



Touching Melody

RaShelle Workman

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Sometimes life isn't pretty, but you have to close your eyes and let go...

Touching Melody Details

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From Reader Review Touching Melody for online ebook

RaShelle Workman says

This story is inspired by real events

I have a thing for firsts. First day of school. First crush. First tattoo. Once, a long time ago, I made a promise to a boy that all of my firsts would be with him. But that was before . . .

Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to All Night Reads and Netgalley.)

18-year-old Maddie is still coming to terms with the death of her parents around 7 years ago. She knows that they were killed by her best friend Kyle's father, but was unable to point the finger at him because he was a high ranking police officer.

Now Maddie is at college, the same college as Kyle, who she hasn't seen or spoken to in 7 years. She knows that she's in love with him though, and she even saved her firsts for him – kissing, touching, sex etc. Can Maddie get past who Kyle's father was though? Can she really love the boy whose father took everything from her? And do bad people raise bad kids?

This was an okay contemporary romance, but certain plot-lines, and inconsistencies in the storyline drove me nuts.

The book started out okay, if a little strange. Maddie is new to college, she's room-mates with some sort of punk/goth girl, and even though they have zero in common they are becoming friends. Maddie's ex-best friend Kyle is also at the same college – and it's really unclear as to whether or not she knew he would be at this certain college before she got there. If she didn't, then that's one hell of a coincidence, especially considering that she runs into him on like her first day?! And that's not where the coincidences end – just imagine, they are both super-talented piano players too! Sorry, but I just don't buy it. Far too coincidental for me I'm afraid.

When Maddie sees Kyle again for the first time, she immediately hugs him, whilst he pretends that he doesn't know who she is. Why he does that is not explained, and I really didn't get it. Kyle's point of view at that point starts going on about how much he loves her and wants her, but he then walks away from her and goes off to have a threesome with two other girls. Why? I don't know. I suppose it might be that he's annoyed at her for ignoring him for the past 7 years, but this isn't explained so I'm really not sure.

Maddie knows that she is in love with Kyle, but she's not happy about it because his father killed her parents – we don't find out why until the very end of the book. I can see why she wouldn't want to be with him because of this, and I can also see how you can't control who you love, but still, it seems like a giant leap of faith to start a relationship with a boy whose father killed your parents.

Anyway, the next thing to annoy me was a conversation that happened between Maddie's therapist and Kyle. I know the conversation wasn't detailed as such, but I don't think that therapists are allowed to just speak to people randomly about their patients, without consent. This was, as a friend suggested – implausible, and

pretty irritating.

After that though, things went from bad to worse. I'll share with you my status updates from Goodreads so you have an idea of where my head was, and because if I talk through all these points this review will never end:

57.0% "He puts her head on his thigh then kisses her neck - how flexible is he?"

63.0% "So before he said that he wanted her sober, and now he's getting her drunk!"

64.0% "What is the big deal about seeing his shoes?"

65.0% "3 shots of vodka and she's passed out? What a lightweight!"

65.0% "His cousin seriously expects him to let him rape Maddie, and threatens to tell his uncle if he doesn't? That is bizarre."

67.0% "I hope she wouldn't get in the car with him if she really knew what he thought of her."

71.0% "I'm not sure this book needs the warning about sexual content as all this girl does is moan that she's not ready yet! It's getting kind of old."

89.0% "So her aunt and uncle don't believe in mobile phones, and never let her have one, and now they're checking she's got it on her before she goes out? Just what?! That doesn't make sense!

97.0% "I'm dating the son of the man who killed my parents." "Great, let's have pie." Seriously?!

99.0% "I've finished, and there is no sex at all!"

So as you can see, there were several things that annoyed me in the second half of this book. I was not impressed that the storyline about Maddie's room-mate being on drugs wasn't wrapped up at the end. We guess that she's on drugs from all the sniffing, Maddie sees coke in her bag, then she's giving Maddie some really strong pain killers, and then nothing more is said. Is she still doing drugs or what? We never find out. I am shocked to find out that this is the start of a series though, so maybe goth-girl's drugs issues will be explored in the next book?

Overall; this book bugged me, on several issues, and I'm not impressed.

4 out of 10.

careen says

There's so much I want to say, and I don't have a lot of time. I wanted to like this, but I didn't. Between the references to *that* book, the female lead with absolutely zero common sense and the whole possible BDSM angle, I wasn't pleased. Also, what was with the cokehead roommate? I don't understand why that was even part of this story.

This was a good plot idea, and I wanted it to work, but sadly it didn't. The sentence structure was poor and editing wasn't nearly as bad as it could have been, but it still needed some work.

