?" He holds his hands up on either side of his eyes. "You plow ahead, and you make a lot of progress that other people wouldn't make, but you can't see what's happening on either side of the road. You have blind spots. You ignore things that are right next to you. Your mom did that all the time."

I had so much to say about this book when I first finished-I had a whole review plotted out in my head, I was so anxious to let my thoughts be heard. But, as it is...TIME. TIME TIME TIME. But, and maybe this is a tad cliché, I think it truly says something when I read a book, have no time to write a review, and STILL come back a month (or more) later and attempt to post one. Obviously this book meant something to me, and *obviously* it was worth coming back for. **Maybe that says the most of all.**

*For more of my reviews, please visit:*

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## emma says

I'M HONESTLY EMBARRASSED THAT I WAS SO EXCITED FOR THIS BOOK.

Like...I hate books that are cringey, and I hate books that are pretentious, but it's so *rare* for me to get the opportunity to hate one that is BOTH!

<https://emmareadstoomuch.wordpress.co...>

Ughhhh. God. I'm someone who is extremely susceptible to the charms of an old movie, so when I saw that there was, essentially, a retelling of *You've Got Mail* (a fairly good movie, I guess) in which old film brings the ~romantic interests~ together, I had to be *in*.

And then I read the first 20 pages and cringed unbearably and put it to the side for, presumably, ever.

Yes. I planned on DNFing this book after 20 pages. Just so everyone knows: I never ever do that. EVER. But I instantly knew this book was going to be ALL WRONG.

But then I saw a metric sh\*t ton (one of my favorite phrases, by the way) of positive reviews. From very trusted sources! And I'm not just talking, like, three-and-a-half-stars "fun fluffy read" reviews. I mean five star, this book is amazing reviews.

Unfortunately, my dumb gut was right the first time. So let's talk about why this book is garbage, using the Caraval review structure I only whip out when books got a whole lotta sh\*t goin' on.

## PLOT, I GUESS

We follow Bailey, who leaves her dirty rotten mom behind in DC to live in sunny SoCal with her cool nerd dad. Bailey is a cinephile, *apparently*, and writes (flirty!) messages back and forth on a cinema forum with this kid Alex. Guess where Alex lives? *In the same small town as Bailey's dad*. Guess when Bailey tells Alex she's there? Ding ding ding! If you guessed "Never, for reasons that are stupid," you're today's winner!

Anyway, Bailey meets this kid Porter, who she "hates" (for all of 20 pages before the whole thing dissolves into sexual tension and smut, never to return). But guesssssss whoooooo Alexxxxxx isssss? Just kidding, you don't have to guess. It's in the f\*cking synopsis. It's Porter.

Now we just have to wait for the dumbest protagonist in world history to figure out what has been increasingly apparent since, like, page 5. GRUELING.

Going to try one of my world-famous character impressions on for size. Here's Bailey:

*Wow, am I ever going to find Alex? All I know about him is that he loves old movies, and has best friend problems, and works in his family's business on the boardwalk within view of the ocean by a stray cat and a churro cart, and doesn't know if he can go to college because his family needs him, and watches movies at work, and has a coworker who smokes a sh\*t ton of weed, and that his girlfriend cheated on him. It surely can't be Porter, who was in the old movie section of a DVD store, and knows Roman Holiday and old sci-fi movies and a million others, and has best friend problems, and works in his family's business on the boardwalk within view of the ocean by a stray cat and a churro cart, and doesn't know if he can go to*

*college because his family needs him, and watches movies at work, and has a coworker who smokes a sh\*t ton of weed, and whose girlfriend cheated on him.*

Semi-spoiler alert: Bailey NEVER FIGURES IT OUT. Her f\*cking dad does, and so does Porter. PORTER HAS TO TELL BAILEY IT'S HIM. My God. The sheer idiocy is overwhelming. And to think, her dad told her she's a "good detective." In the immortal words of Alicia Silverstone, "As if."

On top of this sort of mind-boggling, makes-me-wanna-claw-my-eyes-out stupidity, this book was also so pretentious and made me cringe so often. I ALMOST DNFED IT TWICE.

I just feel so lied to. All I wanted was a contemporary with some chat logs and old movie discussion, and I was CHEATED ON BOTH FRONTS. I'm so anguished it makes me fear for my caps lock key. The online messages are few and far between, and those that we are granted are less than impressive, and really the best old movie discussion we get is from the quotes at the beginning of the chapters - WHICH INCLUDE FILMS LIKE PITCH PERFECT AND CLUELESS AND EASY A! Don't get me wrong, all great movies, but not exactly anyone's idea of vintage!!!!!!!!!! Ugh.

### **THE WORST TROPE OF ALL TIME**

And also, guys, in case you needed a disappointment cherry on top of this infuriating sundae, Bailey is so totally *not like other girls*. The first example arrives at the literal beginning of the book: "It's not exactly the kind of movie you ask a girl out to see when you're trying to win her heart - not *most* girls, anyway."

This is when I put this thing down for a couple weeks.

When I returned, rested, rejuvenated, hopeful, I was dealt another blow: "I'm not going to be one of those girls who goes wobbly-woo over a boy and picks at her food."

Poor Bailey. How does she survive as the only tolerable female in the entire universe?

