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Between You & Me



Synopsis

Phyre knows there is something life-changing about her new drama teacher, Mia, from the moment they meet. As Phyre rehearses for the school play, she comes to realize that the unrequited feelings she has for Mia go deeper than she's ever experienced. Especially with a teacher. Or a woman. All the while, Phyre's best friend--addressed throughout the story in the second person, as "you"--stands by, ready to help Phyre make sense of her feelings. But just as Mia doesn't understand what Phyre feels, Phyre can't fathom the depth of her best friend's feelings...until it's almost too late for a happy ending. Characters come to life through the innovative screenplay format of this dazzling debut, and unanswered questions--is "you" male or female?--will have readers talking.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

Calin, Marisa. *Between You and Me*. Bloomsbury, 2012. This is the Goodreads blurb about this book: "Phyre knows there is something life-changing about her new drama teacher, Mia, from the moment they meet. As Phyre rehearses for the school play, she comes to realize that the unrequited feelings she has for Mia go deeper than she's ever experienced. Especially with a teacher. Or a woman. All the while, Phyre's best friend--addressed throughout the story in the second person, as "you"--stands by, ready to help Phyre make sense of her feelings. But just as Mia doesn't understand what Phyre feels, Phyre can't fathom the depth of her best friend's feelings . . .

until it's almost too late for a happy ending. Characters come to life through the innovative screenplay format of this dazzling debut, and unanswered questions--is "you" male or female?--will have readers talking."Here's my take on this book:1. I was intrigued by the premise. An LGBT YA book with the teen protagonist crushing on a teacher. It sounded interesting (as long as it didn't get creepy - which it didn't). A focus on drama/theater high school groups. It sounded good, and sounded like it would reach a new audience, the same way Beautiful Music for Ugly Children did with its emphasis on music and radio shows.2. I hated, really hated the format. I don't think in screenplays, so it's hard to read one. Also, the protagonist spoke to the reader, so there's lots of "you" going on, but she referred to herself as "me," so I'm the "you" reading what "me" said, but I'm not "me." If that sentence confused you, try 242 pages of that. Also, I checked with my better half, who has a degree in theater performance, and she said that the screenplay isn't formatted correctly. And interspersed with the screenplay are bits of narration that sound like a normal novel (except for the second person craziness). So it's like a screenplay that wants to be a novel that wants to be an in-your-face real-time conversation. No wonder I was unimpressed. The story concept is a good one, but I'm not sold on the execution.

Actress Marisa Calin's young adult debut is a fun, creative novel. BETWEEN YOU & ME is written in a hybrid screenplay/direct address format that expresses main character Phyre perfectly. She's an actress and someone who manages to be much more eloquent in her head than in real life. She analyzes her words deeply but rarely thinks about the things people say to her. Except for Mia. Phyre is crushing hard on the new drama teacher, Mia. She tries to talk to her as much as possible, waiting in places she's seen her before, but often fails to say anything more than "Hi." If she does say more, it's a babbling mess. I loved that Phyre is never fazed that she's crushing on a woman. She doesn't ponder whether this means she's a lesbian or bisexual or any other sort of label. She's more confused by the depth and strength of her passion. It's obviously the first time she's truly been infatuated with someone. (Also good: BETWEEN YOU & ME never goes for some sort of creepy Mia-likes-her-back or Mia-acknowledges-the-crush storyline. Mia acts professionally. Do not expect any sort of LOLITA action due to the heart-shaped sunglasses on the cover.) Waiting in the wings is Mia's best friend, addressed only as you. Much like Steve Brezenoff's BROOKLYN, BURNING the gender of the significant other is never revealed. You clearly likes Mia, but never says it clearly enough to pierce Mia's crush bubble. I liked that you calls Mia out whenever she acts egregiously insensitive, but hoped Mia might call you out a few times. They're both guilty of communication issues. That's part of what makes the direct address so effective. It implies you and

Mia have reached a point where they can talk about their feelings frankly. It gave me hope for their future as a couple and, more importantly, as friends. BETWEEN YOU & ME is a terrific story about young love. It may depict the world a bit too rosily - Phyre is teased for liking a teacher, but not for liking a woman - but it still feels authentic. Phyre's voice is unique, but her story resonates because her confusion and longing and elation seem so familiar. Calin is an author to watch.

It was a great read. I didn't mind the format. I trust a writer to do their writing style. I did at times wish there was more about the other characters but I guess because of the format it was geared to the main character. The "You" & "Me" was interesting. The guessing game was fun but in the end after a few days I wanted to know which gender. Judge me. The ending was not my kind of ending. Not... complete so to speak. Fast and cool read for someone on a 8 hour plane.

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