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Lies We Tell Ourselves (Harlequin Teen)



Synopsis

In 1959 Virginia, the lives of two girls on opposite sides of the battle for civil rights will be changed forever. Sarah Dunbar is one of the first black students to attend the previously all-white Jefferson High School. An honors student at her old school, she is put into remedial classes, spit on and tormented daily. Linda Hairston is the daughter of one of the town's most vocal opponents of school integration. She has been taught all her life that the races should be kept "separate but equal." Forced to work together on a school project, Sarah and Linda must confront harsh truths about race, power and the fact that they may be falling for one another. Boldly realistic and emotionally compelling, *Lies We Tell Ourselves* is a brave and stunning novel about finding truth amid the lies, and finding your voice even when others are determined to silence it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

My Review
Lies We Tell Ourselves is not an easy book to read. And as it says in the Author's Note, this was not an easy book for the author, Robin Talley, to write. I was almost crying just trying to finish the first chapter. The book is told in two alternating viewpoints, that of Sarah Dunbar, one of the first black students to attend the all white Jefferson High, and Linda Hairston, the daughter of one of the most powerful and prominent men in their town who fights against desegregation. From the first chapter, you're thrown into the midst of the horror of racial slurs and hate that the new black students face at the hands of their fellow students and teachers. School, a space that most of us

associate now with being a safe place to learn and make friends, is a literal battlefield, where violence is acceptable as long as it's the white students instigating it. And Sarah Dunbar is on the front line. Protecting herself is difficult enough, but her younger sister Ruth is attending the school as well, so Sarah is constantly worried that something is going to happen to her that she can't prevent. When she meets Linda Hairston, she doesn't expect to find anything more than another white person who's determined to hate her without even knowing her first. And at first, that's true. Linda immediately spouts the same nonsense that her father puts out into the papers all of the time. But after Linda and Sarah have to work together on a school project, little things keep happening that make Sarah think that there might be more to Linda than first meets the eye. And Sarah finds herself wanting to spend more time with Linda, even though she thinks the thoughts that she's having are un-Christian. It's easy to think that everything is ok with society when your every day life doesn't deal with problems. I've been lucky to live a very privileged life. I went to good schools, didn't really get bullied during school and was overall very sheltered when it came to the problems that a lot of people deal with. And I wish that I had a book like this when I was in middle school. Even now, at almost 30, this book is an eye opener. The writing is so excellent. You're drawn into Sarah's struggle. You see her try to understand why she and her friends are the one's who have to suffer for ideals that her parents are so passionate about. And throughout it all, you see her fight with her own self-worth, to understand how it could be ok for her to like another girl the way that she feels that she should like boys. And as we follow Linda's story, you can see how trying to be the daughter that her father always wanted has led Linda to a life where she doesn't even know what she wants and feels. How can she, when she has never had to think for herself? I really loved the way that Linda's change seemed so realistic. It wasn't a situation where she woke up one day and completely changed her beliefs. You can see her struggle with each aspect of change and her difficulty in realizing that she has her own opinions and values, and that her opinions are valid, too. This is an incredibly important book. It's heartbreaking and enraging and hopeful, all at the same time. It's not a true story, but it's a fictional story based on research done on a lot of horrible real life events. It's easy to distance yourself from situations when you are not directly affected, but I think it's important to read books like this, to remind us that even though we don't live in this same time, the issues that are discussed here are incredibly real today. If I could recommend you read any book that may be outside of your normal reading style, it's this one. Pick it up. I hope you're as affected by it as I was.

Another fantastic book on equality, Robin Talley did an amazing job with this novel she wrote this

story beautifully and with such detail and horror it felt as if I was witnessing these atrocious deeds first hand. The pace of the writing was perfect and kept me engaged the entire way through and the characters are perfectly written. This is sadly STILL a controversial topic and it makes me sad to know that these things really happened to people just because they are different. I felt so strongly for Sarah and Linda they had enough going against them, a life time of being raised by a strong belief of segregation and racism, but to not only be different from each other but also different in the fact they want to be friends, then to also have a whole other difference that brings on a whole other type of confusion and fear. Sarah and Linda seemed to not only have their friends, family and society against them but they also had their religious beliefs shaken up. This is just a really amazing novel about some incredibly strong topics, it brought all of my emotions to the surface through out the story and made me feel incredibly lucky to have been raise in a time where we are almost all welcomed, accepted, celebrated and loved for our differences. Skin color, race, religion, sexual orientation, or even just our core beliefs. This is a book I feel everyone should read at least once, so please go out and get it, curl up and read it, love the SH*T outta it and come back here and tell me and the rest of the world what your thoughts and reactions are!

This might have been one of my favourite reads this year (this and another one). I honestly didn't expect it to be this good, but it proved me completely wrong. I was hooked within the first few pages, and more so when the story got going. This book was a good glimpse in this dark part of history, never once trying candy coat it. And it wasn't put aside so that the two characters that fall in love isn't the main plot. It was a nice change, when most books will do just that. The writing was real and left me feeling like I was there, leaving me nervous with them, with my heart pounding. I stayed up late most nights reading, not able to put it down and my eyes burning. I found myself relating to the moments when the characters admitted they were gay, that they might love another woman, but that maybe all they had been told that it was wrong, wasn't true. How they felt about being in relationships with men, how there was simply nothing there, I felt like they were describing my own experience before I came out. Now that I'm done, I miss the character and I wish I could know more. And I'm so happy how it ended.

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