



## Read My Lips

*Teri Brown*

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## **Read My Lips** Teri Brown

*Popularity is as easy as a good secret.*

Serena just wants to fly under the radar at her new school. But Serena is deaf, and she can read lips really well—even across the busy cafeteria. So when the popular girls discover her talent, there's no turning back.

From skater chick to cookie-cutter prep, Serena's identity has done a 180...almost. She still wants to date Miller, the school rebel, and she's not ready to trade her hoodies for pink tees just yet. But she is rising through the ranks in the school's most exclusive clique.

With each new secret she uncovers, Serena feels pressure to find out more. Reading lips has always been her greatest talent, but now Serena just feels like a gigantic snoop...

## **Read My Lips Details**

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Author : Teri Brown

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## From Reader Review Read My Lips for online ebook

### Amelia says

This book gave me some serious headaches but not so much that I stopped reading. It's just that it contains the bouts of insecurity often found in teenagers and it nearly killed me! Serena is likable and can be really funny, but she's also an idiot most of the time in her decisions. However, I was rather fascinated by the ending and I absolutely loved the last page. I loved the romance, even though Serena nearly screws that up, too. It's believable and I loved this fresh new twist to stories. It's the first I've seen of a deaf girl who reads lips.

Definitely worth a shot. There's plenty of humor, emotion, and drama. I loved Teri Brown's imagination.

Cover - To me, there's nothing truly interesting about the cover but it's a good concept in relation to the book. It's very literal and I love the font.

First Line - (technically, first two lines) What the heck? I stared at the small person waving her arms like a referee.

A nice opening because it leaves you hanging. You have to keep reading to find out what the heck the author is talking about. There's nothing immediately funny or deeply intriguing but it does meet the requirement of drawing the reader in.

Pages - 238

Tidbits -

- \* there is swearing, but it's not every page and it's what you'd expect from a teenager
- \* the descriptions for the kissing scenes are awesome
- \* keep going, even when Serena is being an idiot. She makes up for it.

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### Julie says

While I'd argue that the Deaf character's ability to lip read 85% of what she saw was believable, no one would argue with the true emotion of feeling like an outsider at a new school with the added weight of a disability. I especially felt the parent child relationship was more fleshed out than in most YA novels. I'd give it a 3.5 but we can't divide stars...

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### Sara says

There is nothing particularly wrong with this book, but it just failed to stand out from other teen books to the point where it deserves more than 3 stars. Cute plot, cute writing, and a quick read, but there wasn't a whole lot of depth in the book, and it was nothing that I hadn't read before, if you get rid of the specifics.

Serena, a deaf teen who reads lips, moves with her family and begins at a new school, where she meets a

group of girls. In her quest to be popular, she agrees to start reading other people's lips and sharing the secrets she "hears". She starts to feel bad about it, worrying that she's nothing but a snoop, and is also interested in a guy at the school who is a loner and thinks these new friends of hers aren't worth it.

I liked the concept of having a deaf girl reading lips to discover secrets, but the plot is pretty predictable, and I thought "typical" when it was revealed that her crush lives with her aunt and uncle - very convenient so she'll have to see him a lot. This isn't to say that I didn't enjoy the book; I did. I just don't think it was the best book I've ever read or one that I'd normally recommend to others, though there aren't a whole lot of teen books with deaf protagonists and those that can relate may enjoy it.

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### **Karly Brown says**

The book, "Read My Lips" is an excellent read for teenage girls going through their high school years. The story follows a teenage girl, who is deaf, as she enters a new high school. The view point from the main character is very unique, not many books are from that rare perspective. I think the author, Teri Brown, chose this for two reasons, the first being that teenagers with similar situations would be able to connect to the main character and feel a greater connection to the book. The author wants the reader to feel connected and hook the reader with a story that can compare to their own life. The second reason I think the author chose this perspective was to give other readers a look into a life that is not familiar to them, being deaf. The book can expose a whole new perspective of life to the reader by giving them sympathy for people who are not like them. "Read My Lips" has a generic plot that almost every high school book follows. There are the popular, preppy girls that everyone wants to be like and the mysterious skater kid that no one talks to. While the story line is stereotypical and over used the author uses this technique because stereotypes help the reader imagine the book in their minds as if it was a movie. While reading the book the reader will think about the basic popular squad that is in every movie and book and can imagine the story and how it plays out. The author has to do less work in describing the character because the reader already knows what they are like because they are put into a stereotype. Even though there are stereotypes that don't set a good example to the reader the book has a theme that has the power to teach and change the way teenagers view their lives. In the end the book teaches that popularity really means nothing and is not permanent. The author tried to share this message because, like the main character, many teenagers struggle with wanting to fit in. The books theme emphasizes to the young reader audience that nothing is worth being popular and that there are consequences to trying to fit into someone your not. The author took a character with an attribute that is hard to relate to and made her a typical teenager that goes through common struggles so that many readers and connect and want to read the book.

