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When Skye meets Ben their attraction is instantaneous and intense. Neither of them has ever felt more in synch - or in love - with anyone in their lives. What happens next will tear them both apart. *Into My Arms* is a searing love story and a gripping family drama - a shocking, haunting novel in the tradition of Jodi Picoult and Caroline Overington.

The kiss ignited something, blew it into being, and afterwards, all Skye could think about was Ben. One day a woman meets a man and falls instantly and irrevocably in love with him. It hits her like a thunderbolt, and she has to have him, has to be with him, regardless of the cost, of the pain of breaking up her existing relationship. She has never felt more in synch-or in love-with anyone in her whole life. So this is how it feels, she thinks to herself, this is what real love feels like.

It's like that for him too; he wants her in a way he's never wanted anything or anyone before: obsessively, passionately, all-consumingly.

She has found her one true love, her soulmate, and he has found his. What happens next will tear them apart and unleash havoc onto their worlds.

This brave, brilliant, electrifying novel from the acclaimed author of *After the Fall* and *Last Summer*, will move you deeply and shock you to your core. Love, lust and longing have rarely wielded such power, nor family secrets triggered such devastation.

Into My Arms Details

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From Reader Review Into My Arms for online ebook

Kate says

See my full review here: <http://booksaremyfavouriteandbest.wor...>

I recently reviewed Dawn Barker's *Fractured*. I went to great lengths not to reveal the critical plot point (and hoped other reviewers would do the same). I'm exercising the same careful approach in this review of Kylie Ladd's latest novel, *Into My Arms*.

For that reason, it may not seem much of a 'review' however I think when an author and a publisher have gone to great pains to write a jacket blurb that is enticing yet not too revealing, that should be respected. The blurb of *Into My Arms* reads -

When Skye meets Ben their attraction is instantaneous and intense. Neither of them has ever felt more in synch – or in love – with anyone in their lives. What happens next will tear them both apart.

And I'm not going to tell you much more about the story other than that. And that what happens next is shocking. And a relevant issue in modern society. And your worst nightmare. I hope you are suitably intrigued because *Into My Arms* is a gripping read.

Ladd is excellent at creating 'normal' characters – people who are very likeable but with their share of flaws. Given the particular circumstances created in this story, the main characters acted in a realistic and believable way. As I was reading, I had the terrible feeling that there was no happy ending for these characters.

Ladd has been likened to Jodi Picoult. I'm not a fan of that comparison, simply because I find Picoult's stories formulaic and Ladd's are anything but. Ladd's writing style is clean and straightforward but nevertheless is still emotional and studded with detail.

"He missed his parents too: Mary's blue eyes, her rosary beads and her soups; his father's long stride across the paddocks."

Notably, she takes you to a climatic edge at a few points during the book and at each, leaves you dangling for a few pages, before setting you down safely (although given the subject matter, there is no safe ground) – a true page-turner!

I received an advance copy of *Into My Arms* from the publisher, Allen & Unwin, in exchange for an honest review.

3.5/5 Last Summer remains my favourite of Ladd's books however *Into My Arms* is gripping in a different way, predominantly because of the subject matter.

Amanda - Mrs B's Book Reviews says

*<https://mrsbbookreviews.wordpress.com>

4.5 stars

A few months ago Australian author Kylie Ladd blew me away with her powerful new release novel, *The*

Way Back. After being moved by this novel, I thought it was high time I explored some of Ladd's back catalogue. So I dusted Kylie Ladd's third novel off my bookshelf and delved into the book, which I devoured quite quickly.

Into My Arms is the story of a fateful love affair that has far reaching implications for the couple involved. When Skye, a talented artist completes an in residence class with students of a local school, she meets Ben, a teacher at the school. Sparks immediately fly between the two and a passionate love affair ensues. As quickly as this romance begins it is shut down by a shocking revelation. The revelation has far reaching implications for not only Ben and Skye, but for all those close to them. Kylie Ladd explores difficult and confronting territory in her third novel.

Into My Arms is a brilliant but confronting read. Initially, it reads like a romance novel but it soon morphs into a hard hitting family drama with psychological elements. While reading this 2013 release, I was reminded of the sheer force of Ladd's writing, it really is quite incredible. Kylie Ladd is a writer who leaves no stone unturned in the topics she chooses to write about and Into My Arms is no exception.