Bee says

Well, I finished, but only because I got this book for review from Netgalley. That's the only reason. This will be one of those review I hate to write, but sometimes you just have to.

So... yeah... This book was not that good. Not what I expected at all. Basically this book is about Maddie. She is new at college and in the beginning of the book we meet her when she is getting her annual tattoo. She does that to numb the pain of her parents murder seven years ago. Sounds like a cool character, doesn't it? Well, it isn't. She sounds like a cool chick with issues, but actually she's a naive (or dumb) 18-year old girl who never watches tv, never had a cell phone before and don't know what 'kinky' means. Yeesh. Talk about unrelatable. That wouldn't bother me if I had seen more of the traumatised, broken side of her that witnessed her parents murder. But I rarely saw that. 80% of the time she is just a normal (stupid, dumb and naive) girl. Yeah... No.

Then we have Kyle. His dad is the one who killed Maddies parents al those years ago. I didn't like him either. Just another stereotype boy that has some issues he never deals with and instead only thinks of sex.

Yaaaawn

The rest of the characters were not all that memorable for me, so that's not good either.

The romance in this story is one of the main things. Maddie has been in love with Kyle for years because they used to be best friends when they were young. I hoped for a good romance here, but it was just kissing and no bonding most of the time. Yeah, that doesn't do it for me. Especially when I got the background on how they used to be. They made some kind of pact when they were eleven to be each others firsts. First kiss, first date, etc,... And when they see each other again after so many years, no bonding and catching up at all? Another let down in this book. Sigh. Oh and I for one, could never fall in love with a guy whose father killed my parents. Maybe I'm just weird for that. *shrugs*

The writing.... Well... I've read much better. Really. The double POV didn't work for me. At all.

If you expect a great, uplifting book about hope, forgiveness, love, drama, etc,... Don't hold your breath, because that's not what this book was for me personally. I am really sorry, but I just didn't like this book at all. It's a shame though... I like the cover and the blurb made it sound so interesting... *sigh* I'm sorry for the negative review. I really don't like doing this.

Jess at Such a Novel Idea says

I received this e-book in exchange for an honest review through Netgalley.

Can I just start this off by saying I feel a bit hoodwinked. This book was not what I expected from the synopsis I read.

This review is going to basically be a list of things I didn't like about the book, because honestly these things overpowered the story, plot, tone, and writing. I couldn't get past these things and enjoy the book.

1. Tattoos - Yes, I love tattoos. The fact that we start the book out with her getting one (and having some already) made me think I was really going to like it. But then I find out that she's been getting them since she was 13 as a way to cope with the pain of losing (and seeing) her murdered parents. Basically, the tattoos are a 'safe' form of cutting/self-harm. Now I wouldn't have had issue with this if it wasn't suggested by a

therapist (and really, what kid that age needs a tattoo!?) and would have been addressed at some point as self-harm. But no, it was just masked as something sweet she did to move past her parent's deaths.

2. Maddie - Maddie was the most frustrating girl! She is a very confused character - she likes tattoos but doesn't know what kinky means, she was sheltered by her aunt and uncle, but she parties every night she can. And her tattoos were probably the only thing I liked about her personality -- she was a very flat, one-dimensional character. Here we have a girl who witnessed her parent's murderers getting away with the crime. This could have been such a dynamic character. But no, she just sees the boy and has some mediocre tug-of-war in her brain, but really she just jumps to be with him the first chance she gets. Oh and there is the pact her and Kyle made when they were 10. Please tell me how many 10 year olds make pacts about sex.

3. Rape - So at the first party, Maddie leaves her roommate and heads back to her room alone. When she wakes up, the room mate basically says she was raped. And then... nothing. The book keeps going as if she told her she had just eaten cherry pie. I almost stopped reading the book when I realized this rape wasn't going to be discussed anymore. And then at the very next party, the girl put herself in almost the SAME position. Yes, I know date rape is high, especially on college campuses and most girls, like the roommate, feel like they put themselves in that position. But here was an opportunity to really do something with the issue of date rape, and yet it was passed by so we could talk about Maddie's new cell phone from the cute boy.

4. Kinky/Threesomes/Sex - This part was weird. Kyle is introduced to us as someone being invited to a three way with two lesbians. And then the next day we are supposed to believe that he is a swoon-worthy guy? Umm, no. I understand that he had a messed up life, but his character details clashed so violently, I just couldn't find him a believable character.

5. The Teacher, The Family, The Twist - The end was crazy. First of all, the plot twist was just rushed and rarely made me anxious or fearful for the characters. The teacher tells Maddie she slept with Kyle (and then that is never really explained) and the crazy cousin is just kind of allowed to be a jerk throughout the whole book. And Kyle really had no idea what was going on in his family? I don't buy it.