A recommended movie if one liked this genre and style of book would be "13 going on 30". The movie has a similar story line of a young girl wanting to be popular. Both main characters do whatever it takes to be popular even if it means losing true friends for ones that will back stab them in the end. The two stories have a similar theme, that life isn't about being popular and one should stay true to themselves and their believes and not be influenced by negative opinions from others.

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### **Veronica says**

It was so disappointing because this book had so much *potential*. I mean, how many YA books deal with defying the "disabled" stereotype? Um, like none. Anyways, I was excited to read *Read My Lips* (it was on my to read list for **years**) and had no real expectations for what the book would be like. Then I read it. And was disappointed. It was just like any other piece chicklit out there! Don't get me wrong,

I love chicklit, really I do, but there's a time a place for a nice, big slice of chicklit with a side of the cliched stereotypes (that have come to be expected, if not required) to go with the lighthearted fluff. But when you have such a great, unique premise(slash main character) for a book you don't need to stick to formulaic plot lines or situations! I don't need *Read My Lips* to be some deep exploration into the life and mind of a girl who's deaf. I get that it's still YA. But there was no substance for me to hold on to. It was almost like it didn't have want to be original after establishing a main character who was deaf. AND half the time I didn't even remember she was deaf! Not that that's a bad thing; I am a firm believer in the fact that disabilities do not define people. But the only time I remembered was when Serena's lip reading was being manipulated. Or when her hearing aids were being kissed. Weird.

Anyways, the rest of the novel was pretty much your standard, run-of-the-mill, non-paranormal romantic-ish teen fiction. New girl in town, popular clique (a sorority in high school, *really?*), loner-but-sensitive love interest... All resulting in the usual drama, misunderstandings, and conflicts between popularity and true "love." It almost felt like the reader was forced to sit on the emotional roller coaster for the sake of being on an emotional roller coaster. And it wasn't even a fun ride.

Serena was so insecure and desperate for attention (i.e. popularity) to the point that it was annoying. I'll let that slide since it's understandable, wanting to fit in when you feel like you naturally stand out already. But still. That could have been embraced and utilized to create an original and interesting story, while still being accessible and lighthearted. It could have been fun and different-a winning combination.

So, ranting aside, 2.5 stars for *Read My Lips*. I do have to admit, I may have judged it a bit more harshly than I usually would judge a YA book of this sort. It was good, not great. Generic, if not a bit forgettable. But it could have been so much *more*. and I think that's why I judged it the way I did. All that lost potential. It's tragical.

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## Alexis DiVenere says

This novel by Teri Brown was a requirement in my American Sign Language class and was very relatable to teenage girls. The author used a lot of imagery to explain the types of characters present and the way they acted. For example, Serena was always more of a skater chick with punk hair and dark outfits, but upon meeting the girls at her new school she turned to pink clothes. By using this imagery it was clear to see her shift in character. At first, she was carefree and true to herself despite judgment, but you can see that the way her new friends treat her causes a shift in how she acts, dresses, and views the world. Also, it was easier to see the story exactly with this imagery in place. This was shown in situations such as when Serena's friends picked her up from her house and sped down the road, and when she went to her aunt's house and had to help take care of the dogs her aunt had rescued. Scenes such as these represented what was important to Serena, those being her new friends, her family, and the places she went. I also enjoyed the point of view. By using first person point of view it was easy to see the distinction between who Serena pretended to be and who she actually was. The reader was able to see her thought process when the girls would ask her to read lips to find out other people's secrets, and how they would be the opposite of what she wanted (all she really wanted was to fit in). Finally, I enjoyed the plot, it was always moving forward with new conflicts. Oftentimes teen directed books have cliché problems that are re-occurring, but this book had different issues that could also be relatable because of their outcomes (ex: rumors, lost friends, etc.). There was always new drama within the school, just as any typical, and it kept the reader on their toes. One never expects Sonya to exploit Serena for reading lips, and by her doing so it actually improved Serena's life. I enjoyed this book because of the ways the author connected with her audience to make it enjoyable to all through imagery, plot development, and point of view. I would highly recommend this book for any teen girls who are struggling in the high school social scene themselves because it can be related to situations that they go through.

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## **Debbie says**

This is a recommendation from my 12 year old daughter, Leah. She thought it was really good and wanted to share it with me. Brings me back to highschool! As Leah says, "its about all the "itchy girls with a B". Remember the "mean" girls! What a treat! It's a good easy read.

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## **Danielle says**

I really liked it, it was a fast and well written teen chick lit read about a deaf girl who uses her skill of lip reading to get in with the popular crowd.