It did not take long for me to take to main character Skye. Although I didn't always agree with her actions and thought processes it somehow made her more real. Ladd's characters are well drawn and human, this extends to Skye's twin brother Arran, Ben's mother Mary and Hamish. We see the talents and well as the flaws of Ladd's characters very clearly. I was soon consumed by Skye and Ben's love story, it was utterly believable. The big twist, which is one I cannot discuss for fear of spoiling the novel for potential readers, completely blew me apart. I felt so very sad for Skye, Ben and all those impacted by this shocking revelation. The odds of this scenario happening were almost off the scale belief wise, but the science behind it all makes it plausible. Nevertheless, the coincidence was truly awful for Ben and Skye. Although the revelation of this terrible situation may shake some readers to their core and make them feel uncomfortable, for me it increased the brevity of the novel.

It is worth noting there is a side or sub plot included in Into My Arms that examines family, displacement and belonging. It involves the main character Skye, Ben and their encounter with a young Iranian boy who has just settled in Australia. It is a timely and relevant narrative thread that provides a solid commentary on life in Australia, especially the refugee experience. It does link to the characters of the novel quite well but I do have to confess I was so consumed by Skye and Ben's story I couldn't wait to get back to it. By the time I reached the end of their journey, I felt like I had experienced every emotion possible. The ending however, has a redeeming quality after so much despair touched this promising couple.

For those who appreciate a thought provoking read that will make you consider how you would react if you were placed in the same shoes as the characters a novel, then Into My Arms would be a great reading choice. For me, it solidified my appreciation for the courage of talented Kylie Ladd, who writes with impressive conviction and insight for the contentious issues that arise in life.

Kathy says

This is a story about Love. A story about Family. And as everyone else has already stated – it's hard to write an indepth review without spoiling it for you. The twist is heartbreaking and although it comes on quite early in the book it keeps the pages turning to see how everything turns out in the end. I would have given the book 5 stars, and it's a good 4 1/2 for sure, but I like stories to not leave me with any questions and although I was nearly satisfied, I'm still thinking about what may have happened to a few of the characters. But that might be just me! There's also a bit of crude language through the book, which makes me hesitate giving it to my Mum to read, but I think she will like the storyline so I will hand it on!!! Kylie Ladd is a very talented

author and this storyline is modern, contemporary romance at its best, and I do recommend it.

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

In her previous novels, Kylie Ladd has written with compelling insight into uncomfortable issues including adultery in *After the Fall* and death and grief in *Last Summer*. *Into My Arms*, her third novel, is similarly confronting while examining the complexities of family, love and desire.

It's incredibly difficult to articulate my thoughts about *Into My Arms* while avoiding spoilers. The back cover hints at love at first sight followed by a passionate relationship which is then shattered by a shocking revelation but it is much more than that. Skye and Ben are nearly destroyed by a phenomena that challenges moral and societal conventions and *Into My Arms* explores it's devastating effects on both the couple and their families.

What could have been a tawdry, sensationalistic subject, is dealt with carefully, shedding a compassionate light on a little known issue that is particularly relevant in modern society. There is no getting away from the fact that most readers will find it confronting but I think Ladd does a terrific job in humanising the issue by placing ordinary people at the center of the maelstrom.

While the controversial main plot will garner the most attention, there is a prominent subplot in the book not alluded to in the blurb. Zia is a pupil of Ben and Skye, a young boy from an immigrant Iranian family who is struggling to adjust to his new life. While Zia's story is linked by the themes of family and estrangement, and he develops connections with the main characters, I thought it out of place somehow. Don't get me wrong, it is interesting in and of itself, but I didn't find it necessary and I wondered if it's purpose was to blunt the confronting nature of Ben and Skye's circumstance.

Regardless, I found *Into My Arms* to be a fascinating and thought provoking novel. I devoured it in hours and I suspect it will stimulate discussion amongst all who read it.

Amy Simmonds says

I enjoyed the general storyline in this novel, however I found it was difficult to connect emotionally to any of the major characters due to the style of writing. The story moved at a fairly rapid pace, but with the POV changing from character to character with each new chapter, it was hard to really be drawn in. The ideas and moral dilemmas raised in novel were interesting though, and I was engaged enough to read through to the end.

Joanne says

What can I say? Love love loved it. I felt guilty for finishing it so quickly!

Kerri Sackville says

This is a love story with a twist - a contemporary romance set against the background of a uniquely modern dilemma. Kylie writes so beautifully, and her characters live on well after you put the book down. I raced through Into My Arms, needing to know where Skye and Ben's relationship would lead. A brilliant read.

Helen McKenna says

When Skye and Ben meet purely by chance, there is an instant connection between them. Both are a little perplexed by the intensity of it but ultimately they have no choice but to give in to a force that is bigger than both of them. Although this means Skye needs to break off her previously happy relationship with Hamish, she knows that Ben represents the kind of love that only comes along once, if ever.