6. The Roommate... Again - Seriously, I have so much worry for this roommate who was raped and on drugs. And we NEVER find out what happens. I understand it is a series and things will probably come to light later down the road, but seriously we were just left with nothing to chew on. Again, another part of the story line that could have been done so much better.

7. College & Music - For a story about college, very little learning seemed to take place. And for someone on a music scholarship, very little music playing seemed to happen. Again, not something I'm inclined to believe if it won't even be alluded to.

This is the most I've ever ranted about a book, and the reason I'm even doing it is because I feel like it had SO MUCH potential to be so much better. I understand why people will like the book, but I couldn't overlook the things above.

Tee loves Kyle Jacobson says

Touching Melody is such a heart wrenching story about first love and loss. I was excited to read this book when I saw the cover reveal because it just calls to you. I mean the girl on the cover looks so sad and haunted in the picture that it made me wonder what was going on with her to make her look like that. After reading the blurb and then the book I was totally blown away with how much the cover matched the book. This is a

story with so many secrets and lies that it had me at the edge of my seat. I at one point yelled at my Kindle and my kids thought I was going crazy!

Maddie had it all until a senseless act took it all away from her. Her parents were killed and now she is left to live with her aunt and uncle. She is excited to be getting away and starting a new life away at college. She knows it will be hard and she will miss her aunt and uncle but she won't miss people looking at her weird and the whispers of how her parents were murdered. Maddie's all moved in and settling nicely into college life when her friend suggests they go to a fraternity party. At first Maddie didn't want to go but she went anyways because her friend wanted her to. Only when she gets there she sees the boy she has had a crush on since she was nine Kyle. Her heart starts racing and she wants out because Kyle's father killed her parents and she wants nothing to do with him or his family.

So Maddie decides she will throw herself into her music. She practices the piano every chance she gets to keep her mind off of Kyle and her parents. Then her professor asks her to do a duet for annual winter gala which gets her a scholarship she agrees. But she soon finds out the other half of her duet is none other than Kyle. At first she does not want to do the duet but she needs the scholarship so she works with him. She tries to keep her feelings at bay but she soon finds herself right back at square one in love with Kyle.

Kyle is determined to show Maddie that he is nothing like his family. He loves her and wants her in his life but how can she love him? Will she be able to love him? What is Kyle willing to sacrifice to be with Maddie? This is a summer beach must read! The highs the lows and the love between two people is the greatest thing to read on the beach or anywhere!

Ashley says

I finished this book fairly quickly, but unfortunately not because it was so amazing that I couldn't put it down. I just wanted to finish it and move on. The plot, characters, nothing worked for me. I found the writing to be clunky at times. It didn't read smoothly. It would just jump from one thought to the next, which jumbled everything together.

Melody Martin is still coming to terms with her parents murder. She witnessed her best friend's father leave the scene of the crime when she was eleven and quickly puts it together that he killed her parents. Shortly after she is taken in by her Aunt and Uncle, who don't have modern technology (other than one TV) and are stuck in the 70s.

Melody was just not relatable. Finding your parents murdered in a pool of blood at the age of eleven is traumatizing, but she just didn't seem very smart. Why would she move back to the town where her parents were murdered and start a relationship with the killer's son? A lot of her actions were very questionable in this book. Melody seemed overly naive and innocent. She acted more like she was locked away for the past seven years, then someone who was home schooled.

Kyle Hadley, Melody's best friend growing up is first introduced while being propositioned for a ménage à trois. From the start he seemed like a jerk and just not a very nice guy. My impression of him didn't really improve as the book continues.

The book did touch on a lot of hard topics alcohol and drug use, rape, violence, etc., but didn't really flesh them out. For example, Melody's roommate, Gina, is raised in foster care and after their first "wild" college party Gina comes home dishevelled and upset. It is obvious something has happened to her, but Melody wants to ask her about what happened, but doesn't want to upset her. She finds out later that Gina was raped

and it wasn't the first time. Gina thinks there isn't a point in reported what happened because she likes to party, so it must be her fault. After they talk about it Gina seems to be psychologically recovered within a few days and Melody drops the subject.

My biggest problem with this book was how Melody saw the male characters. After she is wakes up in Kyle's house she thinks he must be such a great guy because he didn't take advantage of her when she was passed out. That doesn't make him a nice guy, it means he's not a rapist. Just because you are passed out doesn't give a guy the right to take advantage of you. When Evan attacks her in an alley, she just thinks oh what a jerk he must be. Her naivety on certain matters seemed quite twisted at times.