### **NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL PRETENTIOUS**

Bailey also sh\*t talks the East Coast constantly? And I mean, I've grown up on East Coast beaches. And my question is: What the fuck kind of East Coast beach was Bailey going to? Where does the ocean smell like "bleached metal" and make you want to "roll up a window"? Sweet Lord Jesus. It smells like an ocean. It's great. Maybe that stick up your ass is impairing your sense of smell. And when she's standing in the f\*cking woods, she rants and raves about how that's just the kind of Quality Smell™ you just can't get in the east. Um, it can smell like "pine" here too, you ding-dong.

Continuing along the path of misguided pretentiousness, this book goes on a rant about Breakfast at Tiffany's that cut me to my soul. Don't misunderstand me: Mickey Rooney's racist-ass character is supremely f\*cked. It's far from a perfect movie. But people are allowed to like it! It's a classic! My God, this book, man.

### **CRINGE CENTRAL, PARTY OF ME THIS SECTION IS UNFORTUNATELY EXPLICIT RATED T FOR TEEN SMUT**

Now let's talk about that full-on cringe-fest, baby. This book substitutes a plot with gooey looks and smut



and I guess what would be considered the stepping stone between flirting and sexting. It's always just a couple of hot and bothered teens, and it made me SO UNCOMFORTABLE. I don't like smut much in the first place, but when it's a first-person seventeen-year-old girl talking about her daydreams and fantasies and masturbation habits and what I can only describe as a passion for getting fingered...it kinda makes me wanna Die™.

And God, a light breeze could turn this girl on. Here are some examples of things that spur Bailey into fantasizing in public:

- Handholding
- The cringeworthy-by-itself phrase "Porter likey"
- Extensive injuries from a fight
- Porter informing her she should wear sandals more often because he likes her feet (GAG ME WITH A SPOON)
- Generally being glanced at, touched by or close to Porter

## **GENERAL STUPIDITY**

And nowwww it's time forrrr - GENERAL STUPIDITY! I haven't had the privilege of writing one of these sections in a hot sec. Longtime, long-suffering followers know that this is the section I use for books that contain small mistakes or irritations that just don't make sense.

In this book, it's mostly the dialogue. For example, when Bailey meets the forty-year-old cop girlfriend of her father, guess what said cop says?

I'd bet you a hundred thousand million dollars you didn't think it'd be this: "I like your brows," she finally says. 'Glamorous.'" THAT'S LIKE A FORTY-YEAR-OLD FEMALE COP SPEAKING TO A TEENAGER.

Something that just kind of bothers me: Bailey's hair is constantly described as being like Lana Turner's. People even recognize her hair as being in the style of Lana Turner's. But Lana Turner didn't HAVE just one hairstyle! She had like, a million pinup girl variations! I just want answers. Which one which one which one?

## **ADDICTION IS THE VICTIM'S FAULT NOW AND THEY SHOULD BE BLAMED AND TREATED LIKE A VILLAIN, IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING**

So, remember the briefly aforementioned best friend of Porter? The one he "hates"? That best friend's name is Davy. Davy screwed up his leg surfing so badly he still limps years later. When he was prescribed painkillers, he, like many people, became addicted to the prescription. So when the prescription ran out, he continued to (illegally) source pills. Later, like many people, he moved onto the much-more-affordable heroin. That's an addiction that is almost impossible to break, and, we're told, the sh\*tteness of Davy's family life only spurs him more toward drugs.

But none of that is handled with the understanding it deserves.

Instead, Davy is treated like the villain of this book. All characters carry nothing but disdain and hatred for him. They act like it's his fault and he should ~just stop~. When he shows the warning signs of many addicts, like stealing and lying, they blame him. Porter beats the sh\*t out of him at one point.

But the worst bit of all is what Porter says to Bailey about his supposed best friend, who is addicted to maybe

the worst drug out there. "I'm less worried about him right now, and more worried that you're sorry you ever gave me your number and will never go out on a date with me, because now you're thinking all my friends are trash and we really have nothing in common."

Yup. Yes. He's not that worried about Davy being on one of the most addictive and dangerous drugs in existence. And on top of it, Davy's "trash" for that addiction.

Coolcoolcool.

Great book.

Bottom line: I said a-nope, nope, nope-ity nope, I said a-nope nope nope-ity nope!

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### **alexandra says**

i binged this in a day and i'm hopelessly, horribly obsessed. i've already reread some of my favorite parts three times and I CAN'T DEAL WITH MY EMOTIONS. this is way too cute. :")

full review to come!!

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### **Stacee says**

I didn't even need to read the synopsis of this book. I wanted it from Jenn Bennett's name and my undying love for her other YA book, *The Anatomical Shape of a Heart*. I went in completely blind and utterly fell in love.

Bailey is my kind of girl. She's smart and sort of awkward and would rather be alone the majority of the time. She loves classic movies and dressing like Lana Turner and why aren't we BFFs already. Porter? Yeah, I don't even know where to start with this boy. He's swoony to begin with and then when he actually tries, I was a puddle of goo.

There is some of the most delicious banter ever written, swoons, heartbreak, laughs, and maybe a bit of betrayal. Not to mention a few secrets that are revealed in the slowest and agonizing way.

This is a book that I'll be reading over and over again: when I need a pick me up or to get out of a slump or just need to grin like a loon the way I am right now.

**\*\*Huge thanks to Mysterious Galaxy for letting me take an arc from the back room\*\***

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