



The Blind Faith Hotel

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When her family falls apart, fourteen-year-old Zoe feels like her whole world is going to pieces. Zoe's mother takes her kids away from their father, a fisherman who ships out to Alaska, and moves them to a run-down farmhouse she's inherited in the Midwest. Zoe's stuck -- in more ways than one.

Surrounded by strangers and a sea of prairie grass, she loses her bearings. A brush with the law lands Zoe in a work program at a local nature preserve. But the work starts to ground and steady her. When she meets a wild boy who shares her love of untamed places, it seems he might help Zoe find her way. Or is he too lost, too damaged himself?

Funny and poignant, sharp-eyed and real, this is a portrait of a girl looking for her own true self and a place she can call home.

The Blind Faith Hotel Details

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Author : Pamela Todd

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From Reader Review The Blind Faith Hotel for online ebook

Wisteriouswoman says

Zoe's relationship with her fisherman father is a close one. The book shares the wisdom he has passed on to her about the sea while they go out on his boat in the San Juan Islands. It is surprising how realistically bratty she is when her mother moves the family to the prairie and leaves Zoe's father. The reader learns to love the prairie along with Zoe as her life changes and she adapts to her new environment. The book explores growing up and dealing with love and loss. There is one scene that could have been left out because it didn't ring true: A boy that she is interested in teaches her to float in the river because she is afraid to swim. That is just plain ridiculous. Any Dad that takes his daughter out on a boat in the Pacific Northwest would make sure she was a good swimmer first! Actually the whole relationship with the boy was a bit weird and could have been left out.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Sally Kruger aka "Readingjunk" for TeensReadToo.com

Zoe has always had a love affair with nature. Growing up on the Northwest coast and spending all her free time with her father on his fishing boat, practically made her one with the sea. When her mother and father separate and her mother drags her halfway across the country to the Midwestern plains, Zoe thinks her world has come to an end.

Why do they have to move? They've moved a lot in the past several years, but that's been moving to keep up with work. Having her father gone for months at a time on fishing boats is just part of life for Zoe, her older sister, Nelia, and her younger brother, Ollie. They seem to take it in stride. Why can't their mother do the same?

This time is different for some reason. Zoe's mother packs them and all their belongings up in a U-haul and they head east. They're going to the town where their mother grew up. The old family house is now hers and she insists it is just the place for a bed-and-breakfast. Just what does her mother know about running a business, anyway - and how can she take them away from their father?

After a grueling trip where nothing goes right, they finally arrive. The house that supposedly holds so many memories for her mother turns out to be a rundown mess. Just about everything needs replacing, so workmen are soon swarming all over the place. With her mother knee-deep in renovations and her sister and brother busy with newfound friends, Zoe finds herself feeling like she usually does - out of place. She makes one new friend, but that hardly makes up for the fact that she hates school and misses her father more than she could have ever imagined.

Zoe gets more attention than she bargained for when she makes the stupid mistake of shoplifting some bust-enhancing cream. When she tries to return it and right her mistake, she is taken to the police station and later appears in court. Her sentence is a list of strict guidelines and community service work at a nearby nature preserve.

It may not be the saltwater sea she is used to, but the sea of prairie grass where she spends her Saturdays soon becomes a fascinating and magical place. That, along with a mysterious boy named Ivy, might make this new place a home Zoe can learn to love and appreciate.

Author Pamela Todd takes readers on a journey not only across the country, but also into the life of a young girl forced to leave behind the father she loves and the only place she's ever felt at home. Todd gives readers a feeling for Zoe's pain and loneliness, and at the same time, artfully describes the Midwest prairie as nature's ultimate garden.

THE BLIND FAITH HOTEL is not a book filled with rock em' sock em' action, but anyone who appreciates a story with emotion, feeling, and the beauty of nature is sure to enjoy this one.

Stephanie A. says

I loved the setting and the characters, especially Zoe. Wasn't as fond of the dream sequences, but otherwise it was a really solid novel for younger teens, with a great focus on family dynamics.

