



Pretty Amy

Lisa Burstein

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You'd think life couldn't get much worse than being arrested on prom night. But you'd be wrong.

No friends. My two besties, Cassie and Lila, are now officially parentally banned.

No summer of freedom. Instead, I'll be working at a convenience store, earning money just so I can cover bail.

No future. Just a series of humiliating "rehabilitation techniques" designed to teach me a lesson.

The only silver lining is Aaron—a mystery wrapped in a leather jacket and wielding car keys—who just happens to show up right when I need him. Now I only feel alive when we're driving together, the wind in my hair.

Maybe finally getting a life only happens once you think your life is over.

Pretty Amy Details

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Author : Lisa Burstein

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From Reader Review Pretty Amy for online ebook

Rabiah says

Originally Posted at: <http://iliveforreading.blogspot.in/2013/05/review-prettyamy.html>

When I saw Pretty Amy's cover on Goodreads, it immediately caught my interest. That dress is GORGEOUS! I then went on to reading the blurb and then further went on to request for a review copy from Lisa Burstein because this sounded like an original premise for a contemporary YA novel. And it was just that. Pretty Amy explores what every teen would never dream of: being arrested on prom night. That alone makes you curious doesn't it?

While I enjoyed most of the story, I did find many faults with the characters. Some of the absolute worst people are in this book, ones that I would never want to meet in real life.

The only thing I really liked about Amy was her humor. She's got quite the knack to have smart comebacks from time to time. She really lacked self-confidence though. I hated how she constantly had to put other people down most of the time to make herself feel better. This does relate to teens now days I completely understand, but it somewhat annoyed me when she took pleasure in other people's problems and faults. Her whining really did put me on an edge!

Her mother, on the other hand, is a different story altogether. I seriously think, that out of all the YA novel moms out there, she's the worst of the worst. A pain in the butt this lady is. Her dad was one character I liked though. He, Joe and AJ (her parrot) were probably the most likeable ones in the story. But the unlikeable ones? You gotta love to hate 'em!

This story was very character-driven, so if you don't like the characters, it's going to be one bumpy ride. I liked the ups and downs though, it made me really get to understand Amy's character even more. Pretty Amy is definitely one contemporary not to pass up! Lisa Burstein's writing is amazing, and can't wait for more from her. One debut definitely not to miss.

Thank you to Lisa Burstein for sending me Pretty Amy for review!

Jessi says

Flying through the pages of Pretty Amy was like a trip back to the halls of my high school--the cliques, the heartbreaks, the searching, the uncertainty. Amy is searching--but she doesn't even really know what she's searching for (or perhaps even that she's searching). She's found a group of friends who make her someone, but is that someone who she really WANTS to be? Is it really who she is?

Unfortunately, I am only myself. I am only Amy Fleishman. I am one of the legions of middle-class girls who search malls for jeans that make them look thinner, who search drugstores for makeup to wear as a second skin, who are as sexy and exotic as blueberry muffins.

-p7, eARC

Amy will, I think, steal your heart from page one of this book because her slightly broken, pessimistic personality turns her into a real person--not just another character on the page. Many readers will find themselves identifying with Amy's struggles to find her place in the world amidst the many pressures and pitfalls of being a teenager (even though most of us PROBABLY weren't arrested on our prom night, if we went at all). Her snarky wit, which manifests itself in hilarious one-liners, will have you laughing out loud and taking notes so you can steal her humor later. Now, I'll admit that there were times I wanted to reach in and shake the poor girl because she's seriously a hot mess and she just needs to step it up a bit! BUT, I think sometimes these sorts of characters are the ones that really insert themselves into our memories and the ones that we can relate to because haven't we all made stubborn mistakes and decisions?

*She shouldn't have been surprised I was messed up. Anyone forced to wear a pink tutu and a Miss America ribbon that read **Novocain Princess** while holding a rolling-pin-size syringe and touting her father's dental practice on basic cable was bound to end up with some problems. Not unexpectedly, drug related.*

-p38, eARC

Ms. Burstein's writing truly brings together this story in a perfect portrayal of the turbulent adolescent years. I felt like she really captured the emotions of being a teenager--the ups and downs, disappointments and revelations. I'm young enough that I remember quite vividly my own moments of utter betrayal at the hands of "friends" and the moments of pure bliss that showed up at random, unexpected times. This story brings you back to your own experiences, no matter how different they were from Amy's. We all had moments where our parents were the bad guys and we were too cool for school, where we struggled to find a place to fit in and once we did weren't sure that it was really the right place.