Nominee for the Schneider Family book award.

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## **Lamar H says**

Read my lips by Teri Brown was a very interesting book in my opinion, although I usually struggle to finish reading books I happened to be able to finish this one in a short amount of time. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who enjoyed reading Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli, The Twilight series by Stephenie Meyer or any other book in the chick lit genre. I would also recommend this to anyone who is in the younger audience because personally I believe this book is written in a simpler manner and the language and vocabulary is very simple. I also would recommend this book for people in the members of the deaf community because our main character Serena expresses her struggles of being a deaf pupil in a hearing community. Although this book has many structural flaws and is not written in the best way, I believe it had a good message and I enjoyed the overall story. Brown uses various forms of literary devices to style her literature, one that stood out to me at first was Characterization with our main character Serena Nelson, from the beginning of the story we were able to see how she is fairly introverted, has an attitude and is very opinionated "I whisked a covert glance around the room because the 'rents had moved me to ends of the earth, I wanted to check out what kind of kids I'd be dealing with. Like being in tenth grade wasn't bad enough." (Brown, 2). I feel like this book is a very relatable for many teenagers because it addresses the issues that come with moving to a new school, relationships, popularity and being deaf in a hearing society. Another literary device that stood out to me in this book is the author's diction, the way Brown expressed Serena's dialogue was very unique "What interview? I had to interview? My stomach dropped. Freaking great." (Brown, 135). I believe that diction and characterization go hand and hand, Serena's diction helps understand her character and personality more. Last but not least imagery is also another literary device that is present in this book, "I held it up to my body in front of the mirror. Dark purple lace held together sheer light purple panels. The shirt flared out around my hips and tied with a dark purple ribbon just below my breasts. I looked down and saw a dark purple choker with a black disk attached to it sitting on my dresser. Matched with a pair of dark jeans, the shirt and choker would be perfectly me." (Brown, 166). The imagery Brown used not only helped me view the story in a more realistic manner, it also helped me understand Serena as a character as well. Although this book has its ups and downs I still enjoyed reading it and I would recommend this to many people in the deaf community as well.

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## **Nancy says**

A very creative spin to the whole girl-wants-to-be-popular story. A girl who is deaf finally has the chance to fit into school, but only if she's willing to read lips and gather all the gossip. Besides the interesting twist, the same Popularity plot is there:

1. The protagonist is the New Girl who wants to fit in. In her entire existence, something (or someone) has hindered her route to popularity.
2. There's a group who rules the school, AKA the bitches and/or the sluts.
3. Protagonist falls in love with either the Golden Boy—who, in most scenarios, is the (ex) boyfriend to Queen B—or Lonely Boy. Lonely Boy is usually smart, moody, and sarcastic. Lonely Boy also likes to ridicule said protagonist's new group of "friends". Lonely Boy also has a heartbreaking or troubling background i.e. his parents are dead and he used to get into fights.
4. Some sort of party—without parental supervision—always happens.
5. Embarrassing First Day of School.
6. To expand on number five, protagonist always BUMPS into her Dream Boy (whether he happens to be Golden Boy or Lonely Boy) and spills her drink or lunch (something very messy and can stain easily, like spaghetti and meatballs) all over him.
7. Boy and Girl fights over popularity issue. Usually, in one big confrontation where Boy goes: "You care more about those friends of yours more than me. What do I mean to you? Are you embarrassed to be seen with me? That's it, isn't it?" And then Girl tries to reassure Boy that it's not the case, but Boy stalks away anyway.
8. Girl apologizes and realizes that popularity is overrated.
9. Oh yes, I almost forgot the most joyous part: the Bitchy Villain of the story gets beaten by the protagonist as they banter witty conversation. Bitchy Villain says: "You are so going to regret this. By the time I'm through with you, you'll REALLY be nothing. Right, girls?" And while she throws her head at her supposed friends, said friends will look away, to the ground or to the walls and say nothing. Bitchy Villain's face will turn an embarrassed red upon realizing she no longer has her trusty sidekicks, and therefore, stalk away angrily. And miserably. But still plotting her revenge.
10. P.S. They all live happily ever after. END SCENE: Smooches. Very typical.

If only real life was like that.

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## **Lisa (Remarkablylisa) says**

I first read this book back in high school and I remembered it being great. I related well to our main protagonist Serena because she wanted to stand out from the crowd, be a rebel, read manga, and occasionally skate. I don't do all those things at all. But back then I thought this idea of teenage rebellion and this mould we were all expected to fill was awesome

Now at 21 years old, it's just annoying. It seemed to me that Serena was being a stuck-up who was different and had to laugh at everyone who were the same. Where is this high superiority complex come from? So, it was difficult to get in. And then we see her slowly transforming into one of them. The popular kids. She does juvenile things to fit in with the in crowd. She basically becomes someone she despises all for popularity.