Tori says

Awesome! It's books like these that give me more faith in humanity. This book is kinda tragic. For this little girl, sorry, almost 15 year old to have to go through all the moving, and the parents splitting up, and having a mother that isn't really a great mother or who doesn't have the time to be one, which I can relate to sometimes. And I would DIE. Period. If I was moved to some some little house on the prairie. I mean, having to deal with people that have never seen an ocean?! SAVAGES!!! And I'm totally willing to believe that it was Ivy waiting for her at the end of the book. I liked him a lot better than her drunk ass father.
~T

John Clark says

What do you do when life falls apart and you're fourteen? This is the dilemma Zoe faces. Her dad is hooked by the sea. On land, he's moody and sometimes gets very drunk, but when he's on the ocean, usually going after giant crabs up in Alaska, he's completely different. Zoe is very close to him and he's taught her how to read the subtle changes in the natural world. When her parents separate, her mother heads back to the Midwest with Zoe, her older sister, Nelia and her little brother Oliver. It's a road trip that's one mishap after another and Zoe doesn't help because she's miserable and angry. But sometimes what we get from the unknown and unexpected is the perfect medicine. Mom is coming back to the decrepit house she inherited from her grandparents, intent upon making it into a bed and breakfast.

At first, Zoe finds it very easy to hold on to her anger. When she has a moment of horror after looking in the mirror and realizing one breast is growing and the other isn't, she freaks out, especially since she's been invited to a pool party at one of the snotty girls' homes a couple days down the road. Her panicked reaction gets her in minor trouble with the law, resulting in her doing community service at a small prairie preserve near her house. At first, she resents the backbreaking work, but when she starts learning the history of the place from gruff old Hub and noticing the amazing wild boy, Ivy, life does one of those amazing shifts and she starts to really care about Ivy and the preserve.

As she learns more about her family history, the way the preserve really does represent a tiny window into how the world was a hundred years ago and how much she cares for Ivy, her life begins to make sense and she gets that elusive sense of place, so important to everyone. It doesn't come easily, she has to deal with

accepting that her family is never going to be like it was when they lived on the west coast and she has to deal with losing people she cares about more than anything, but these make her stronger and more grounded. The book ends on one of those perfect notes that lets your imagination write the next chapter yourself. While this is an older book (I discovered it while moving it to our storage collection), it's a wonderful story for younger teens who love nature or are struggling with where and how they fit in.

GirlwiththeBraids says

All of her life, Zoe has never had a real home. One year after the other, her family packs up their things and moves on. Her father had always been her role model by being a fisherman. He knew and explained things differently than others did, but when the family is separated by divorce, Zoe starts doubting everyone. Zoe, her older sister, younger brother, and mother move away once again, to a run down house they plan to fix up to become a bed-n-breakfast. While there, Zoe goes through puberty and becomes self-conscious of her body. She tries to live up to her age and as a result, gets in trouble by the police. As punishment, she has to work at a nature preserve. While she is there, she falls in love with a boy working by her side. Throughout her new life and surroundings, Zoe becomes aware that she has a real home... with her family.

The Blind Faith Hotel was anything but normal. It had a meaning. It was wild, exotic, and explained life and home differently than other books. Everything was laid out clearly among the pages. I don't know any other book that had such a vivid description as to what family really is. I am very impressed. Yes, it was more than I bargained for, but I certainly needed it. This book will rub off on anyone who reads it, I am certain, for it did for me. It made me want to get my Bible out from my dresser drawer and start reading once more. I sound quite dramatic at the moment, but you will surely understand once you get a copy of the book in your own hands. Girls who are in their teenage years will appreciate everything that Author Pamela Todd has to offer through this one-of-a-kind read.

Sarah Sullivan says

I liked the main character, and I was interested in her journey at the outset, but I didn't stay engaged throughout the book.

Allie says

Technically I shouldn't mark this book as read since I didn't finish it. I wanted to learn about the Ivy character but honestly I didn't feel like reading another 40 chapters about some girl whining and complaining while watching a vulcher with stolen binoculars.

Leslie says

A sweet coming of age story with beautiful descriptions of a prairie restoration and prairie animals. The author is local and came to visit our mother/daughter book club which was an awesome experience for the moms and the daughters.

Melanie says

Fourteen-year-old Zoe is forced to move to the Midwest when her mother separates from her father. She has a very hard time adjusting as she's always been near the waters of Washington state and there's nothing but grass and trees in the Midwest. Leaving her father behind isn't easy, either. And there's an additional problem: she has no breasts.