Even I knew that the way things really were was the exact opposite of what my parents had told me. Hard work and a college degree no longer meant anything other than moving right back in with the parents who had lied to you about it in the first place.

-p49, eARC

Pretty Amy is a realistic portrayal of the world that your average teenager lives in. Sure, there were moments that required a bit of suspension of belief, but the overall tone and story rang true for me. Amy's story isn't clear-cut--her path is messy and filled with moments of uncertainty and betrayal. If you're looking for a fun contemporary YA read with a snarky protagonist, you can't go wrong with *Pretty Amy*.

Rachel Harris says

PRETTY AMY brought me back to the chaotic halls of my own high school. I too had a friend like Lila, who always had to be the prettiest one in the room. I too was a middle-class white girl who was as exotic as a blueberry muffin (oh how I love that line!). And, most importantly, I too had a tendency to define who I was by how others saw me, by how easily I fit in, and how well I was liked.

Truth be told, I'm still a little like Amy.

Lisa Burstein knows how to capture adolescence and the turbulent teen years with perfection, and she does it

with an amazing blend of laughter, seriousness, cringe-worthy moments, silliness, and a whole lot of heart. She populates her world with so many fresh and varied characters that completely leap from the page, sucking you even further into the story and Amy's life. Lisa doesn't hold back. She tells an authentic, realistic, sometimes shocking young adult story, with a voice that is creepy in how spot on it is. It actually kinda makes me wonder how old Ms. Burstein really is...

Amy is endearing and wonderfully flawed. Her best friends, Lila and Cassie, perfectly illustrate the kind of girls I knew in high school, and they serve as the perfect catalysts for Amy's journey of discovery. And let me not forget the hottie boys. PRETTY AMY has two excellent specimens –Aaron, the mysterious bad boy, and Joe, the adorable boy next door—and they are both quite scrumptious. As this will remain a spoilerific free review, let me just say that I picked my team early, cheered my man on throughout the novel, and in the end, totally won. (*raucous cheer*)

Yes, I love my main man. And I'm totally in awe of Amy, and how beautifully crafted her and her friends are. But actually, the minor characters are what completely wow me. From Amy's bird, AJ, to the hippie counselor Daniel. From Connor, the surprisingly well-rounded (and well-meaning) co-worker, to Dick, the corny-joke telling lawyer. And finally, Amy's hilarious parents...and particularly crazy mother. They make the story real. They are what bring the funny, and their presence is what helps Amy achieve her own psychedelic Wizard of Oz reenactment. PRETTY AMY ends up going so much deeper than I expected, and it is through scenes with these richly drawn characters that real growth occurs. Along with an exceptionally hilarious, shockingly unique, church bathroom scene, that had me wiping my eyes from laughing so hard. I will never look at a chocolate milkshake in quite the same way again.

Bottom line? PRETTY AMY is young adult Contemporary at its finest. It speaks to the teenage experience, provides valuable insight, and does it all through a thoroughly entertaining ride. It has definitely earned its place on my shelf of favorites, and I hope it will be on yours, too.

♥Rachel♥ says

2.5 Stars

Amy is friends with Lila and Cassie. Well, I'm not sure you would call these girls friends but they hang out together. Amy ended up falling into their group after not fitting in with anyone else. She keeps hanging around these two because somehow, they make her feel like she belongs, and in her eyes, they're cool. After planning to go to prom with Lila and her boyfriend, and a couple of other boys rounded up for dates, the girls are stood up and decide to crash the prom without dates. They do this while high on pot, and end up being arrested. Amy is suspended from school and now facing possible jail time. Amy's relationship with her parents was already fractured before this stunt, especially with her mom, so this doesn't help the situation at all. Even though her parents try to provide help, Amy resists at every turn.

After seeing the cover, and reading the description, I starting reading Pretty Amy thinking it was one of my light, fluffy, vanilla reads. I couldn't have been more wrong. In the beginning of the book you see Amy following her friends into bad decision after bad decision and she ends up getting into quite serious trouble. Does this shake some sense into her? Apparently not, because through the rest of the story, she continues to make mistake, after mistake. I kept reading on, hoping that this girl would get a clue. Instead, she kept

defending her so-called friends' motives until the bitter end. I have trouble enjoying a story if I don't like the main character. Sadly, I couldn't bring myself to like Amy or even connect with her. I didn't feel any valid reason was given for her angst or why she continued on her downward spiral. It wasn't until the very end that we finally see some changes in Amy's attitude and behavior. I'm sure the feelings and actions, portrayed in this story, are typical to many teenagers today. I just didn't find it enjoyable to read about. I feel really bad writing negatively about a story. Others may find this type of story enjoyable. This just wasn't for me. I'm rounding my rating up to three stars because I feel my negativity might be due to personal preference.