Which I get is an interesting theme for readers in grade 7-10 but as a University student...

WHO THE HELL CARES?????

It was a disappointing read because my values and outlook changed. Not to say that when I was a teenager, I wanted to be a princess and the most popular girl in school with a unicorn as my car. But to say that these meaningless things to strive for in life is not worth reading about.

My advice? Read the book if you're 12-17. Skip it if you're 20+.

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### **Amy Leigh says**

The cover of this book is cute, simple but still pretty. I was drawn to the premise that the main character is deaf, which is so rare in books and I wanted to see how the MC would develop in writing. This book wasn't my favorite but I didn't hate it either. It did have a very Mean Girls feel to it.

Serena has just moved and is the new girl at her school. She knows she will stand out bc of that and bc of her disability, she is deaf. Just like most girls, she wants to be part of the popular clique and tells them she is an expert lip reader and can get the juiciest gossip. She winds up literally running into the cutest guy and instantly crushes on him. There's a ton of drama and things get ugly but the ending was cute.

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### **Vigilante says**

I don't honestly know why I'm so drawn to these kind of books. They all seem so interesting until I realize the author has the writing skills of a 12 year old. Read My Lips seemed like such a cool book, the idea of a deaf girl reading lips and spying on people is downright evil yet perfect. Throw in peer pressure and some romance and you might have a hit! Until the reader realizes they wasted money on a poorly written book. The plot is fun and different from most other books, but its overall layout and interpretation is lacking. Along with poorly developed characters and missing details, I also found the book to have no real layout. There was barely a climax and the ending was just too good. Never let the conflicts be completely tangle free by the last page of the book...there is a rising action, climax, and resolution for a reason. These things make up a book, they should never be shrunk down to the very last page! Overall a 2 star for an amazing idea, but poor writing and character development.

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### **Cara Salazar says**

The book, Read My Lips by Teri Brown, was a terrible 'realistic' fiction about the life of a hard-of-hearing teenage girl. This book was recommended to me as a good book to read when you want to be frustrated, and after reading it I can see exactly why it was recommended to me in this manner. Upon starting the book, I actually found it to be interesting. However, as the book progressed I noticed that none of the characters have

much character development or even personalities. The book often felt cluttered with needless information. For example, many useless characters were introduced at random points in the story, which could've been an attempt at making the world created by the author seem more real. Ultimately, this just left the reader wondering why that person was even introduced in the first place as they seem to be completely useless. They were completely useless, in the sense that they were either never brought up again, or were only added to the story as a filler. Along with the introduction of random characters without substance there was also the introduction of random events that never took place. For example, at least 3 of the chapters were dedicated to Serena worrying about homecoming, but there was never any homecoming dance and the topic was dropped after a couple chapters. Another issue with the book is that even with the characters that do stick around, they are just so forgettable that it is almost impossible to know who is who. None of the characters had any real depth or personality they all seem to blend together. I was halfway through this book and still did not know the main character's name. The main character, Serena, was almost unbearable, when she was not being snarky, she was just plain out rude to everyone around her. With these character traits it made me root for her even less. Without being able to build a connection to any of the characters, I felt that this book was too long and dragged out. In the end, I even thought it to be completely pointless, as all of the issues were made due to the main character making bad decisions and were totally avoidable. Another part of the book that I found to be irritating was the diction and syntax. In an attempt to write in the way a teenager would, the author comes off as annoying and uncultured. For example the phrase "omigod" seemed to show up multiple times in every chapter, a word that isn't even really a word. Also, there were words that were just completely misspelled throughout the book words such as "are" and "were". There was also the homonym mix up where the author would mean to say "they're" but instead say "their". Lastly, what really killed it for me was the fact that the plot was not well developed. I previously mentioned that all of the problems were completely avoidable had the main character just made better decisions, but that wasn't the only problem. Another plot problem was the pacing which seemed dragged out as the book focused on things that did not matter at all in the rest of the story, the book had whole chapters devoted to the main character worrying about nothing. Also, there is no real plot or character development. At the end of the story everything ends up the same as when it started except now the main character is popular. The book has no good message for it's target demographic of young girls. Overall, the book had no real deep meaning or lesson to be learned, and therefore left the reader feeling confused about why they took time to read this book. Overall, I found this to be one of the worst books I have ever read, however if you enjoy reading stories about high school gossip and drama then this is the book for you. People that enjoyed the show 90210 will also likely enjoy this book.

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## **Leah says**

This is a book my cousin Shannon told me to read. I had a lot of fun reading this book! I think it was a good read.

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