Although surprised by Skye's decision, her family are supportive and welcome Ben into their circle. Skye, her twin brother Arran and mother Nell are close, even more so after recently losing Skye's dad Charlie to the ravages of dementia. It is only after Nell notices a particular trait in Ben that she begins to wonder and worry. The idea seems too unreal to begin with, too fanciful to be possible. The odds of it being true are infinitesimally small – yet she knows she can't remain silent. As much as she knows it will break her daughter's heart Nell finally breaks her silence and then the fallout begins.

It is difficult to say too much about the subject matter of this book without giving a major part of the plot away. Suffice to say Kylie Ladd tackles a difficult and uncomfortable subject with wisdom and realism as well as compassion. It is a subject that will continue to haunt individuals, in fact much more so in our modern society. And as much as it does feel abhorrent, it is a reality – with much scientific evidence to back it up.

Confronting subject matter aside, this is a wonderfully written, well paced book. The earlier chapters, which covered Skye and Ben's meeting are fast moving, mirroring the swiftness of their attraction – while other sections are slower, again moving in rhythm with the story. I wasn't entirely sure of the significance of the subplot involving an Iranian refugee and his family – it just didn't seem to have a great bearing on the overall plot. It was a touching story though, also handled with compassion and insight.

Into My Arms is a compelling and thought provoking book that raises many issues that are not as farfetched as they may seem. It certainly educated me on a subject I had only the scantest knowledge of.

Sharon says

Skye has been going out with Hamish for a few years now and the pair are in a loving relationship, but that's until, Ben Cunningham walks into, Skye's classroom where she is teaching. When Skye and Ben first met it seemed there was an instant connection between them. Skye tries to avoid her feelings, but the more she sees, Ben the stronger her feelings become.

Breaking up with, Hamish may have been hard for Skye, but she knows she wants to be with, Ben. Their feelings for each other grow stronger by the day. Then suddenly their world's are turned upside down when they receive some very unexpected information. Ben leaves immediately after receiving the information and

without saying goodbye to, Skye. Skye is left heartbroken, devastated and feels torn apart as she wonders if she'll ever see or hear from, Ben again. She also knows in her heart that this is probably the best thing for both of them.

This was a difficult story to write a review on without giving away too much of the actual story line. What I can tell you is that it's a beautiful and very moving love story and so much more. For me personally I must say the subject matter in this novel was a bit hard going at times, but in saying that it was still a fabulous read. I have no hesitation in HIGHLY recommending this book.

Amanda says

4 for plot. 5 because i could not put it down.

Belinda says

There has been a bit of buzz around Kylie Ladd's new book Into My Arms, so I was excited to pick it up from the library yesterday. I love a book where you can really sink your teeth into the ideas and characters featured and I thought this book club darling was going to be the next dinner-party must-read. Into My Arms opens strongly, when the impetuous headstrong Skye, who is dating Hamish, meets teacher Ben Cunningham at a school. Skye falls in love with Ben and leaves Hamish. However, problems arise when Skye introduces Ben to her mother Nora and her gay brother Arran, who has just broken up with Mark, who cheated on him, and Nora realises that Ben and Skye are actually brother and sister - Ben was conceived using fertilised eggs left over after Nora and her husband Charlie, who just died of dementia, used IVF to have Arran and Skye. Ben didn't know he wasn't his parents' genetic child and becomes estranged from his mother Mary, although he stays in touch with his sister Kirra.

Sound complicated? That summary sums up just about every single problem with this very average book. After its strong beginning, the story just goes nowhere. The characters lack any depth at all, do not develop over the course of the novel and there are so many different characters with a stake in this story it's overwhelming, especially since their narrative voices are exactly the same.

On top of the laundry list of characters, this book is not afraid to acknowledge multiple ideas. As well as the incest storyline, there is a dementia storyline, a gay storyline, a cheating storyline, a squatting/freegan storyline, an asylum seeker storyline, a widow storyline and, just so nothing gets left out, a religious storyline as well. On top of that there are the broader overarching themes of family, motherhood, home and belonging. Simply put, that's too many storylines! Ladd would have been much better served to strip back the unnecessary stuff and focus on the important characters and stories so we care about the people she is writing about. Instead, she makes something a big deal - like Charlie having dementia - that has absolutely nothing to do with the rest of the story. This is Basic Writing 101 - if it doesn't add to the story, take it out. What's even worse is that Ladd's metaphors are so laboured it's almost painful to read - for example, after finding out that Skye is his sister, Ben has explosive diarrhoea and the only thing he had to wipe his arse on is the letter from the genetics company telling him the results of the sibling test. You have seriously got to be kidding.