Thank you to Entangled Publishing and Netgalley for allowing me to read this.

Kate Avelynn says

We've all been Amy at some point in our lives, even if we didn't spend prom night in jail. A must-read for lovers of contemporary YA!

Giselle says

Turned out being much more intense than I expected, Pretty Amy is a contemporary novel filled with disasters and mistakes, during a hard journey to self discovery.

Amy lacks self confidence. She always has. This is what causes her to have trouble fitting in as well as constantly worrying about what others think of her. Her voice is very melodramatic which makes her sound like a genuinely lost, broken teenager. High school is hard and demanding in a lot of ways - especially socially; It would be easy for a lot of readers to relate to her. I did myself to a certain degree, I understood her completely and I get it. I really do. Nevertheless, I still found myself getting bothered by her constant crestfallen attitude. This became such a problem even for her, that she was ready to sacrifice her whole life for friendships that were not in any way worth it. And again, I get it. I get that she *finally* finds some friends with who she fits in - or at least better than before - so she would do everything to keep this friendship. Still, it's like she's so blinded by this want, that she fails to see that these so-called friends, are clearly not worth sacrificing a future for. I always have a hard time connecting with this sort of selfless, hardheaded personality. Regardless, Amy does have a knack for getting you to feel for her; I truly did. I also enjoyed her sarcastic tone. Her internal dialogue can get pretty amusing.

Amy's mom, she needs her own lovely paragraph. *stab stab* If I ever had to maim a fictional mother, Amy's would be the one I would choose! Easily one of the most cold-hearted parent I've met fictionally; her exaggerated anger and seemingly uncaring attitude towards Amy and her situation definitely riled me up. I couldn't understand why she wouldn't even listen to what Amy had to say. I don't think she never even asked, or found out, what really happened. On the other hand, why wouldn't Amy just explain? Her mother simply assumed Amy was a drunk drug addict who deserved everything she was getting. I'm sure some parents are like that so I won't say it's unrealistic, but it still made it terribly hard for me to believe.

This is a tough story. It's filled with loneliness and regret. Longing and self doubt. But it's a story that has heart. It addresses real issues that too many teenagers encounters. Peer pressure, reckless decisions, loyalty, insecurity - really, every teenager goes through bouts of these at one point or another (though not always as

deeply). It's a great portrayal of high school angst. I thought it was well written and easily engrossing, which is why I still quite enjoyed it even though I didn't completely connect to Amy herself. If you enjoy contemporaries with a raw, tense vibe, but also comical at times, I think Pretty Amy would easily capture your attention!

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For more of my reviews, visit my blog at Xpresso Reads

Amy Zhang says

Wow. This was wonderful. PRETTY AMY was so, so real. As a teenager and a writer, I can say that this book had merit as both. My prom night this year was unbelievable and fun and so, so stressful. Getting arrested afterwards? It's something that everyone is secretly afraid of (I remember that last year, half of our tennis team was arrested for underage drinking at a party, and all of the sports in season were screwed--so yes, this premise is very real). PRETTY AMY addresses many of the problems that most high schoolers go through: problems with parents, looking for romance, making stupid choices and having to pay for them, obsessing over small things that you don't realize are insignificant until big things begin to happen. I'm repeating myself, but I loved this book because it was REAL. Nothing was sugarcoated, and that made the world believable, the conflicts suspenseful, and the characters alive. This is a book that every teen girl should read.

Heidi says

Rated 4 stars

“Four Stars: A rocky road for a teenage girl who struggles to find her identity.

It is prom night for Amy. As her mom drops her off, she receives an earful on her poor choices, her bad influence friends and her attitude. Not once does her mother offer any encouraging words or even tells Amy she looks pretty in her dress. No matter, Amy still intends on making this the best night of her life. She, along with the narcissistic Lila and the rebellious Cassie, plan to have a fabulous time at their senior prom. Soon all hopes for a magical date are dashed when Lila's boyfriend fails to show up with his two friends, who are supposed to Amy and Cassie's blind dates. Furious, Lila drags the other two over to Brian's house, only to find out the terrible truth; they have no dates for the big dance. Lila finds a plastic bag stuffed full of pot, which she steals. The girls then try to sneak into their prom but are turned away. The girls smoke the pot and drive around completely stoned, until the cops pull them over and arrest them. Their magical prom night ends with the girls tossed in jail. Bailed out of jail, Amy quickly learns that her life is going to get a whole lot worse and fast. As the turmoil grows, Amy feels that she is alone, cut off from her two best friends, while dealing with parents who don't understand, as well as an unctuous lawyer who tries to force her to turn on her friends. Add in a miserable job at the gas station, expulsion from school during the final two weeks of her senior year, and a possible impending jail sentence, well as you can see Amy is in the middle of a big bad mess. What will happen to this misunderstood teenager as she grapples with these troubling issues?