I have read a fair amount of the New Adult genre and unfortunately this just wasn't one of the better ones.

Marianne (Boricuan Bookworms) says

Touching Melody had a great premise. I really had seen a lot of potential in it, but sadly, it didn't live up to my expectations.

When first picking up the book, I thought I would be facing a psychological thriller, instead of an insta-love, hormone filled book.

I got mislead by the summary, and I couldn't enjoy the book as much as I wanted to, because my expectations were incredibly high.

This book had a lot of faults. From the shallow characters, to the unrealistic setting, I actually had to force myself to finish this book.

The main character's name is Maddie, and she spends the whole book with this inner turmoil on whether or not she can trust the main love interest, which is the son of the man that killed her parents 7 years ago.

We see no character growth whatsoever from Maddie. Just some reckless behavior here and there, obsessive thoughts about Kyle, and that she plays the piano (the "piano" subject only gets touched about twice in the story, even if it's supposed to be the main theme).

She was so naive all the time. The "evil" people were practically holding a sign in her face saying "here I am! Send me to jail already", but she never picked up on it. *Never* .

And then, we're introduced to the most arrogant boy in the universe, Kyle. Know how Kyle gets introduced? Kyle gets invited to join a three-way. Guess what? He accepts. Yay.

How does **anyone** fall for a guy like that?

Anyways, apparently Kyle does have a nice side... it's hidden in the letters that he's written for Maddie ever since he was twelve. The same letters where he glorifies her body parts and asks her to remember the "pact" they made when they were ten. What pact, you ask? The pact where they promise to save all their "firsts" for each other.

They're 10 years old! How in the hell do you write 10 year olds to promise to have sex with each other?

When I was 10, I probably couldn't say the word "sex" without giggling for 15 minutes. Gah.

Something else that really ticked me off about this story was the setting. This is supposed to be a college campus, but I could have sworn I was reading something about the Jersey Shore. There's sex everywhere, booze everywhere, drugs everywhere... and apparently not a single drop of learning.

If that weren't enough, in the first few chapters a character gets raped. Does that get mentioned later on in the story? No. Does anyone go to jail for raping a girl? No. I lost my respect for this book after this.

Overall, I expected a psychological thriller with a little bit of mystery. What did I get? A poorly executed insta-love story, with unrelatable characters, unrealistic setting and a shaky plotline.

1.5 stars.

Ebook provided by Publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

Laura P says

When Maddie Martin sees two men leaving her house, one her best friend Kyle Hadley's police officer father, the other man with a gun, she would never have believed that she would find her parents shot to death inside. Forced by her strict Aunt and Uncle to keep quiet about Hadley's involvement, Maddie becomes reclusive. She throws herself into music, becoming an accomplished pianist, earning a full scholarship to the University of Bellam Springs. As devastating as it was to lose her parents, never hearing from Kyle after the murders hurts her more, and makes her believe that he is just as bad a person as his father. What Maddie and Kyle don't know is that her Aunt and Uncle intercepted all of letters Kyle wrote, in an attempt to keep the two apart.

At Bellam Springs, Maddie and Kyle are reunited. Maddie is surprised by how strongly she is drawn back to Kyle, given how firmly she believes that he is not a good person. Kyle similarly doesn't know how to act around the girl who has, in his mind, rebuffed him for years, but who he knows he still loves. Forced to play a piano duet for the Winter Gala, Maddie and Kyle are pushed back together. They are forced to face the lingering feelings that had for each other as children, work through their resentments, learn to work together, and ultimately fight for their lives, against a threat trying to keep them permanently apart.

Touching Melody has elements of romance, suspense and mystery, which was maybe more than it could handle. There was so much going on in the storyline, that at times it was fairly hard to follow. The novel moves from one event to another in a speed that leaves your head spinning. As someone who appreciates more of the slow reveals, and the moments of "I never would have seen that coming, but it makes complete sense" in a mystery - where you as the reader mentally work to figure out what is going on, and then you are rewarded with the answer - I was fairly disappointed. The quick pace of the narrative and the way that the story moved from one event to the other, with the answers just being given, the bad guys unmasked, and the mystery revealed, without their being a chance for the reader to answer any of these questions on their own, didn't allowed me to connect to the story or the characters in any worthwhile way.

