



Under Rose-Tainted Skies

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At seventeen, Norah has accepted that the four walls of her house delineate her life. She *knows* that fearing everything from inland tsunamis to odd numbers is irrational, but her mind insists the world outside is too big, too dangerous. So she stays safe inside, watching others' lives through her windows and social media feed.

But when Luke arrives on her doorstep, he doesn't see a girl defined by medical terms and mental health. Instead, he sees a girl who is funny, smart, and brave. And Norah likes what he sees.

Their friendship turns deeper, but Norah knows Luke deserves a normal girl. One who can walk beneath the open sky. One who is unafraid of kissing. One who isn't so screwed up. Can she let him go for his own good—or can Norah learn to see herself through Luke's eyes?

Under Rose-Tainted Skies Details

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Author : Louise Gornall

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From Reader Review Under Rose-Tainted Skies for online ebook

Inge says

This book.

This book, this book, this book.

I'm so happy that there's finally a real and *honest* book about agoraphobia. While I liked *Finding Audrey*, I didn't think it was completely realistic. The girl skips to Starbucks within a week because of a cute boy. And while there's a cute boy in *Under Rose-Tainted Skies* as well, he acts like a catalyst more than a cure. He's the reason Norah *wants* to work to get better, but he doesn't actually make her better, which I was infinitely grateful for. Pretty boys don't cure everything, you know, as much as we may want them to.

Agoraphobia is a really tricky illness. It's hard to understand if you haven't experienced it yourself. I imagine it's quite hard to write a whole book about it, because how does one write a book about a girl who can't leave her house? But the author did a really great job; *Rose* never felt monotonous, even though the illness is most certainly that.

Although there were a lot of instances in the book that made me smile, there were also a lot of quotes that left me misty-eyed because of how well I recognised it. How well I could relate to Norah and her situation. It's just So. Damn. Hard. And I loved how the author didn't flinch away from that. It's clear she knows what she's talking about and that really showed in her novel. The pain, the madness, the boredom, the endless scrolling through social media to look at pictures of old friends who have long since outgrown you. It's all there.

I also thought the OCD and self-harm scenes felt really realistic. Though I don't have personal experience with those myself, I thought it was important to mention to any potential readers out there.

"I want to see that girl in my social media selfies. The one that smiles and never has to live up to anyone's expectations or explain why she is the way she is. But all I see in my real-life reflection are blunt smudges of shadow. Fragile. Upset. Weak. Thin. Afraid. Failing. And tired. Above everything else, tired of battling with my own mind."

You can imagine that someone with agoraphobia doesn't have a lot of friends. Online, I have loads of friends. Social media are my connection to the outside world, because at the moment it's pretty much impossible for me to meet up with friends or invite them over. But the few relationships Norah had, were done really nicely. I loved that moment when Norah realised that she'd become best friends with her mother, which is something that definitely sounds familiar. Her friendship with her neighbour Luke also develops really naturally (and very much *awkwardly* because holy crap so much awkwardness).

I really liked the writing. Most of the descriptions were really snappy and made me laugh, such as *"Doubt sneaked behind me like some horny guy at a disco*, which is probably the best and worst analogy I've ever heard.

All in all, this is a really important book. It's awkward and sad and honest and real and cute and true and I could probably name all the adjectives in the world. This book means a lot to me.

abby says

2.5 stars. This one just didn't work for me.

Norah is agoraphobic, has OCD, and has not left her house in years apart from trips to the doctor. Her life is pretty much limited to what she can experience online. The only human being she has regular face to face contact with is her devoted and protective mother. Then a cute boy moves next door. For some reason, Luke finds Norah intriguing, if also a bit odd. They strike up a friendship of sorts, which mostly involves Norah staring at him through a window, and then that grows into more as they get to know each other.

I had real frustrations with this book. First, mostly nothing happened. Then there's the "love cures mental illness" thing. I don't think Luke ever *gets* it; he's always going on about what he and Norah will do "one day"-- that day being when his attention has cured her agoraphobia and they fly off to Paris together. To me, Luke and Norah's relationship was a perfect example of how sometimes a romance like this **can't work**. It would have been a bittersweet ending, but it would have been real. Instead, the author validates the "cute boy fixes brain" idea by showing that Norah does in fact start to improve because of Luke.

I like Norah, and her relationship with her mother, but not much else. And the ending came out of left field and didn't fit with the rest of the book. Overall, I'm underwhelmed.

I received a copy of this book courtesy of the publisher and NetGalley.

Sana says

BR WITH MY BBY MAGGIE WHO I'LL TAG

I FINISHED AND IM CRYING I LOVE THIS. BEST MENTAL HEALTH REP EVER. IM CRYING.