What I Liked:

*I already mentioned in another review, that I don't often read contemporary fiction. I guess this month has been an exception. I will tell you that the majority of Pretty Amy was rocky for me. You have a story

revolving around a protagonist who isn't the most like-able person. Amy chain smokes, and on occasion smokes weed and drinks. She is disrespectful and for the most part has a bad attitude about life. I really didn't feel much sympathy for her either because I felt like she was given so many chances and numerous offers of help but she bats them away, drowning in misery. Yet, I understood why she behaved as she did. Amy is one of those girls who easily gets lost in the crowd. She is desperately fighting to find her identity. She doesn't want to be the simple, unnoticeable girl she was up until her freshman year when she met Lila and Cassie. With these two girls, Amy finds the validation she is craving. She lets go of the boring Amy and becomes the bad girl who smokes and thumbs everyone else. Even though she feels accepted and has two friends, she still lacks her own unique identity, as she allows herself to be a minion to Lila, always acquiescing to Lila's whims. As the story progresses you watch Amy very slowly transform and eventually find her own identity.

*This is a coming of age book that is a very rough ride, but in the end I liked Amy. I liked that the author was able to make me feel a whole range of emotions during this read. Do not pick this up expecting a light, fluffy read centered around prom, it is anything but that.

*I appreciated that the author dealt with some very real and difficult issues as she takes you through all the drama and angst that Amy endures. It isn't pretty, but in the end I loved watching Amy's growth.

*I enjoyed Lisa Burstein's writing style. She tackles troubling topics but she gives Amy a snarky voice, which pep's up the book. There are plenty of funny and sarcastic comments peppered throughout the read, which spices it up.

And The Not So Much:

*As I said this book takes on mature issues and Amy often indulges in self destructive behaviors such as drug use and chain smoking. There is also a great deal of cursing. For these reasons, I would strongly recommend this book for older, more mature teenagers. This is not a book for young, very impressionable girls.

*This book was a bit rough for me. I had a hard time in the beginning connecting with Amy, mostly due to her bad attitude and self destructive behavior. The book is definitely a bit slow and has a serious tone. I kept reading because I was holding out hope that Amy would find redemption. I will avoid spoilers, but I am glad I kept reading it. Even though it was a difficult read at times, I learned a great deal and once I finished the story stuck with me.

*One of the most troubling aspects of the novel was the turbulent relationship Amy has with her parents. The mother daughter relationship is extremely strained and very trying. The two are constantly locking horns and tensions run high. Amy's father, on the other hand, is more aloof and hands off, the detached parent. He really loves his daughter but fails to connect with her. Somewhere along the way they forgot how to communicate with one another. The hardest part is that they both really love and care about Amy but they have never given her the positive validation and attention she so desperately craves. At the end, I was a bit disappointed that there wasn't a more full resolution. I would really have liked for Amy and her mom to sit down and just talk.

*Joe, I really liked this character but he plays such a small role. He is, for the most part, a background character but he plays a crucial part. I really wanted to know him a bit better.

Pretty Amy, is intense and at times a difficult book. It follows a teenage girl on the brink of adulthood as she makes a critical mistake that sends her life spiraling out of control. Amy must fight to somehow put the pieces back into place, but unfortunately they won't fit like they used to. Amy is forced to find her way and eventually her own true identity. It is an emotional and hard journey, but in the end, it was one I truly appreciated. I would recommend this for mature readers only.

Favorite Quotations:

"I am one of the legions of middle-class white girls who search malls for jeans that make them look thinner, who search drugstores for makeup to wear as a second skin, who are as sexy and exotic as blueberry muffins."

“If bitching were karate, my mother would be a black belt.”

“When nothing felt like everything.”

“I hated that he knew who I had been before I was me.”

“I thought about saying I was sorry, but I wasn’t even sure what I had done wrong, other than turning into the kind of girl my mother had warned me I would be.”

“Eventually daylight came, not all at once but slowly, like the sky was set on a dimmer switch. The moon and stars finally snuffed out.”