My biggest problem with how the novel fragmented was how such little explanation went into some of the biggest story elements. The fact that Maddie and Kyle for instance both become accomplished piano players, when neither played piano as children, really didn't make sense to me. I would have like more background into how and why they were led to the piano after Maddie's parents are killed, because the piano element in

the story as is, seemed to just be an arbitrary means of forcing the two together. Especially disappointing considering the piano element was one of the biggest draws for me to the novel. The character of Gina, Maddie's roommate, similarly only seemed to be used as a vessel into the drug storyline, and only then because she used drugs. Just as the reader got really interested and invested in her story, she disappears completely. The biggest leap for me was the drug ring. I could not believe that a huge drug ring could exist in a town, where an undercover FBI presence was warranted, yet, until Maddie link to the drug ring is revealed, the ring as a whole is never alluded to or mentioned (aside from Gina doing drugs which in no way conveys the magnitude of the apparent drug presence in the town).

Another effect of the quick pacing was how little the reader really gets to understand the characters. Maddie is in therapy and has been since her parents were killed. Yet, how she (or anyone else) works through emotions or struggles (besides using drugs), and how they are feeling (aside from being attracted to someone) is barely alluded to. Instead, Maddie frequently faints or passes out instead of handling situations maturely. Also, the length of time it took for Maddie and Kyle to actually have a conversation about the past, especially considering they have been forced to work together on their piano duet, and considering their behavior clearly shows that their idea of the other person was wrong - Kyle's not a bad guy like his dad, and Maddie clearly wants to talk/ communicate with Kyle - was frustratingly astounding and completely unrealistic to me.

The synopsis of this story was intriguing, and gave the impression that Touching Melody was taking New Adult in a different direction, past just a romance. I feel like there was potential in the story, but the quick pacing, disjointedness between events and lack of really insight into characters and their feelings or decisions, ultimately made me completely uninterested.

** I received a copy of this book from the publisher to read and honestly review. I was I no way compensated.

Lauren at Live Read and Breathe Reviews says

2.5 to 3 Stars

Source: eARC for Honest Review from Author

Here is a story about first loves, first everything, loss, denial and forgiveness

Maddie and Kyle sitting in a tree... (You get the drift. Childhood friends and first loves)

Then Holy shit tragedy happens and Maddie moves away with her controlling yet still loving aunt and uncle.

The whole time Maddie can't stop thinking about Kyle but because of the tragedy has vowed to not have him in her life. Of course without telling him why and Grrrrrrl don't you know assuming just makes an ass of u and me.

However, the whole time Kyle is still missing Maddie and is lost and confused but that did not stop him from being a wee bit of a slut (so not a lot of firsts left for Maddie. Oops) But his letters. Gah! What a friggin' sweetheart.

Fate and soulmates can be tricky buggers and Maddie and Kyle are forced to know each other again. With more mis communication and yes more assumptions (girl did you not learn anything the first time), suspense and did not see that coming moments make a bumpy journey for Kyle and Maddie.

Cute story with loads of potential but I just didn't hundred percent connect with the story.

For more reviews, visit [Live Read and Breathe](#)

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Rose says

Pre-read: Holy crud, that blurb! I have no qualms saying that I'm intrigued to see where this goes. It has the potential to turn out towards something interesting if handled well.

moves up on reading list

Post-read: I'm only giving this book a single star as a formality. Zero stars would be too high of a rating for this utterly offensive, inaccurate, violence glorified, implausible horrible novel. I would rage quit New Adult after this if my patience wasn't so firm, and if I didn't have hope that there are far, far better authors writing in this genre than Ms. Workman. What on earth would make anyone think a novel like this was okay?

Full review:

I'm going to start the discussion on "Touching Melody" for what it means to have false promises in the book you're marketing. Whoever wrote the blurb for "Touching Melody" ought to be thanked for selling what probably should've been an interesting premise, if treated within any realm of responsibility. Granted, I understand others might think "Ehh, I could tell this was going to be problematic before even going into the novel - a girl falling in love with a guy whose father killed her parents? That's not likely to end well."

I'll make an argument on Workman's behalf for that, and it's probably the major, if not only point of defense I'll make about this book. An idea in itself depends on the way you carry it, develop it, nurture it for the conflicts that arise and the people involved at its core. This actually could've been a fine coming of age/contemporary romance as it was advertised on NetGalley. It helps that it has an uber pretty cover to complement it to draw people in, in addition to it's premise. It deals with several tough subjects, and I expected it to carry the weight of its contexts with perhaps a statement on forgiveness, on morality lines, maybe even have a bit of a suspenseful/thrilling element that was plausible, mature, and kept my attention until the very last page. I had the expectation that there would be *some* sex or some violent aspects to it, but I thought it might actually go against the grain of what I've seen in this genre and actually handle it with good development. I also liked the suggestion that this would delve into the interests of the leads with regards to music and their college experiences. If anyone knows about how much I love anime series like

Nodame Cantabile where it revolves around the characters as well as the music thematic, you'll know what I was expecting out of this particular story.