REVIEW TO COME

okay guys so far I'm halfway and honestly, THANK YOU GORNALL for this amazing mental illness rep and not making meds and therapists seem fucking evil and bad with a CUTE ASS ROMANCEE

Caitlin says

4.5 stars!

Trigger Warning: Self Harm

"Mental health is usually the last place people go when they think about someone being sick."

In general, I pretty much avoid contemporaries - especially those centred around mental health. I'm always incredibly worried that mental health would be treated inappropriately and really be more harmful than helpful. I originally heard about this book and how it dealt with similar topics like in *Everything, Everything* - which is not a good book in my opinion. I was pretty hesitant to want to read this book because of that fact,

but Amber then read it and really enjoyed it. My tastes are always pretty similar to Amber's and I know that if she recommends me a contemporary, there's a good reason behind it - especially since she knows I don't like many contemporaries.

I went into this book with pretty low expectations and I was honestly shocked about how good this book was. It's real. It's raw. And most of all, it's important. It deals with serious topics such as agoraphobia, anxiety, OCD and self harm. I personally have a very limited understanding of agoraphobia (tbh I thought it was a fear of spiders) and reading a book about it **by an author who suffers from it** is incredibly refreshing. I feel like when mental health is concerned, you can't talk about it or do it justice unless you've suffered yourself. I found the OCD, anxiety and self harm aspects extremely realistic and there were so many scenes that I saw myself in Norah. I could completely relate to what she was dealing with and where her thought processes were coming through and it was honestly so refreshing. I hate when mental health is done incorrectly and this book just gives me so much hope for future books about mental health.

"See, anxiety doesn't just stop. You can have nice moments, minutes where it shrinks, but it doesn't leave. It lurks in the background like a shadow, like that important assignment you have to do but keep putting off or the dull ache that follows a three-day migraine. The best you can hope for is to contain it, make it as small as possible so it stops being intrusive."

Honestly, my favourite part was that, even though there was a love interest and a romantic plot, **love did not cure all**. Luke is an incredible love interest and is so supportive but he doesn't attempt to cure her. I can't even tell you how sick I am of books that deal with mental health being easily solved by love. **Love does not cure mental illnesses**. Sure, they can definitely help but they do not cure it.

Mental health should never be used as a fun plot point that can be easily solved. Norah is sick when we meet her and by the end, she is still sick but slowly recovering. This is what it's really like.

My favourite scene of the book is when Norah and her therapist discuss how Luke could react to her confessions about her mental health. I personally have had 2 different reactions (both good and bad) to sharing my mental health journey and it honestly still leaves me intimidated to share it with some people. Who knows what people's reactions are going to be? Some people are just completely unaccepting of mental health. When you tell someone you're sick, they expect you to say that you've got a broken bone or something along those lines, not that you're suffering from mental health problems.

I'm sorry for the mess that is this review but I can't express enough how **IMPORTANT** this book is. I would recommend it to everyone. This is the type of mental health books we need. Please let 2017 be the end of 'love cures all problems' plot line.

Jesse (JesseTheReader) says

This book was great! It has a focus on anxiety, ocd, & agoraphobia. I feel like this book did a good job of exploring each of these topics and helping us the readers understand what a day to day life dealing with those things is like. I loved the mother daughter relationship that's showcased here. I feel like we don't often see good mother daughter relationships depicted in books and it was refreshing to read about. I wasn't a massive fan of the romance, but honestly what's new.

Lola says

Where do I even start?

I bet many of you will like this book. It has that type of snarky, sarcastic main character who feels real and as if she were telling us her story while simultaneously living it. She's vulnerable and she's strong. She's funny and she's morbid. **She's real.**

But she's *very* sarcastic and says things that leave a bad taste in my mouth, such as: *It's possible I've ingested enough of my own fingers to call myself a cannibal.*

shudders

Furthermore, I found the idea of exploring the theme of mental health with agoraphobia quite interesting. (Norah also has OCD.) However, it *is* extremely reminiscent of *Everything, Everything*, which is a book I found heartfelt and powerful in themes.

They're comparable vis-à-vis the subject (girl cannot leave her home), the romance (neighbour to the rescue), the mother (single and crazy about her daughter) and the way the story unfolds... slowly and heavily on the romance.

Sadly, the romance is one of the things I least enjoyed. Don't get me wrong, Luke can be sweet, but he sure isn't realistic. Guys his age (seventeen) don't talk the way he does (like a robot)—or so I think, but it may be me who expected more charm out of him. He's calm and a beautiful listener, but he certainly does not know how to woo a girl.

Plus, **it just isn't romantic.** Norah and Luke's interactions are extremely awkward. I understood that they both had little idea of how to react around each other, but hell, does no teenager nowadays know how to flirt? What. And truly, I *got* that it was a HUGE deal for Norah to even clasp his hand, but the whole romance felt so anticlimactic, instead of adorable like in *Everything, Everything*.