“In high school you are not given a choice as to who you become, you are signed up long before that based on looks, smarts, and talent, and then corralled into your group. The problem was, I didn’t like my group.”

“You do a poll and I would say most people would choose to be somewhere else, doing something else, and if they really had the option, being someone else.”

“I wanted to keep chasing the impossible dream of teenage-girl perfection, even though I was further away from it than I had ever been.”

“When presented with mediocrity or failure, I’d chosen failure. I’d chosen to be the best failure I could be. I guess I’d finally succeeded...”

“You’re acting weird, and not the way you usually act weird. Like, bald Britney Spears weird.”

“I knew the weirdness between us that had begun freshman year had been because we’d started having feelings that scared us, that made us want to pretend we didn’t feel anything at all. That made ignoring each other safer.”

“Unfortunately, I am only myself. I am scared and alone and unsure, but I am practicing. I am scared and alone and unsure, but that doesn’t mean I always will be.”

A big thanks to Heather over at Entangled Publishing for providing me a copy for review purposes.

Posted @ <http://rainydayramblings.typepad.com>.

Rachel says

3.5/5 Stars

Before I read *Pretty Amy* by Lisa Burstein I thought Amy and her best friends were going to be arrested because of a silly prank. I was really excited to find out what exact crazy prank was pulled. I created scenarios, in my mind, of some prank ideas. Would Amy, Lila and Cassie splatter food on the outside of Lila’s boyfriend Brian’s house? Or maybe they would steal the boys’ cars.

Instead, *Pretty Amy* was a story of the effects of not only being arrested but recovering from ruining your life by sliding into the influence of peer pressure to take drugs. Even more, *Pretty Amy* is a story of a girl

completely devastated by her life and, is now, is striving to be happy. Amy thought she would be happy being the friend of the cool girls. But she is not.

I enjoyed reading through Amy's story of self-discovery. I disliked feeling Amy's depressed outlook of life for the most part of the novel but was amazed by how easily I was captured by Amy's mood. I liked Amy as a character because she is a complex character with real feelings and problems. I enjoyed meeting the funny characters that Amy met too. From convenience store Conner who is happily married to the ditzy but well-meaning lawyer Dick Simon to Amy's controlling mother, the characters all brought excitement to the story. I rejoiced in how individualistic each character turned out to be!

I feel that *Pretty Amy* is a very profound story that I admired and enjoyed. It's the type of book that is best to read when you want a thought-provoking contemporary novel. I probably would have liked *Pretty Amy* more if the plot was more fast-paced and exciting. There were some scenes that caused me to be eager to continue reading but there were times in the story where the plot appeared repetitive. I lost interest half-way through the novel, but, after a break, I was able to enjoy reading the book again.

Overall, *Pretty Amy* is a unique novel that I will remember in the years to come for its unique and inspirational take on a real teenager girl's feelings. This book has inspired me to be proud of my past mistakes and look forward to the future.

equilibri says

And the award for the most obnoxious, pathetic and mind-numbingly boring protagonist goes to Amy! I'm giving this up even before I've read halfway through the book - that's a personal first.

I'm so pissed at this book! Its blurb led me to believe I was in for a thoughtful coming-of-age story. Boy, was I misled. It reminds me a little of Curtis Sittenfeld's 'Prep'. I slogged through pages and pages of endless whining, insecurities and incredibly bad decisions with no personal growth in sight.

"I probably should have been scared to smoke that much (pot), but I needed to be annihilated. I had to forget tomorrow, when I would wake up in one of the three hotel rooms we'd rented, alone in that big bed..." See, her obnoxious manipulative friend, who loves pushing Amy around, set her up with her stoner boyfriend's pal. Amy hasn't met him yet, but she thinks it's a good idea to rent a hotel room and plan for sex on prom night.

So when the guys stand them up, she is devastated. All her fairy-tale dreams for the most important night of her life are smashed to bits! So of course they do what any upset teenager in this situation would: get arrested for driving around stoned out of their minds with a big bag of pot in the car. Oops!

Amy has no sense of personal responsibility. Everything just happens to her and everybody is out to get her. She bitches and moans about her parents, who care about her and provide her comfortable middle-class life. But evidently, all they want is to make Amy's life miserable and refuse to understand her.

When her dad picks her up from the police station, Amy comments: *"I thought about saying I was sorry, but I wasn't even sure what I had done wrong, other than turning into the kind of girl my mother had warned me I would be."*

Really? You don't know what you've done wrong?

Amy actually describes herself and her friends as 'rebels', while looking down on 'losers and dorks' at her school.