There are interesting ideas in this book. The consequences of IVF and sperm/egg donation are real - there are concerns about genetic siblings hooking up because they don't realise they are related. The integration of asylum seekers into Australian society and the processing of refugee visas is a big problem. It is horrible to

lose a family member to dementia and it must be awful to discover that your partner is cheating on you. However, you get absolutely nothing from reading this book that you wouldn't get from reading a really detailed plot summary, so read a couple of reviews of Into My Arms that contain spoilers so you know enough about it to get by at dinner parties and spend your time reading another better book instead.

Chloe says

I have mixed feelings about this one. It was a great beginning, a good ending, but the middle dragged a bit for me. I couldn't help but feel that the author threw a few too many story lines in for fillers.

John Purcell says

Just finished Into My Arms and highly recommend it. Anyone who has read and enjoyed Caroline Overington's novels or Jodi Picoult's will love it. Kylie Ladd engages the reader from the first page to the very last. Interesting and moving.

Georgia says

What a ride! Kylie Ladd sure knows how to write a gripping novel and Into My Arms does not disappoint. Devoured this over a weekend.

MarciaB - Book Muster Down Under says

Please note that this review is based on the uncorrected proof provided to me by the Publisher and that it may differ slightly to the final published version

I am not a fan of book reviews that end up spoiling a story for another reader and, while Kylie Ladd doesn't hesitate to give us some teasers in the first few chapters, and the plot is revealed fairly quickly, I have still been faced with the challenge of writing this review without spoilers which, to say the least, has been difficult because Ms Ladd has indeed created much food for thought, and conversation.

Skye and Hamish have been together for quite a while and although their relationship appears to be set in stone and the path to their future inevitable, everything is threatened when Skye, assisting two Grade Five classes one day a week to create a wall mosaic for their school tuckshop area, meets Ben, a teacher at the same school.

Their first meeting, following a small medical emergency in class, has her feeling sure that she has met him before, but on asking the question, it becomes clear from his reaction that they have not.

Two weeks later, the concern for a young Iranian boy, whom they both teach, brings Skye and Ben together to discuss him, then, after yet another encounter when *"the kiss ignited something, blew it into being"*, Skye

finds her thoughts becoming totally consumed by Ben. Breaking off her relationship with Hamish, Skye and Ben enter into a relationship which smoulders from the pages of this novel. They are totally in-sync with one another and the attraction is like nothing either of them has ever felt before.

Skye's mother Nell, having lost her husband (Skye's father) six months prior, only wants happiness for her daughter but, when she meets Ben for the first time, she can't help the disturbing unease which plagues her. Ignoring her instincts until she can no longer, she begins to make enquiries of her own which lead to a shocking discovery that will have you reeling in both disbelief and sorrow as the strong bond which has developed between Ben and Skye shatters and a family is torn apart by a secret they felt was theirs to keep.

Unable to comprehend how this has happened, Ben quits his job and disappears from Skye's life and, just as she helped her class build a mosaic from fragmented pieces, she attempts to rebuild her dismantled life with what remains of her, until disaster strikes in another form, ultimately bringing them together again, in more ways than one.

There is a sub-plot to which the blurb gives no allusion, and that is the plight of Zia, a young Iranian refugee boy, who has come to live in Australia with his parents and youngest brother. Living in a commission housing complex and going out of his way to please his father at the expense of his education, while his mother suffers from crippling depression, he is connected to both Ben and Skye through their teaching, as well as Skye's twin brother, Arran, through his work in social services. While I did feel that Zia's story was a bit out of place on the whole, there is no doubt that the feelings and emotions he and his family experience on their journey add cohesion to the strong themes of loss, grief, depression and familial ties that bind, which weave their way throughout the narrative.

In the same vein as *Jodi Picoult*, albeit less formulaic, Kylie Ladd has framed her novel around a morally complex issue which, in today's world, could quite possibly be a time bomb waiting to go off. With great insight and empathy, Ms Ladd has touched on a subject that some could find confronting, but for this reviewer, the desperation and emotions of her well fleshed out characters touched me to the core and I couldn't help but feel the deepest sadness for everyone involved.

This deftly woven literary exploration of love in all its forms, longing for the impossible and family secrets long held, is a haunting reminder that seemingly innocent decisions in the past can all too easily shape our futures.