The writing is one of the things that could have made me up my rating to 3 or 3.5 stars even, because there is nothing I *hated* about this book (aside from the weird, unexpected, what-the-hell ending). Louisa Gornall has a way with words, I'll give her that. She does... So why is she trying so hard? I swear, **every single descriptive paragraph** contains a comparison.

I'm all for figures of style (and hers are quite imaginative) but that's too much! It takes away from the realism of the story (and annoys the reader).

It wasn't a chore to read it for me, so do keep that in mind in case you're interested in reading it. If what bothered me will not bother you, it can make for an incredible read!

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Chelsea ♥Peril Please♥ says

Some books have flare, have that cover and synopsis that draws you in the moment you lay eyes on it. You know you want to read it, you know it's a genre you are absolutely obsessed with, but it's also a genre that makes it difficult to gauge what's going to be good, and what's going to be a pile of wasted potential. And under those breathtaking covers and beautiful synopses, you expect (and hope) to find a spellbinding novel, the **same level of awesomeness** the outside of the book promises...but you almost always end up disappointed, because nothing is ever as good as you wish. But I can promise you-**this isn't that book.**

A side effect of worrying about everything and everyone; I cry at least once a week over things that shouldn't concern me.

It may not be for everyone. And, hey, you might even find it repulsive. I can only assure you one thing-**this book feels wholly authentic**, and I find that to be one of the hardest things to get past these days. Finding an authentic novel that not only **shows you a deep, introspective look** at a mental illness, but also lets you see that people understand, that **people can be kind**, that falling in love is a possible thing, no matter the restrictions or stipulations, is so very rare, and it's just as captivating as any other love story. I find that fantastic and just plain beautiful.

I just want to have proof that I can think straight, that I am more than the girl who believes that odd numbers will cause a catastrophe.

This story felt so unique to me. I know, I *know*, mental illness books have been handled well before and so have realistic fiction-gasp!-but the depth to this story...**it touched me.** And, even more than that, **the romance was handled so delicately.** I never once felt forced into their relationship. I never once felt uncomfortable (well, aside from when Norah felt uncomfortable). And seeing Luke's journey from clueless, to informed, to understanding, helpful love interest was a true transformation-and, frankly, also realistic.

Perfection is a feeling; you'll know it if you've ever questioned the competency of your penmanship before writing on the first page of a new notebook.

He didn't understand-not at all. He said he did. He really wanted to...but **he didn't truly understand until it all fell apart**, until he saw how horrifying it was for Norah, how terrifying each and every day was for her if things didn't go just as she needed them to. He didn't understand-not at all...but he figured it out, for her.

“Do you need some help?”

I'm drenched in shadow, and boots with steel toecaps take three steps onto the porch. Three steps. That's awkward. He leaves his back leg trailing behind. I wish he would bring it forward and make it four steps even. My eye twitches.

This did not happen...but they did hang out on the bed and it was so cute so I had to use one of these!

Look. Nothing goes perfect in this story, and that's frankly the best part. **Life doesn't come wrapped up neatly in a perfect little bow**, and not everyone gets their happily ever after. It takes work. It takes trust. It takes friendship....and it takes a strong support group surrounding you, **people who will stand by your side no matter how tough life gets**, and I just loved that about this story. I even felt like there was quite a bit of tough love in this story-Norah's therapist didn't let her off the hook, ever, and she constantly tried to push her out of her comfort zone.

It's possible I've ingested enough of my own fingers to call myself a cannibal. They're so chewed I have trouble straightening them. I very much doubt every girl my age does this. This is perhaps bordering more on my unhealthy levels of panic.

Funny, witty, wholly gripping, and with an **adorable romance that stole my heart and took my breath away**, this story sunk its claws into me from the moment I started it. I saw this book and just *knew* it was going to be special...and for once? I was right. It's refreshing to pick up a story and feel not only **giddiness, happiness, elation, true love**...but also a life altering reality that many people live through every day. To read about something that hinders someone else's life to the point of almost ruining it, to read about them and the support they receive but also how hard it still is for them. **It broke my heart in the best possible way...** and patched it back up again.

I hope others will find the same love and enjoyment from this book as I did, but if not, **I'll cherish it all by my lonesome**-and I won't feel the least bit guilty about it.

For more of my reviews, please visit:

Fables&Wren says

WrensReads Review:

Overall, I really liked this story.

I thought it was more realistic than other mental-illness based books that I have read.

Like:

001. That Norah, our main girl, knows that she is being irrational but also knows she has to do it that way or the world will implode.. irrationally.

002. She calls herself crazy because, again, she knows that what she is doing is not necessary but at the same time it is necessary and she has to do it. Mental illness is weird.

