



Have You Met Nora?

Nicole Blades

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She's blossomed from a wealthy surgeon's beautiful daughter to elegant socialite to being the top fashion stylist in the country. And Nora Mackenzie is only days away from marrying into one of New York's richest, most powerful families. But her fairy tale rise is rooted in an incredible deception—one scandal away from turning her perfect world to ashes . . .

What no one knows is that Nora is the biracial daughter of a Caribbean woman and a long-gone white father. Adopted—and abused—by her mother's employer, then sent to an exclusive boarding school to buy her silence, Nora found that “passing” as a white woman could give her everything she never had.

Now, an ex-classmate who Nora betrayed many years ago has returned to her life to even the score. Her machinations are turning Nora's privilege into one gilded trap after another. Running out of choices, Nora must decide how far she will go to protect a lie or give up and finally face the truth.

Have You Met Nora? Details

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From Reader Review Have You Met Nora? for online ebook

Stevie Carroll says

Previously reviewed on The Good, The Bad, and The Unread:

I'm always intrigued by conventions and assumptions that are different in the US to how they are over here in the UK, particularly when it comes to issues of race and class. I can't see anyone over here going to the lengths Nora does to conceal their racial background under the same circumstances (although anything's possible); however, the idea of someone being embarrassed by their parents giving away markers of a class other than the one they've claimed for themselves is a long-running mainstay of many forms of humour. It must be said that Nora's childhood, particularly following her mother's death, was especially horrific, but I'm not sure that justifies the levels of deception she employs to re-imagine her history upon becoming an adult.

Nora is the green-eyed, fair-complexioned daughter of an African American woman working in domestic service and a long absent white father. From the age of nine, Nora is sexually abused by her mother's employer, while his wife turns a blind eye. Then, following the death of Nora's mother, the couple adopt Nora and pass her off as their own child: bleaching and styling her hair, then sending her off to an exclusive, almost entirely white boarding school. Nora is one of the popular girls, but also mean: when a scholarship girl recognises that Nora is no more white than she herself is, Nora sets out to ensure the girl is expelled. However, a revelation from her adoptive mother soon after sends Nora running away from the school herself and making a new life for herself in New York.

Now a successful men's fashion stylist, Nora is on the verge of marrying her white, over-privileged fiancé, who knows nothing of her background. Nora has surrounded herself with employees whose family histories are just as complex as the one she is concealing, while her best friends outside work seem to be mostly white. Nora lives in a state of constant fear that her secret will be uncovered, not helped by her fiancé talking about his mother's prejudices, while reminding her of how popular she is with his family. Of course, Nora's worst fears seem to be realised when her old rival from school shows up and begins blackmailing her and slowly unpicking everything Nora has worked to build. Nora eventually resorts to drastic measures to save herself and her secret, although we're left somewhat in suspense as to how that plan works out.

I really couldn't warm to this book. Very few of the characters were remotely likable, and while the author did a reasonable job of pointing out all kinds of unconscious assumptions white folks make about race, she also had Nora use a term, which I've only heard Americans use, and which at least some of my Irish friends living in the UK find just as offensive as I thought they might. Another author I'll sadly be avoiding in future.

Noemi Proietti says

Nora Mackenzie seems to have a perfect fairy-tale life: she has a fantastic job as a fashion stylist in New York and is about to marry one of the richest and most sought-after bachelors in Manhattan. But Nora's secret and scandalous past threatens to ruin everything she has worked for when a former classmate comes back into her life.

Although the writing is clear and precise, I found the plot a bit far-fetched and confusing, and I can't say I liked any of the characters. With themes of friendship, love, but also abuse and ethnicity, this is an easy read but didn't exactly captivate me.

Kristin says

HAVE YOU MET NORA? is intense and passionate and painful even while being fun and loving. As with Nicole Blades' earlier novel THE THUNDER BENEATH US, friendships play an important role as do "meant to be" romantic partnerships. The layers revealed about the characters and the fluctuating sympathy Blades' demands we have for various characters ensures readers relate to the events, even if reluctantly. Struggles with identity, past secrets, and anxiety about the future all play major roles in this novel. In brief, HAVE YOU MET NORA? is a high pressure version of reality. An excellent read.

NB: Childhood sexual abuse factors into the story.