Has there been some kind of tragedy to make Amy this messed up? Nope. She just keeps spiralling down through making one bad choice after another. Throughout the book, she's being dragged kicking and screaming into accepting any kind of responsibility and she genuinely hates everyone for it. It's an endless pity party of a selfish entitled brat.

Now, why would the author choose to inflict Amy on unsuspecting readers? I guess she was trying to create a complex character. Judging from the tone of the book, we are supposed to sympathize with Amy because of her sarcastic commentary - which of course is a cover for her deep insecurity. But look how incredibly witty she is! She snarks at her mother, her father, school, and even her 'friends' - only to herself, of course. This might be a somewhat realistic portrayal of a teenager, but did she have to have no redeeming qualities?

I don't care that she's seventeen. I don't care that she's supposed to be a flawed character. There's flawed, and then there's insufferable. At this point I don't care if she's ever going to learn , though judging from some reviews, her transformation is less than impressive. I give up. There are enough annoying characters to deal with in real life. I don't need them in my books too.

Jasprit says

3.5 stars

*"It's easy to believe
that someday I will just like A.J unlocked from his cage.
That the bars I've put around me will fall away.
That I will feel like that little girl again.
Finally and beautifully free"*

When I first saw the cover to Pretty Amy I thought it would be a light fluffy easy going read, but once I picked up I realised it went much deeper than I originally thought. Amy has been looking forward to her prom for a while now, on the night she gets dropped off to her friend Lila's house she's jangling with nerves. It could be her biggest night of her life, an unforgettable night. And yes it does become that but for all the wrong reasons. Amy, Lila and Cassie don't end up going to prom but caught with pot in their possession by the police, they're taken to the station, where they're eventually allowed to go home further pending their trial. Dealing with disappointed parents doesn't compare to the rest of the stuff they have to deal with. They're suspended from school, so will miss the final week, banned from their own graduation and the icing on the cake? Amy's mum states that she will have to pay for her lawyer out of her own money, so she has to get a job! How could what was meant to be the night of her life? Quickly spiral out of control? But Amy is given a sort of reprieve, her lawyer Dick could probably prevent her from going to jail but she has to dob her only friends in instead.

What I liked about this book;

Amy was such a strong character, with all the crap she had to put up with, the constant pressure from her parents, her lawyer and her therapist to dob her friends in she battled on against everyone's better judgement. She displayed a stubbornness and stood her ground, despite them constantly pushing her buttons and even using shock tactics. At times I usually felt hugely sorry for Amy, despite all the bravado she was a lonely girl who had no one; she wasn't allowed to contact Cassie or Lila, her old friend Joe didn't want to know her

anymore, she didn't feel comfortable opening up to her therapist and each time she talked to her mother they would get into a shouting match. Her only friend was her bird A.J. the only person that wouldn't pass judgement on her. But then sometimes you wanted to clock Amy from her stubbornness. Yeah I understand that they were the only friends she had, but if her friends were put in the same situation would they do the same thing for her? But I definitely preferred Amy's character to her mothers. Honestly I don't really know what to make of her, I think she did care about Amy but she just had a funny way of showing it. She couldn't understand Amy's sarcastic temperament, she was at times way over the top; insisting to Amy's principle that she had to attend Amy's graduation even though Amy was not allowed to go? And slashing and burning her mattress because she thought it contained heroin? All Amy wanted was her mother to be there for her;

*"her only job tonight was to tell me I was beautiful
that I was her beautiful baby girl all grown up, but she couldn't even
do that"*

I adored Amy's dad, he was relatively calm and laid back but quite under the thumb of his wife. I also adored Joe, Amy's former friend; it was heart breaking reading their scenes together because all he wanted was Amy how she was before, before she met Cassie and Lila, but had Amy changed so much and was it too late change back?

Despite the "dark cloud" hanging over Amy; the mistake that had been made and the choice that still had to be made, the story was laced with humour which certainly did lighten things up. I loved Amy's snarky humour and her sarcastic comments, I looked forward to her meetings with her lawyer, therapist and when she went to work to see what she would come up with next.

Overall Pretty Amy is a bittersweet coming of age story which I surprisingly enjoyed. You're probably wondering what does Amy finally do in the end? Does she make the right decision? My lips are sealed you'll just have to find out for yourself.

A big thank you to Entangled Publishing for the opportunity to read this book.

This review and more can also be found on my blog: The Readers Den

Best says

THIS REVIEWON B'S BOOK BLOG! +AUTHOR INTERVIEW

An ARC of this title was provided by the author for review.