003. Luke, our main dude, reacts the same way we would when Norah has an episode: wide-eyed, cautious

and just wanting to help her get through whatever she is doing.

004. I really appreciated the fact that the boy didn't "cure" the girl. **That's my main enjoyment of this whole book.** Too many books have people being "cured" by getting in a relationship. That's not how life works.

005. I also really appreciated that it was more focused on her being able to do baby steps when she had companionship beyond her mother and her therapist. She can cope with the two women who have dedicated themselves to helping her, but she can slowly rewire herself the more helps she gets. That's important. As someone who deals with **my own** type(s) of mental illness, it is so important to have a handful of people to keep you afloat.

006. The narrator, Pheobe Strole, did a phenomenal job.

007. The relationship between Norah and her mother was what touched my heart the most. I think it's because it reminded me of my relationship with my mother and I wanted to drive five hours to go give my mom a hug.

Didn't Like:

001. The writing was a little young for my taste, but it was still enjoyable. I think I would have rated it lower actually reading it; but Pheobe Strole did such a great job that it didn't bother me as much as it usually would have.

And the ending? My goodness, you do not expect something that insane to happen with such a happy-looking book. You don't expect your jaw to drop (yes, mine did physically drop) and go "is this really happening or is she imagining the absolute worst scenario?" It was happening. I died.

Also, a little P.S. here: *You can't say things like "that's now how mental illness works" because all mental illnesses are different. Even if I had voices talking inside my head and you had voices talking inside your head, our likeness ends there. How I get better and how I deal is going to be different from how you get better and how you deal. Individuality people. It's a thing. Which is why you can't rationalize someone's anxiety just because you also deal with anxiety.*

WrensReads | Goodreads | Twitter | Instagram

Hailey (HaileyinBookland) says

This was so well written and such an overall just beautiful story. You could really feel the authenticity as while this is fictional, the author herself has struggled with agoraphobia, OCD, anxiety, and self harm. However I will say I was not thrilled by the ending as I found it to be a bit rushed and too unexpected.

Piya says

“Just pull yourself together! I mean, it is all in your head. Why can't you just get over yourself?”

I loved this little book.....this is the first time I have read anything related to mental health issues. And it's so different from almost anything I have read before. Yes....It's a guy meets girl story but well...the guy meets girl when she is fishing for groceries at her front porch :P

Its a story about a 17 year old girl named Norah...who suffers from anxiety, Agoraphobia and OCD. Agoraphobiawhat's that now?? It is fear of crowded places or public places...basically any place outside her house. Norah has won the lottery in the mental illness department .So, as a result of this trifecta...she is confined to her home. The fear is so extreme that she is incapable of taking even a single step outside her house, even to get the groceries when they are dropped off at her front porch! Struggling to fetch her grocery with a stick, she meets Luke. How can he not fall for Norah...I myself fell in love with her!! :)..She is humorous, super sarcastic –master of one-liners.

The entire story is told in her voice...so we as readers get a chance to be in her head all time. Yes, the situation she is in ...not funny at all...But the writing style is so witty that there is never a dull moment. There is romance in this book but not in the usual sense and it takes a back seat for the most part. It's all about Norah and her fight with her demons.

I can tell that the author has put her soul in this one. And I assume that this is a very accurate depiction of Norah's situation because the author herself has suffered from these crippling conditions(as she mentions in 'the Acknowledgement' section) . Norah's daily struggles are captured so well that you can tell it was told by someone who has been through these struggles herself. Overall, it's a good book ...very well written....and I look forward to reading more of her works in future. :)

Louise Gornall says

Hey guys,

My name is Louise and I'm the author of Rose. Thank you for giving Norah's story a shot. I really hope you enjoy reading it, as much as I enjoyed writing it.

may ❁ says

Full review posted:

From the moment I picked up this book, I KNEW it was going to be so epic that I would exit myself from real life

so *basically*, this book has GREAT MENTAL HEALTH REP and it's ADORABLE but also really IMPORTANT and INFORMATIVE

let's run a list of all the great things contained in this v short book

- Norah is the snarky kind of relatable
- Her over encompassing anxiety is described in such an accurate way
- Her crippling mental illness expresses itself in physical ways and honestly im so proud that the author took the time to explain that
- It deals with panic attacks so accurately I wanted to cry
- LOVE DOES NOT HEAL ALL
- There is NO magic kiss that **cures** Norah and thank bloody goodness for that
- LUKE IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING IN THE WORLD

- This kid is so bloody cute I wanna wrap him in bubble wrap and feed him rose petals bc he's that precious
- Hes so kind and compassionate and adorable oh my GOSHHHHH
- The book is super short you could finish it in an hour no joke
- The cover is so beautiful
- Norah's relationship with her mom = goals
- Norah's relationship with her therapist = grade A
- Family issues were handled REALLY well too
- And the ending spiked me up like I thought it was gonna slowly descend BUT HELL NAH IT GOT EVEN MORE EXHILARTING
- I love this book so much
- Its surprisingly funny too, you don't expect it, but it is

Perfection is a feeling; you'll know it if you've ever questioned the competency of your penmanship before writing on the first page of a new notebook.