This book did not provide any of what it promised, understatement. Matter in point, this book upset me so badly I seriously considered stopping reading New Adult all together. Almost to the point of saying "Look, I'm sorry, I can't review this age group anymore - it offends me that people think they have to sell graphic, no bars held erotic sex with minors and advocate violence, including sexual violence with no consequence, development, or responsibility at all. I'm tired of it, I don't see why other people aren't tired or offended by it, and it's not messaging that I want to support with my time, my money, or my resources. And I'm not buying the B.S. that comes with it being 'just a story.' It's a milking of people's suffering and it's not a good marketing offshoot when so many strides have been attempted in YA and younger categorical groups to note that these measures are wrong. Even further, these aren't things that even adult or erotic books would do, because at least they know the audience they're writing for, and approach it with varying degrees of responsibility. That's not the case here."

But I'm not doing that. I recognize that even in the spectra of this age group trying to find its wings and with its quickly budding popularity, RaShelle Workman's individual story, in itself, is not representative of the whole of the New Adult age group, and while people have the right to write about whatever topic floats their boat, I can simply put the book down, leave the author's work by the wayside and seek better stories out there (or write them myself). I'm still searching for a story that I love in New Adult, and I'm not giving up on it. There have been stories that have come close to piquing my interest, but haven't gotten over the hump because of flaws that I've seen within them and had problems with. I can't speak for anyone else's experiences, though.

In the meantime, Workman's managed to convince me in one story - with its poorly surface developed characters, with its over the top glorification of sex, sexual and physical violence, implausible progressions and lackluster writing that I will never pick up another book of hers again, not even the other one I own by her ("Exile"). This book was that bad for me.

It's interesting in the "Afterword" part of the e-galley copy I had, the author specifically mentions that this is an account of "fictional characters based in a fictional world." Just because your characters are fictitious, it doesn't absolve you from considering the real world implications that you establish in the story you write. Even fantasy, the genre, has ties to the real world that make it recognizable enough for readers to have something to identify with it. I felt no true love or coming to terms for ANY of the characters in this book, it was straight up, manufactured, appropriation of dramatic context and real world struggles that were used as manipulative vehicles for the sake of drama. I can't even begin to say how bad these measures were handled. I thought about writing this review about a hundred different ways - rage mode (though I think I did that enough in my status updates on Goodreads), creative mode, or reflective mode. I ultimately chose the latter. I'm not even upset about this anymore, I'm just completely and utterly disappointed.

The author also mentions if I had a problem with the content that I should talk about it. Well, let's talk all. I'm opening the floor.

"Touching Melody" is a dual perspective novel that heavily leans toward the narration of the female perspective character, Maddie. Maddie is a damaged young woman, and you can tell that in the narrative from the get go. She's gotten tattoos over her body since she was only fourteen years old, and she suffers in the aftermath of the murders of both her parents. I'll admit I was intrigued with her biting tone in the first chapter of this novel. The catch is that Maddie was a witness to her parents deaths and based on her observances and interactions, her best friend's father was the one who committed the crime.

Kyle, the other perspective in this novel and Maddie's best friend, is completely oblivious to this fact. They grow apart after Maddie goes to live with her aunt and uncle, despite Kyle's letters trying to reach Maddie up to a point. Maddie's aunt is quick to drill into her mind that since Kyle was a "murderer's son" that he was no company to be around. Fast forward years later, and Maddie's at college with no lick of seeing Kyle.

At least until they end up going to college in the same music program. But no, don't grow too attached to the fact that this is a college environment or even with the backdrop of music prodigies. I'm here to tell you that the music backdrop was pretty much a non-entity except for some spot mentions that weren't fleshed out. And considering Maddie refers to her teacher as "Bitchy Spears" - it's more of a high school evocative environment than college.

Kyle's introduction in the novel is made within the realm of engaging in a *menage a trois*. The sexual depictions, the drug use, and the drinking are all graphically shown in this work, almost to the point of glorification in points. But even with the offending content, I think the biggest factor in this that made it telling for the mediocrity of the story were that neither of the characters were fleshed out well. Practically every couple of pages after a certain point had Maddie instacrushing on Kyle, and debating in her mind "I can't fall in love with him, his father killed my parents." This fact was repeated SO MANY TIMES, to the point where it was overkill. I expected Maddie to be bitter and standoffish among other emotional turns, but there was no range to be shown in that other than the constant affirmations of "His father killed my parents, but I LOVE HIM." Her body says go, her mind and heart say "no." Meh.

Kyle's pretty much the clueless friend who, while sleeping with his menage, insta-obsesses over Maddie. He also has a petname for her - ready for it?