Unfortunately, I am only myself. I am only Amy Fleishman. I am one of the legions of middle-class white girls who search malls for jeans that make them look thinner, who search drugstores for makeup to wear as second skin, who are as sexy and exotic as blueberry muffins ... and one of the only girls I know to get arrested on prom night.

I think I've learned at some point in my high school life that opening sentences are very important, as it has to "entice the reader and sets the subject, the tone and possibly the style for the whole work". Honestly, I've never paid that much attention to opening sentences of the books I've read in the past, though there are quite a few lines that caught my eyes and are still stuck in my head. The opening sentences of *Pretty Amy* by Lisa

Burstein, which I just showed you, are one of those very few that have made an impression on me, making me feel connected to the main character right away. There's something about the voice of Amy Fleishman in those sentences that reflects her endless insecurities and pessimism and angst, which I think is also the voice of many high school girls struggling to feel comfortable in their own skin, and all the while wishing they could be perfect. It's so real. And to me, that's what's so haunting about these sentences.

Pretty Amy tells the story of Amy Fleishman, high school senior. We're introduced to Amy on the prom night that changes everything. Amy and her best friends Lila and Cassie are all ready to go to the prom, but their dates never show. Frustrated, Lila breaks into her boyfriend's house and takes back with her a huge bag of pot, which is quite a stupid thing to do, because later that night they're arrested for possession. It's a night of frustration, anger, and disappointment, and their lives start going separate ways and downhill after that.

Amy's mother doesn't handle the arrest very well. It can be said that the relationship between Amy and her mother isn't very healthy. There's a lot of forcing, crying, tantrums throwing, and banning. For one thing, she takes away her cellphone and prohibits any contacts with Lila and Cassie. And then she hires a lawyer for Amy, for whose service Amy will have to pay on her own with the money she will earn from working at a convenient store (or was it a supermarket? I'm not sure), which is one of the things her mother forces her to do. To make things worse, Amy now has to visit a therapist who encourages Amy to talk when she doesn't want to. No, that's not all. On top of all that, she has to do community service, which turns out to be not a very good experience for our Amy at all.

The story of Amy Fleishman is quite a series of misfortunes. I really like it. I was hooked from the very first sentence. It's incredibly engaging and kept me wanting to know more, wanting to see how Amy will handle the situations she finds herself in. I could sense teenage angst on every page of the book. I found myself wishing the best for Amy and furious at her mother and was glad that mine isn't like that. Although I can't exactly relate to the story, it's Amy I can relate to, and I believe that it's true to a lot of girls, too.

Amy is a fantastic, strong character with a unique sarcastic voice of her own. Bad things keep happening to this girl, and in the middle of all that, she struggles to stand on her own feet and become herself, after years of following whatever Lila and Cassie do. Amy used to be a nobody with a real friend, Joe, before she met Lila and Cassie. She was sick of blending in with the crowd, the face that didn't stand out. She wanted to be cool, to be different. When she starts hanging out with beautiful Lila and kickass Cassie, she ditches Joe and allows herself to form her shape around them. She picks up their habits like smoking. She feels like there's a place she belongs when she's with them.

But does being with "cool" friends make her feel less insecure? No, not really. Amy still has very low self-esteem. I think she feels intimidated by Lila and Cassie that she wants someone to tell her that she's as good as them, too. She often needs reassurance that she's pretty and that there's someone worse off than she is. She does things and say words she feels she's supposed to do and say and she doesn't confront. You'd think hanging out with Lila and Cassie would boost up her self-confidence, but it's actually the opposite. That's kind of sad. But who cares, right? Being with the cool people make you look cool, and appearance is really what matters, isn't it?

Poor Amy. She's spent so much time with them and trying to become one of them that she doesn't quite know who she is anymore. Now, what happens when they're taken away and she's not allowed to see them or talk to them? She's lost, and doesn't know what to do. But there's nothing she can do now except to find herself again. I totally understood how difficult it is to try to do that after having thrown it away in order to fit in and be accepted. And Amy accomplishes that. She rises and stands up tall and fights for herself, as she has to do what she has to do.

Maybe it takes encountering a dire situation together to know who your real friends are.

Lisa Burstein's writing in this book is impressive. Her words are very cleverly used. Lisa gave Amy just the right voice, the voice of a teenager who's struggling to be heard, who feels lost and scared and alone. You can tell Amy's feelings just by looking at things she says. There are a lot of lines that I've highlighted just because they're pure brilliance on Lisa's part. Sometimes they can make you laugh because they're so funny, and some other times they make you chuckle or snort because it's so true and the truth is ugly. *Pretty Amy* is undoubtedly very well-written. I think that's all I have to say about Lisa Burstein's amazing writing skill. I'm expecting great things from her in the future!