4.5 stars!!

~~~~~  
here's a little backstory sharing my struggles with obtaining this book. . .

sooooooo back in fricken early **MAY** of 2017, i saw a little section on my local libraries website that was like "IF YOU WANT A BOOK, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SUGGEST HERE" and i was like yaaaassssss, Y'ALL DONT KNOW WHAT YOURE GETTING YOURSELF INTO, ASKING ME FOR SUGGESTIONS AND ISH

so, Under Rose Tainted Skies has been on my immediate TBR since forever and it couldnt find it in my library so i was like let me suggest this one bc *why the heck not*

and so, me being the ~~innocent~~ inexperienced little human i am, thought it would take maybe a week or two, at worst 3 weeks for them to purchase the book and have it on the shelf, ready for me to pick up

YEAH WELL  
OBVIOUSLY  
FRICKEN  
NOT

ALMOST 4 FRICKEN MONTHS LATER  
AND HERE WE FINALLY ARE

i was fricken losing hope man, so this book better bE WORTH ALL THE PAIN AND SUFFERING I WENT TO GET IT IN HARDCOVER

if you actually read all this, i applaud your determination, here have a cookie for your good work ? illy

that is all

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## April (Aprilius Maximus) says

*"How can I expect people to empathise with a sickness they can't see?"*

*"You don't expect anything. You talk, you teach."*

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## Joshua Gabriel (???) says

*When people say weird, what they really mean is different. And difference has never been a bad thing.*  
—Luke

I resolved to finally pick up *Under Rose-Tainted Skies* because it had been on my TBR since 2017 and the pages had turned murky yellow. Hahaha. Also, someone told me that the story was similar to a book that I felt meh about: *Everything, Everything*. Basically, my expectations were kinda low, but everything worked out well at the end because this book took me by surprise. Out of the 20 books I've read this year, it's the third one to get a perfect rating.

Plot-wise, *Under Rose-Tainted Skies* is indeed similar to *Everything, Everything*, in that it also features a female protagonist who cannot leave her home because of agoraphobia (and other mental complications). Furthermore, just like in *Everything, Everything*, the protagonist's life "changes" when a handsome and inquisitive dude moves next door. Thankfully, that's where the similarities end. For one thing, **the mental illness in this book doesn't turn out to be fabricated**. AHEM, AHEM. Ugh, I need to stop before this review turns out to be a rant about another book.

One reason why I loved *Under Rose-Tainted Skies* was that it was surprisingly funny. It was weird because Norah's mental health was anything but funny. In addition to agoraphobia, she had OCD and anxiety disorder. Her symptoms included an obsession with patterns and even numbers, panic attacks, self-harm, and more; she obviously didn't have an easy life. Still, the author managed to discuss or explore these symptoms in a way that was simultaneously serious and lighthearted. The author's writing style, combined with Norah's sarcastic humor, made me laugh with fondness, not malice. I hope that makes sense. I will always remember how Norah antagonized the blackbird outside her window for singing too loudly. xD

Another reason for my rating was Norah herself. Since the book was written in first person, I was able to connect with her on a deep emotional level even though our thought processes were super different. I could understand her tendency to criticize herself as well as her fear of the great unknown. Just because she had anxiety disorder didn't mean that all of her fears were irrational. I myself know what it's like to be my own enemy. Just like Norah, I sometimes put myself down and look at the future with negativity. And just like Norah, I feel better when I hear the voice of reason. I genuinely loved this book because it taught me that no one on Earth has a completely "rational" or "benevolent" mind. Everyone has bouts of "crazy" once in a while.

Finally, I loved this book because of Norah's support group, Luke in particular. As far as his treatment of Norah was concerned, he was the epitome of kindness. He sometimes triggered Norah, but it was only out of ignorance. He was a gentleman from the very beginning, and when he learned about Norah's mental health, he became even more admirable. He respected Norah's personal space, he taught her how to dream, and he was basically the sunlight to the darkness of her thoughts. Honestly, I had never encountered such an angelic male protagonist. I guess you can call him a great role model.

To be objective, I would have enjoyed this book more if the author had given more information about Norah's jerk of a father. I just couldn't fathom how he could abandon his family just like that. Oh well, that's probably the point: some people simply care more about themselves than their family.

With all that said, it's been quite a while since I gave a book 5 stars. Norah is a such a thorny but beautiful rose, while Luke is probably the nicest guy in the fictional world. And I must say, the book's thriller of an ending is nothing short of perfection. This #OwnVoices novel really deepened my understanding of the complexities of mental illness, so I would be more than happy to reread it someday. <3

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### Cait • A Page with a View says

3.5 stars. The story revolves around Norah's struggles to live her life with agoraphobia, anxiety, and OCD. I thought these mental health issues were all portrayed well and liked that they weren't simply "cured" overnight because she met a cute guy. The guy is more of what leads her to work on everything more instead of what makes it all magically go away. Nothing felt too cheap or unrealistic.