"Freckles." It's pretty much used in the same frequency as "Pigeon" was in Jamie McGuire's "Beautiful Disaster". It's a childhood nickname, and personally speaking, I was appalled at the levels this book went when examining the childhood relationship between Kyle and Maddie. From the fact that they made a pact to have sex with each other when they were only 10 or 11 years old to the lost letters that Maddie later finds that has a 14 year old Kyle objectifying her body to the point of visualizing her legs among other aspects of her body. I felt sick reading those parts.

I could also note how this book delves into just about every New Adult cliché there is, almost to the point of it being a checklist, but I'll defer that comparison to touch on a few other things first.

I'm going to quote a telling passage on the level of what thematically this work sells in its messaging; this is from Maddie's perspective:

"When teachers prepare you for college, they never mention the dark underbelly. They talk about the classes, finding a major, living on your own, socializing with peers your own age, and getting a degree. They don't say anything about the parties, the drinking, the drugs. They leave out the boys, and the way our bodies thrum for more than books, studying and tests. They don't tell us what happens at night, when classes end and real life begins."

A more mature narrative could've carried some ideas in that, but at the same time, there's a heck of a lot of generalizations there that I found to be perturbing. This passage came shortly after Maddie's roommate, Gina, was (insinuated, repeatedly) raped/sexually assaulted and the idea was that if Maddie hadn't been picked up by Kyle, she probably would've been raped by someone willy nilly. As for Gina, she doesn't even tell anyone that she was raped, and while she tries to justify not telling anyone with generalizations that are noted in larger rape culture, the plot point is dropped faster than a hot potato, with no repercussions for the character or the parties involved with the rape/sexual assault. It's like it never happened.

This book virgin shames, slut shames, and delves into familiar offenses in some measures of NA, probably

even going one step further in some cases. There's visions that Maddie has of Kyle dominating her - some graphic to the point of overemphasizing (and demonizing) "kink" and in the measure of being tied to a bed, spreading her legs, "nothing but bare air caressing the places [she] didn't dare to touch", all the while noting that Kyle might be a violent person who may still be bent on killing her.

Mental illness is also horribly portrayed in this with generalizations about Maddie's therapist even knowing that Kyle's father might've been involved in Maddie's parents's deaths. At which point I couldn't help but ask "She's a professional, why the heck isn't she getting someone in law enforcement involved?" This whole narrative emphasized all of these horrible things happening to the characters, but no one says a darned thing about them or rises up to the oppression, hurt, or shame.

It gets worse when the narrative approaches its end and the facts are revealed revolving around the truth of Maddie's parents' deaths. If my suspension of disbelief wasn't gone before that point, it certainly flew out the window afterward, considering that Kyle's cousin Evan not only verbally threatened Maddie, but he also beat her senseless and left her standing in the middle of an alley where all of her stuff was left by the wayside.

WTH?!!!! Evan also threatens to kill Maddie, her remaining family, and even Kyle if she tells anyone who beat her and what she knows.

And to add insult to injury, in one scene where Maddie confronts Evan and Kyle with fear following the aforementioned scene, Kyle thinks that Maddie's being "hot and cold" and dismisses her feelings **DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE KNOWS SHE THINKS HIS FATHER KILLED HER PARENTS**. He thinks that she should *get over it* and that bad stuff happens to anybody.

I couldn't at that point. I was so upset and pretty much had every mental thought oriented for him to screw himself. But things delve into the more implausible after that point, and with haphazard scenes of peril, violence, and instaloving, the story progresses to a somewhat happy ending when it's all said and done.

Nothing about this respective story was realistic. Nothing about this story convinced me of a love story that I could root for, and the overglorification of so many problematic elements in NA in addition to the violence and sex with no repercussions or realism made me close my digital book with utter disgust.

I would not recommend this story to anyone, and I'll leave it at that.

0 stars.

Note: I received this as an ARC from NetGalley, from the publisher All Night Reads.

Leah says

I love the New Adult genre, it's been an interesting and very enjoyable genre to get into and I've enjoyed most of the books I've read. There's been one so far that hasn't floated my boat, and I can now add a second to it in Touching Melody. I wanted to like the novel, I thought the premise sounded utterly amazing – and it's so long, you're basically desperate to read the novel once you've finished it because it's described SO well. But, the synopsis is wildly misleading. Wildly misleading. I thought the weeks of seclusion between Maddie and Kyle would see them sort their differences (mostly, for Maddie to sort out her differences with Kyle, very relevant differences considering his dad killed her parents), but they aren't secluded anywhere and there's very little time dedicated to their piano duet.