Angela Amman says

From the outside, Nora Mackenzie lives an awfully charmed life. Elegant, blond, and successful, she's engaged to be married into an established, wealthy family via a gorgeous man she truly loves. Why, then, is Nora guzzling champagne while cowered in the cavernous bathtub in her guest bathroom? The daughter of a black, Caribbean mother and white father, Nora's world fell apart when she was abused by her mother's employers, who later adopt her when she's orphaned. Shuttled to an exclusive boarding school, Nora learns how much easier it is not to talk about her real mother — or her heritage.

When an old enemy threatens to expose Nora's secret, weeks before her marriage, Nora teeters between truth, lies, and running away to reinvent herself once again. Readers will both cringe at and sympathize with Nora's reluctance to confide in the people who love her and her cool mood swings, as she must decide how far she's willing to go to keep her friends and almost-family in the dark about her past. Have You Met Nora? provided a fun escape into a different world than the one I'm used to. I enjoyed the drama and intrigue of seeing into the upper echelon of New York society, and I couldn't wait to get to the end of the book to see how Nora would deal with the threat to a life she put together so carefully.

*Disclosure: I received a copy of Have You Met Nora? for consideration for review. All opinions are my own.

RoloPoloBookBlog says

Have You Met Nora? by Nicole Blades

Source: Netgalley

My Rating: 2/5 stars

Talk about starting off the new year with a crazy, conflicted emotions read! Have You Met Nora? is likely going to go down as one of the year's most confounding reads with me left wondering how in the world I made it from the beginning to the end of this read.

Here's my best assessment:

To be clear, I couldn't put this book down and read the entire thing in a single day. Generally, such a marathon read would translate into a very high, if not the highest of star ratings, but in this instance, I think it had more to do with the book's train wreck quality. I just couldn't stop watching, so to speak.

Nora Mackenzie has crafted a life for herself that is the envy of so, so many. She comes from wealth and privilege and has built a successful career out of sheer will, hard work, and single-minded determination and focus. Additionally, in just a month's time, she is set to marry Fisher Beaumont, one of society's wealthiest, most handsome men who comes with a name, riches, and a life beyond belief.

Unfortunately, much of the life Nora Mackenzie has crafted for herself is a complete and utter lie. Oh, the career success is real enough as is her love for Fisher, but all the rest is a finely crafted façade built over years and years. Until just recently, Nora's façade has been so rock solid as to convince literally everyone in her world. Her best-friend, her fiancé, her co-workers have no idea of Nora's past, the lies she has told, the people she has hurt to achieve a life among society's elite. What's more, none of the people closest to her have any idea of the lengths Nora is willing to go to in order to protect her secrets.

In the weeks leading up to her wedding, Nora's world begins to crumble. Unless well and truly dead, the past doesn't always stay buried, and it often comes back to haunt those who deserve it. In Nora's case, the past comes a calling in the form of a former classmate, a now bitter and angry woman whom Nora utterly destroyed as a teenager in order to protect her secret and her world. Nora's past isn't just bitter and angry, she's also technologically skilled and determined to see Nora exposed and destroyed. The revelation of Nora's past would, to Nora's mind ruin everything she has worked and lied for, which means her past must be well and truly buried. There can be no loose ends and as Nora begins to unravel, she also begins to form a plan that will see her safe and protected for the rest of her life.

The Bottom Line: *Have You Met Nora?* is one of those reads where you find yourself wanting to like the main character, but just can't ever see your way to doing so. Nora's horrifying past certainly lends itself to sympathy and understanding, but Nora's actions because of her past are just so pitiful and pathetic that all sympathy is erased. The lies and deception are so much a part of Nora even she can't tell the difference any longer and that makes her utterly unlikeable. Nora lies like she breathes, automatically and without a thought or care for others, only herself and her own survival. As if a thoroughly unlikeable lead character weren't enough, there is also the outrageousness of the plot and ending. I simply don't understand why Nora's past has to be a secret. Are we really so shallow and pathetic a society that Nora's situation is a has to and not a want to? Furthermore, given the time and place of the story, why did Nora never seek help for her issues? In this day and age, there is a plethora of help to be found, but Nora would rather continue to live a lie than deal with her past and her issues in order to live a freer, healthier life. Nora would, quite literally not be in her current predicament if, at any time she had drummed up even an ounce of courage to tell the truth and seek help. Finally, there is the ending. Between the big bad and Fisher's reaction, I found myself wondering a great many negative things about how I and this story got to this point. In the end, *Have You Met Nora?* had the potential to be a very interesting and truly good read, but it somehow lost its way in a mixture of bad characters and bad plotting.