The story itself wasn't for me, though, because I haven't been able to leave my house in over 2 years for health reasons & it just caused way too much anxiety. So I gave it an extra star because it is well done even though I personally didn't really enjoy it.

Thank you to the publisher for sending me a review copy!

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### ambsreads says

4.5

**TRIGGER WARNING:** self harm.

**WARNING:** this review will get super personal, if you're not interested in that I suggest skipping it.

*"I'm being forced to challenge ideas that have kept me safe for so long. There's an entire library of information in my head, and suddenly I can't decide if any of it is worth reading."*

*Under Rose-Tainted Skies* was an **amazing** book. It was similar to Everything, Everything but **better**. It felt a lot more realistic than Everything, Everything and had what it was lacking - a character who doesn't change purely based on a boy and a supportive circle of people. I just enjoyed this so much.

The story is from the perspective of Norah, a girl who has agoraphobia, OCD and anxiety. Not so fun for the typical teenager. As someone who was diagnosed with anxiety, depression and PTSD I found it **amazing** to see thought processes I have every day going through the main characters mind. My whole life I have been called both a hypochondriac and a drama queen because of how my brain wants to keep me safe. I don't branch out. I stay in a bubble and I will always think my options through if it is a dangerous scenario - this is something I'm getting with purely because my friends put me in situations that make me uncomfortable. Norah had a similar thought process of mine, processing all the worst possible case scenarios - even if they

are unrealistic. I have never felt so completely represented in a book before.

However, I did have a small problem with this book. It felt that, in some way, it invalidated the fact that self-harm can be represented in other forms apart from cutting. The mum and Dr. Reeves are very open to it, but Norah was incredibly close minded and it was slightly frustrating. I'm about to get personal, so get ready, but when I would self-harm during my anxiety attacks I would scratch my skin till it bled or rip chunks of my hair out. It grounds me. Norah did something similar where she would scratch her skin until she bled, Dr. Reeves points out this, is in fact, self-harm and Norah doesn't agree because "it fades in a week."

This was my only problem, though. I loved all the characters. I felt so giddy while reading it. I loved the dynamic between both Norah and Luke. It was just such a sweet story and ultimately did have an amazing representation of mental health, in my opinion. I highly recommend it.

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## Nat says

*"Sometimes things are going to happen and the only way out is through."*

This was my first YA romance read in quite awhile, but a number of things compelled me to pick it up:

- An agoraphobic obsessive-compulsive main character written by an own voices author.
- A wonderful mother/daughter dynamic.
- A main character named Norah!! (I'm still obsessed with Skam... but thanks to that, this show brought another positive thing into my life.)

And I continued reading when I quickly came to realize that the writing style was the exact kind I love i.e. perfectly captures those specific as hell feelings.

Just to give you a few excerpts:

*"But before I hit the stairs, that tiny corner, no longer in line with the other five books, is consuming me. Like that song you heard but can't quite remember the name of. Or that actor you've seen in another film but can't for the life of you recall which one."*

I love that the author took the time to capture and explain what Norah is feeling in such a downright way.

Also this:

*"See, anxiety doesn't just stop. You can have nice moments, minutes where it shrinks, but it doesn't leave. It lurks in the background like a shadow, like that important assignment you have to do but keep putting off or the dull ache that follows a three-day migraine. The best you can hope for is to contain it, make it as small as possible so it stops being intrusive. Am I coping? Yes, but it's taking a monumental amount of effort to keep the dynamite inside my stomach from exploding."*

What I wasn't anticipating going into this read was the feeling of relating to Norah on such a deep level. It was like seeing myself through someone else's eyes; it's petrifying. And so I kept thinking of this quote that fits perfectly:

*"We read to know we're not alone."*  
? William Nicholson, Shadowlands

This review contains **\*spoilers\***.

Initially I wanted to include in here all those moment that made me scream, “ME TOO.” But there are simply too many... (I literally kept a list of things we had in common, but gave up in the end because I kept adding on and on.) So I'll instead settle on featuring this next exchange between Norah and her superb therapist, Dr Reeves:

*“I was hanging around on The Hub, that social media site I was telling you about.” She nods, and I bite down hard on my bottom lip. “And all these people started pinning notes to their profiles about this tragedy in Seto.” She knows I’m talking about the earthquake in Japan. I can tell because for a split second, grief clouds her eyes. She’s seen the reports, read the first-hand accounts, mourned over the thousands of pictures that have been published.*

*‘So I started reading . . .’*