This is where it gets a little weird. Zoe tries to talk to her older sister, then her mother and a family friend. But no one seems to have the time or the patience to talk to her about her problem. So she takes it upon herself to steal (not intentionally) a "natural bust enhancement cream" from the local drugstore. She slathers on 3 times the recommended amount and finds herself in a predicament the next morning: the cream has caused an horrendous rash. To add insult to injury she is supposed to go to a pool party...in a bikini.

She goes...

Of course all the party-goers gasp "Oh, My God!" "Disgusting!" so on and so forth. So she's off to the emergency room. Ready? This teen girl, who talks about being humiliated when going to her regular doctor for checkups, has absolutely no problem with a strange male doctor taking a look at her chest to give his opinion on her breast development.

I was a teen girl once. And there was no way on earth I would have allowed a (strange) male doctor to examine my "swimsuit covered area" at all; not to mention without my mother present!

In the middle of all this, she meets a boy about her age on the nature preserve she's assigned to in lieu of probation for theft. She thinks she falls in love with this kid and begins to have these incredibly mature "love heals all" introspective thought processes. Would never happen. In fact, it broke the entire flow of the book. I almost didn't finish because it was so unrealistic.

Good story, great idea. But the story gets lost after the confused teen seems to figure it all out.

Jennifer says

This book thoroughly surprised me. This is a coming of age story about Zoe, a 14 year old girl who struggles with family issues, self image, trust and forgiveness. I recommend this book for young teens as well as adults.

Patricia says

Zoe's mother takes her children to the Midwest to refurbish the rundown family home as a bed and breakfast, leaving her husband the Alaskan fisherman behind. Zoe feels out of place and loses her bearings, and is worried about how her breasts are developing unevenly, but she can't seem to get her mother's attention long

enough to ask her about it, so she unintentionally ends up shoplifting some cream that is supposed to help, but she has a severe allergic reaction and almost goes into anaphylactic shock. She returns to the store and admits that she stole from them, is arrested and sentenced to community service at a prairie preserve, where she at last finds some work to ground her and steady her, plus she meets a "wild" boy who loves untamed places and develops a friendship with him. It all doesn't work out as she would like it, and it often seems a bit harsh to me, but that's how life really is sometimes, and it's a great coming-of-age story.

Kristen Lemaster says

Not the worst YA book out there, if only because Zoe is a good balance between snarky and sincere and doesn't change her entire life when she meets a boy whom she thinks she loves. However, this novel is super frustrating in that it seems like the different storylines are used only when convenient - her father's absence, her grandmother's garden, her mother's history, the hawks, the bed and breakfast, even her own love of books, all randomly pop up and then disappear just as randomly only to appear again to further plot or add a tiny bit more superficial characterization. I think the most redeeming quality is the absolutely poetic, lyrical, gorgeous prose when describing nature and our relationship to it as human beings, like the whole concept of adolescents as a type of edge species who are still looking for a place to call home and worried they may never find it. The prairie is described perfectly in terms of visual features, but Todd could use more practice in employing the other senses - sound, taste, touch, smell - as well as in further developing her characters, since I realized at the end that I couldn't physically describe any of them and could only marginally describe even the main character (and the other characters are mostly typical stock characters, with maybe the exception of her sister Nelia who is hilarious). An interesting setting, definitely, with some really beautiful writing, but really that's the only thing this novel has going for it.

Lisa says

A wonderful novel for young people, but for adults too. A coming of age story with an odd-girl-out main character who's plucked out of her element--the Pacific Northwest, to move to her mom's midwestern hometown where she has never been. At first everything seems like a bad fit, and her prickly relationship with her mom and sister seems likely to combust. But she grows to love the prairie landscape, mostly makes peace with her family and discovers a lot of strength in herself. Beautifully written.

Crystal says

Example #2 Zoe's Dad is absent from the family

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Evidence for Evaluation: Zoe is a 14 year old girl who is moving from town to town with her mother, father, and siblings. Until, one move, her father does not go along. Zoe misses her father terribly and does not always relate to her mother or older sister. She is having a hard time finding someone to listen to her problems and be supportive towards her adolescent issues such as growing breasts, boys, and girl-friends. She ends up developing a respect and admiration for an older man who takes a liking to her as well. They bond and she develops a trust that I think was similar to that which she had with her father. She continues to miss her father, but the angst begins to lesson as she comes to understand herself better and trust others.