Samantha March says

I had a bit of a difficult time with this book. It started out okay for me, but the middle really lagged. I think it

took me a little too long to figure Nora out. Once I did, I found the scenes explaining how she became who she is in the present to be interesting, but it was almost a little too late for me. It read almost literary at times and a few scenes got a little long, but the ending was not what I expected and left the book on a thought-provoking note. Not a favorite, but interesting enough if you're willing to read through the slower scenes. I received a review copy

Didi says

<https://youtu.be/Fj6HbgqEU0c>

Kathryn says

Review to follow

Audra says

"...she'd learned long ago that allowing someone their story was easier than rolling out the truth."

That pretty much sums up the theme of this book. I don't want to give any spoilers, but Nora was a tortured soul who managed to very carefully craft a privileged life for herself. She thought she successfully buried her other identities, but someone was watching her from afar. Someone with a vendetta against Nora. Someone who wanted to send her fragile house of cards crashing to the ground.

This is the first book where I was torn in my feelings for the main character. I admired Nora so much for taking her life into her own hands but I detested the way she did it, but yet I understood why she did it. See what I mean? Torn.

This entire novel kept me turning the pages, but the last third of it got intense. Every chapter ended with a cliffhanger and I had to keep reading to see how Nora would get herself out of predicament after predicament. This was *Imitation of Life* on steroids. The suspense was a wild ride and it left me breathless.

And the way it ended? Well, all I have to say is that there better be a sequel!

This is one of those books that I will read over and over again. I'd love to see it made into a movie.

Jamie Holzberg / Fluff Smut & Murder says

I had originally pre-ordered this book from Amazon.com as I liked the blurb on the back - then I was lucky enough to see it on NetGalley.com and was awarded the opportunity to read an ARC copy. I am so glad I didn't waste the money on this book! I was only able to get about halfway through the story - I was confused and Nora just isn't that likable of a character to put the effort in to see if she gets any kind of a happy ending in the end.

Carrie Ardoin says

DNF. Nora and her best friend Jenna are grown women but talk in annoying abbreviations like teenagers. No character in this story is likable. By 25% in, I had lost any interest in where the story was going.

Gabrielle says

Sadly, this novel was only just okay. The story felt very predictable and sometimes too far-fetched. There were some interesting elements about race, class, and identity to uncover, but that's about it. This book is definitely something in the chick-lit category and not really literature. I should have been more cognizant of that going into the book. I think it could be a good book to discuss race and class so I might recommend it to a friend. Likely would be good for a book club or group discussion.

Jennifer says

I found the ending to be very unsatisfying. The first part of the book was overburdened with too much superfluous information about Nora's current life. I hoped that it was building to something, but the nothing was a huge disappointment.

Edgle Bennett says

Hated it. A waste of time, if u read this you will
Hate the ending.

Holly says

After having read *Have You Met Nora* by Nicole Blades, I'm finding it difficult to form an unbiased opinion. The writing was clear and concise, which I like, but for me, the story was beyond imagination. I think that part of my problem with the story is that I can't relate to the premise of the novel or the characters. Maybe the problem is mine – having grown up white in a very liberal household in an upper middle class neighborhood – I just can't understand why in this day and age, a teenager would feel the need to hide her bi-racial roots and continue that ruse into adulthood. I can't understand why Nora made the choices she did and felt justified in her actions. In the end, she was completely immoral yet held up to be something of envy.

Ultimately, I didn't like any of the main characters. I started out liking Nora, but quickly she made that difficult. For me, deception is the ultimate sin. I couldn't stand Jenna from the beginning, but I warmed up to her. She started out so brass and in your face, but gentled as the story continued. And then there's the protagonist Dawn, who has little to no redeeming qualities. Although she certainly didn't deserve her fate. And finally Fisher, Nora's fiancé. So loving and supportive. His actions at the end of the story were over the

top and just not believable.

There were several points during the book that I thought about putting it down and not finishing. I didn't do that mostly because I was curious as to where the author would take the characters. I thought for sure one of them would step up and do the right thing. Nope.

Thank you to the publisher and NetGalley for the ARC I received in return for my honest review.