*Her mouth turns down into a frown. ‘I thought we talked about not doing that.’*

*‘We did. And I was working on it.’*

I have the same issue with reading tragic news because I somehow convince myself that if I leave the house, it'll happen to me... Also the reason why I never picked up Everyday Sexism again.

Also, this valuable moment changed a lot for me:

*“‘Effect and outcome.’*

*‘Exactly. We can assume the best, but we can’t choose how people perceive us. We can, however, choose how those views affect us.’*

Circling back to Norah, I really appreciated how she had such a great supporting team made out of her mother and Dr Reeves. Almost all my favourite moments were when one of the two were in scene.

*“A knock at the door makes both Mom and me jump. A wave of pink wine rip-curls right out of her glass and splashes on her shirt. She uses her fingertips to wipe it away.*

*‘Are you expecting someone?’ I ask.*

*‘You mean besides Brad Pitt?’*

*‘Then it’s probably him.’*

*‘How’s my hair?’ Mom laughs as she climbs off the couch and heads for the door. She makes a ceremony of opening it and revealing our mystery visitor. ‘Ah. Norah, I think this Brad Pitt is for you.’*

As you can see, I loved the beginning. My interest only wavered a bit when the focus shifted on developing the romance, particularly when I found out that the romantic interest loves the *Transformers* film series.

It's pretty much indisputable that Michael Bay's movies are highly sexist. To quote this article, *possibly the most annoying thing in the continuing franchise is director Michael Bay's constant objectification of young women on screen.* And I can't fully appreciate someone who's favorite movie is the definition of catering to the male gaze. I kept hoping that the author would let Luke get enlightened and hold the movie accountable for its problematic aspects... that didn't happen.

But once *Transformers* wasn't mentioned again, I was steadily sucked back into the book. And by then I was quietly but sturdily rooting for these two and their hang-outs at Norah's house. It was seriously one of the most fun times I've had while reading a book.

*“‘I’ll go to the party,’ he says. ‘But I can come and see you immediately after, right?’*

*‘Yes. Yes. You absolutely can. If I’m going to be your girlfriend—’*

*‘Wait,’ he interjects, grinning from ear-to-ear. ‘You’re going to be my girlfriend?’*

*'Yes. If you can promise me you won't hold back just because I can't do a thing.'  
'I promise,' he says, and his pinkie, as light as a feather, draws a heart on the side of my hand.'*

Even though Luke's a sincere and compassionate guy, he still has to seriously educate himself before committing to a serious relationship with Norah. And I'm glad we got to see that start to unfold a bit.

However, that ending left me with a lot of food for thought. **Under Rose-Tainted Skies** suddenly turning into a thriller left me feeling perplexed for days and actually questioning if I picked up the same read as when I started. I just... I don't even have the correct words to explain what I felt other than to say that it was not something I was anticipating.

Here's a rundown of what happened in the last thirty something pages:

- Luke kisses Norah.
- Norah isn't ready - understandably- and drifts away from him.
- They don't talk for over a month.
- Intruder breaks into into Norah's house. (I still don't know how that suddenly appeared in the plot.)
- Norah - understandably - loses her cool over it, but in the end bravely takes action.
- She then proceeds to leave the house on her literal hands and knees, and my heart almost left my body.
- And of course other things happen that I didn't even have time to sink in because I was continually flummoxed over the author's decision to end the book like that... HELP.

I just cannot understand what the hell went down and why. So in order to give myself some needed peace, I'm going to focus instead on the first half of this book and all that I loved in order to forget my confusion (and fear\*). I genuinely feel like this next video.

\*The day I finished reading this book, I literally had a nightmare about that intruder with the mask... dammit. This is exactly why I don't pick up thrillers; I can't handle those things, especially without warning. So that made me feel a bit more resentful towards that ending.

*Note: I'm an Amazon Affiliate. If you're interested in buying **Under Rose-Tainted Skies**, just click on the image below to go through my link. I'll make a small commission!*

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## Emma Giordano says

5/5 STARS I ABSOLUTELY LOVED THIS BOOK. I have been *devouring* YA mental health novels lately so when I heard about a new release that dealt with agoraphobia, OCD AND anxiety, I could not wait to read it. It took me less than 2 days to read and I loved every single thing about it. I think I'm going to post a video review as well because I just loved it too much.

The #1 thing I loved about this book is the mental health rep. If you are interested in reading more books dealing with individuals suffering from mental disorders this is a MUST READ. I will probably recommend it until the end of my days because I cannot stress enough how wonderful this book was. It's accurate. It's realistic. It's raw. It's authentic. It's educational. It's everything you want in a fictitious work of mental health, I promise you.