Pretty Amy: A great realistic young-adult book, one that should not be missed!

Lindsay says

1.5 stars

Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says

Pretty Amy was not at all the book I expected it to be. I was expecting a fluffy prom book, something like *Ditched*. Hijinks, misadventures and pretty dresses. That was all kinds of wrong. The book is like that for approximately five seconds, and then it's very clear that this book is deeper and darker. Pretty Amy is not a fun, feel-good book, not a prom book, even though Amy does have a prom dress like the one on the cover.

Actually, Pretty Amy is mostly about trying to find your identity in the unforgiving high school years. When we meet her, Amy is desperate, and, worst of all, she thinks her life is about as good as it's ever been. She has two best friends, Lila and Cassie, though she worries that they like each other better than they like her. But hey, at least she has them, right? And they have dates for prom. Only then they get stood up, and Lila steals a HUGE bag of pot from her boyfriend, and they get arrested. It's a mess.

Although I usually avoid reviews, I know that some people have been turned off by Amy; they just could not relate to her or understand why she would make such incredibly stupid decisions. Although I must admit that I did some serious Amy-judging, I also have a better understanding of her motivations. I know what it's like to be utterly friendless, and I know what you will put up with in an attempt to be liked, to not be alone. While I would like to think I'm too damn stubborn to have ever have done some of the stupid shit Amy does, like the smoking of all sorts, maybe I would have if I had had the possibility of friendship.

Amy's self-confidence is pretty much non-existence, which is, again, something else I can totally empathize with. It's pretty clear that most of this comes from her mother's treatment of her, and her dad's neglect. Her dad does seem to care, but he seems pretty hands-off, so much so that it doesn't make much of a difference. Amy's mom is one of those women who is so completely focused on appearances; she wants everything to be perfect, and criticizes Amy constantly for not reaching her standards. Her mother just does not listen to her; in fact, when someone asks Amy a question, her mom almost always answers, not trusting Amy to even speak for herself properly. Sadly, this kind of mother is entirely believable.

Amy is a real girl. She's not especially beautiful or smart or talented or friendly. As a result, she doesn't have

anything that really sets her apart, at least in her own view: "It's easy for you to tell me that I'm wasting my life. You think I don't know that? You think I don't know there's nothing that makes me special? That the only thing I may ever do that makes news is, as far as my parents are concerned, the worst thing I've ever done?" (150). Let's be honest. We all want to be special, and we all want to be loved. As an adult or a kid that has your shit together, it's easy to say that her logic is stupid (it is), but, when you feel completely boring and unlovable, pretty much anything feels worthwhile to make that feeling stop. There were two things I wanted to say to Amy throughout the whole book: 1) It gets better 2) "Look at your life, look at your choices."

Pretty Amy is definitely a book that's going to make a lot of readers uncomfortable. It's not a pretty story. There's violence, drugs, cigarettes, alcohol and generally teenage angst. However, I do think this is an important book, because it definitely captures the pain of being an awkward, lonely teenager.

Christina (Ensconced in Lit) says

This book came highly recommended so I decided to give it a try.

Pretty Amy is a coming of age YA novel about Amy, a graduating senior who is hanging out with the wrong crowd~ beautiful Lila and trash talking Cassie. Amy finally feels like she fits in, but during a fateful prom night her life changes forever, and she has to finally grow up.

This novel is well written and while Amy is hard to like sometimes because of her bitterness, anger and frustration, we somehow get the sense she'll turn around at the end. I loved her parrot AJ and liked Conner.

The difficulty with novels such as this is that this is material we've all seen before. Teenage angst and a troublemaker who eventually sees the light through tough love. And there are some romance issues in the background. I recently sat in on a group of child psychiatrists who were talking about words they used to describe teenagers. These descriptives included overconfident, hormonal, defiant, experimental---all which were shown in this novel to the tee. The difficulty is going beyond the expected. I immediately compared this novel to Before I Fall by Lauren Oliver which remains one of my favorite novels. These two novels have a very similar beginning-- but the books are vastly different in the way the material was handled. Unfortunately, while this book has many strong points, it does little to get out of the stereotype. However, the voice is what is unique and gripping, and that is what carries the reader to stay until the end.

That said, this is a strong first novel. While there were no surprises, it was well written and flowed nicely with good characterization.