I thought the novel was just too much. The synopsis above doesn't justify the novel at all. It doesn't mention how Maddie goes from being desperately in love with Kyle to wanting to stay away because of what his dad did. How she doesn't fall in love with him again, it seems to be a constant state from page one, same for Kyle. I just thought the whole entire backstory was ridiculous. Kyle's dad killing her parents, the whole way that entire bit ended, it was all absurd. I'm not joking those last thirty pages are so did more than jump the shark. It went from a New Adult novel to some weird Criminal Minds episode. I thought I'd switched to a wrong book. The ending just felt thrown in, and it just made what was a pretty bad book even worse. It was just horrifically unrealistic. I like a love story, I like when two characters who maybe shouldn't be together end up together, but Maddie and Kyle just didn't work for me because it was all so instant. Despite not having seen each other in several years and despite Maddie suffering massively with the loss of her parents and hurting so bad the only way she can shake it is to get a tattoo, she seems to quite happily give herself to Kyle, and know he's The One. It was too flipping much, too flipping soon.

Another really awful part, is the attempted storyline for Maddie's so-called best friend Gina. I say so-called because Maddie's a pretty crappy friend, allowing her friend to do drugs (hard drugs), and knowing she was raped but not telling anyway. Instead it was brushed under the carpet and left hanging. Who the hell knows what happened to Gina because her storyline wasn't relevant enough to complete it. Despite the fact that rape and drug using are major topics, Maddie's love for Kyle was way more important it seems, and that disappointed me. If you're going to use rape and drug taking in your novel, then have the balls to carry it through, to see some form of punishment take place because it sends out a really bad message when Gina's answer to being raped was that she was asking for it. That's the wrong message entirely. Gina didn't ask for it. At all. And it made me sad to read that, really sad.

The whole novel just didn't work for me at all. The book sounded good, and it had a pretty cover but it was so poorly executed I could barely finish it. I think if your entire premise of a novel is a girl falling in love with a boy whose dad killed your parents you need to rethink your premise, because I don't know how a person gets past that. No, Kyle wasn't his father and a bad dad doesn't equal a bad son, but Kyle would have looked like his dad and surely it'd be a constant reminder to look at that face every day, a face so similar to the one that shot your parents? I dunno, I'd find it pretty weird. Touching Melody didn't touch me at all. It was poorly executed, written in quite a juvenile way, and it tried to throw in some serious topics and failed all around in that area by not dealing with them properly enough and then throwing in a ridiculous ending that you have to read to believe. But, take my advice, don't read it, it's not a very good novel, sadly.

Claire Robinson says

WOW, just WOW.

This book grabbed me from the first paragraph of the prologue, and it didn't let me go until the last sentence of the Epilogue. I could write a long and wordy review about how great the story is (and it is),but quite frankly the time you would spend reading it, would be much better spent actually reading Touching Melody.

RaShelle Workman knows how to write a story thats for sure. Touching Melody, is original, engaging and thoroughly pulled me in. Not once did I have that moment where I thought "hey this reminds me of such and such, that I read before" and the story between Maddie and Kyle, is unique, it grabbed my heart and kept squeezing right until the end. There are thrills and spills aplenty and several times I had a "whoa, I didn't see that coming" moment. I Loved, Loved, Loved it....

On a side note, this book costs less than the price of a cup of coffee, or a sandwich from the deli. Take my advice and buy the book, because believe me one you start reading, you won't remember you wanted a

coffee, or a sandwich anyway, and the enjoyment and satisfaction you get from reading Touching Melody, will last a lot longer too.

I was lucky to be provided with a copy of this book through Netgalley, and for that I am happy to provide the above honest review.

Nicole Naranjo says

4.5 stars

Wow! Totally not what I expected, but I loved it! Such sadness and sorrow for them both and I'm so glad that fate stepped in and brought them back together. They both clearly have loved each other for a very long time! I love the pact they made and that she kept up her end and I love that Kyle wrote her letters for 7 years and even when they were returned unopened that he kept them; definitely swooning! "I'm so glad your here. Please let me be part of your life." That has to be my favorite line in the book! I'm really hoping there's another book, I want to know more of their story.

Maria says

Another amazing book by RaShelle Workman.

After her parents are murdered, Maddie at only 11 years old goes to live with her aunt and uncle where she leads a very sheltered life. Once she's 18 and in college her world comes crashing down.

Kyle, her childhood best friend is there at school wondering why she never contacted him after she moved. Together they discover each other and find out the truth about the past. But can they overcome the truth and still be together?

I am a lover of all things RaShelle Workman has written. She had an amazing writing style and a highly recommend this and all her other books.