This is the first book I've read dealing with agoraphobia, but with my knowledge from my psychology major, it seemed fairly accurate! Personally, I saw a lot of my own habits in Norah, which was lovely considering I feel no book has ever completely portrayed what it's like to compulsively tear at your cheeks and cuticles like I do. I also loved how Norah's illnesses were prominent on every. single. page. It affected her at every moment of the day, which can truly be what living with an invisible illness is like, so that really hit home for me. Something I really adored about this book was how realistic the comorbidity of Norah's disorders were portrayed. You could simultaneously see how each illness affected her individually as well as how they all bounce off of each other. I do want to just place a trigger warning for self-harm on this book since it's not addressed in the synopsis. It's not a hugely present theme throughout the novel, but there are a few scenes I think you should be aware of! Overall, it was executed BEAUTIFULLY and I could not be happier with this mental health rep. Knowing it is an own voices novel where the author implemented their own experiences is also such a comfort.

I also want to touch on the romance. If you were expecting a novel where the boy saves the girl from her mental illness, you'll be pretty let down by this novel because Norah is a BADASS at fighting her own inner demons. Luke is a wonderful love interest because he is understanding, supportive, encouraging, and adaptive. He is perfect for Norah but he is **not** a magical romantic cure for her disorders. It was SOO wonderful to see a romance that was able to flourish without "fixing" the person who is struggling. Luke compliments Norah in all the best ways, but this is Norah's journey through overcoming her fears and gaining control over what she believes has always controlled her.

I love love love love loved this book. It's absolutely one of my favorite reads of 2017 so far (I promise, this will still be true in December. I loved it THAT much.) This book is up extremely high on my recommendations list and I sincerely implore you all to read it.

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## **Kelly (and the Book Boar) says**

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

***“Why do people keep telling me to be myself? Honestly. It’s like they’ve never even met me.”***

Every now and then a certain someone takes a break from training monkeys in order to send me little treasures I didn't even know I wanted until I received them. *Under A Rose Tainted Sky* is one of those. When I received a message telling me I had some goodies waiting for me if I would get off airplane mode (said monkey trainer also has to run interference in order to save me from my own stupid) I had much excite. Especially when I discovered this one was about someone with agoraphobia. Even my husband reacted like so when I told him what my book bestie had selected for me . . . .

What can I say????

So about the book. THIS is what that *Turtles ~~FUCKING SUCK!~~ All The Way Down* should have been. But NO. John Green will sell eleventy trillion copies of a giant pile of turtle suckage and this little gem will sell a handful. And don't even give me the "John Green struggles with the same thing as his MC" argument, because THIS author does to. Now I'm going to let the book do the talking from here out so I don't have an aneurysm.

Meet Norah – a 17-year old agoraphobic who leaves her house only to attend therapy. She is well aware that she needs to work on controlling her fears, else she . . . .

***“die cold and alone. Hidden in my room while strangers post messages of condolence on my social media and rabid cats eat my decomposing corpse.”***

But managing her anxiety is easier said than done . . . .

***“Anxiety doesn't just stop. You can have nice moments, minutes where it shrinks, but it doesn't leave. It lurks in the background like a shadow, like that important assignment you have to do but keep putting off or the dull ache that follows a three-day migraine. The best you can hope for is to contain it, make it be as small as possible so it stops being intrusive.”***

And when things get too overwhelming, sometimes she needs an escape . . . .

***“It's drastic, a last resort. But so easy. Like breathing, blinking. One beat in time. One quick slice, where nobody can see, and it all stops. This is not about dying. This is about trying to get back some control.”***

When Luke moves next door – and then continues to pop up on Norah's front steps, laughing at her snarky commentary, withholding judgment regarding her lack of leaving the house – Norah is confronted with a new challenge . . . .

***“TV didn't adequately prepare me for talking to boys in real life.”***

Norah is well-aware her issues are quite the inhibitor when it comes to romance, but it doesn't stop her from asking . . . .

***“Why can't I be normal? Why can't I think the way normal people do? I so desperately would have liked to have him as a friend.”***

What Norah doesn't realize is . . . .

***“There isn't much you miss when you're really looking.”***

If you want a different take on the “boy next door” story – this one might be a winner. I sure loved it . . . .

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**Lily ?? says**

**“See, anxiety doesn't just stop. You can have nice moments, minutes where it shrinks, but it doesn't leave. It lurks in the background like a shadow, like that important assignment**

**you have to do but keep putting off or the dull ache that follows a three-day migraine. The best you can hope for is to contain it, make it as small as possible so it stops being intrusive.**

**Am I coping? Yes, but it's taking a monumental amount of effort to keep the dynamite inside my stomach from exploding." (rtc)**

?? buddy read with kat

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