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Plastic Angel



Synopsis

A moving, funny first novel by an acclaimed singer-songwriter about friendship, music, and being true to who you are--even if it means disappointing your parents and everyone around you. That was then: Angela has been a child model all her life, the baby on the cake mix box, the cutie pie in the toy commercial. She was mom's pride and joy, the celebri-toast of her tiny town. Back then choices, priorities, and rules were made for her. No one thought to ask 'Gellie' what she wanted to do, nor had she asked herself. She was a sweet and obedient cipher, a plastic angel.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr. 7-10. Thirteen-year-old best friends Angela "Gellie" Riddle and Randi Rankin feel stifled by their wealthy Massachusetts suburb and their private school's exclusive cliques. Gellie is further fettered by her mother's dreams to make her a supermodel and actress, while Randi struggles with her parents' constant fighting and her desire to be part of the popular crowd. Randi's background is solidly counterculture, and Gellie's parents are quite conservative, but together the girls find solace in music, forming an acoustic duo. Both have significant songwriting skills, and they discover a natural talent for harmonizing. Unfortunately, Mrs. Riddle sees Gellie's music as a distraction to her "real" career and orders her to stop playing. The considerable charm of this title lies in the characters: Randi's wry narrative playfully mocks everyone, including herself. The pull between acceptance and self-expression will resonate strongly with young teens, as will the fear and

attraction cliques instill. Nields incorporates the girls' song lyrics to excellent effect, and the final book promises a free CD (not available at time of review), which should increase interest. Debbie Carton
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BCCB July/August 05
It's the summer between eighth and ninth grade, and Randi's summer mission is to start a rock band with her friend Gellie. Music would be a connection with Randi's too-often-absent musician father as well as a possible route to popularity, but it's also unfortunately a distraction from Gellie's budding career as a model and actress, which Gellie's mother considers paramount. Randi becomes increasingly invested in the band, Plastic Angel, and its possibilities, despite the fact that Gellie's mother forbids her daughter's participation and Randi's own parents' marital tension has erupted into separation. Nields is herself a musician, but that doesn't result in any particularly compelling insider insights into the process; this is a fairly standard tale of young people whose suddenly emerging abilities would take them far if only their personal dramas would permit it. Randi herself has little character beyond her desire for approval and Gellie's complicity, and the book tends to reduce people and situations to extremes for contrast. That's not out of keeping with a middle-school viewpoint, though, so readers may cheerfully share Randi's sweeping judgments; many will also share her yearning for musical self-expression, and they'll get vicarious enjoyment from the young artist's progress toward her dream. DSSLJ 8/05

I thought it was a wonderful book. I enjoyed the characters, the plot, the writing, the whole thing. I became very caught up in Randi and Gellie's lives and read the whole book in a day. It was an easy and really enjoyable read. I had not heard the album when I read it, but have since bought it. It is a really cool idea to accompany a book about singer/songwriters with a CD of their songs. It brings a new dimension to both the book and the album.

First of all, I have to say that this was a very good first novel. The writing allowed for easy reading and the plot was pretty straight forward without many unsuspected twists. In a nutshell, two girls, Randi and Gellie are experiencing the summer between eighth and ninth grade, and yes, most of us who have experienced it do remember it. Gellie is an aspiring model, due to her mother's overzealous encouragement while Randi is beginning to experiment in her father's profession, songwriting. Randi's new job at a music store in the next town over sparks her interest even more by

introducing her to an inspiring band, The Big Idea. Soon Randi has Gellie interested in starting a band with her and Gellie has to choose between modeling and singing with Randi. But there are some flaws. Throughout the story, I found myself asking why a topic had been introduced. For instance, Randi goes to a party and gets involved with a boy, but he never comes back into the story. There were quite a few elements that never came together for me. The second flaw came at the end. I was given a copy of the CD "This Town is Wrong" about a year before the book came out and listened to it obsessively for about a week after which it stayed one of my favorite CDs for regular listening. But as the book wound down, the characters began to spew bits of the lyrics from the songs. While this made the songs even more meaningful, it really seemed forced, like it didn't fit in quite right. But other than that, I thought this book was brilliant. As someone who is not so long out of ninth grade, I could really relate to how Randi and Gellie felt about the choices they had to make, because at that point in your life, choices begin to matter. This book is really great for young adults and grown ups would enjoy it too. So all I have to say now is have at it. To be hypocritical, "I am giving you the world."

Hi, I'm a thirteen-year-old girl who's nearly turning fourteen, and let me say three words: YOU'LL LOVE THIS!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Trust me, if you're an adult you might not see what's so entertaining about the book, but if you're a teen, it's guaranteed that you'll find this book fascinating. Angela (Gellie) Riddle and Randi Rankins are two BFFs that practically do everything together. It's amazing how they can bond so well because Gellie is a model, while Randi is just your ordinary everyday-girl who loves to play the guitar, like her dad, who is a singer. But the two discover that they both love making songs and music on the guitar, so they form a band. But Gellie's mom wants Gellie to have nothing else but her modeling career in her head. Soon, Gellie realizes that being a model was actually her mother's dream and not her's. And it isn't long until the band gets noticed. This book is overall a collection of factors that make up the life of a teen - finding and chasing your dreams, having crushes, rapid changes, having your friendships challenged, and most of all, discovering who you really are. Just read the book, and you'll see what I mean!!! Enjoy!

The main characters of this book Randi and Gellie are not the stereotypical teen girls usually found in teen novels. The characters are given much more depth and different hobbies than the average teen. One is interested in music, the other is a model. The book follows the two friends as they develop from girlhood to being teenagers, and explores the impact your choices and the choices of others can make on your life. I enjoyed this book because it featured teenagers that did not spend

their entire lives obsessing over that Hot Guy, hanging at the mall or battling their way through popularity wars. Plastic Angel focuses more on the realistic and important challenges of finding and accepting your identity, and how to find yourself when your life is being run by someone else. Plastic Angel is more upbeat and focuses on the goals of the girls not so much on the negative schemes of wanting to be popular and accepted. Plastic Angel deals with real, but defiantly not average teenage girls. I would recommend this book for more "girly" teenage girls and adults that can enjoy a fluffy teen novel.

Randi and Gellie are 13-year-old best friends, and while Randi almost qualifies as "cool," Gellie, despite being a successful model, definitely does not. When Randi decides she's sick of trying to fit in and Gellie decides she's sick of doing everything her mother wants to be a famous model, the two girls turn to each other and form a band, writing songs together and practicing on the sly. Each girl is a compelling, complex character, trying to figure out what she wants and how hard to push to get it, and I loved them both. Their dialogue is always just right, and the girls have the same worries and problems that many teenagers do -- but that many young-adult books gloss over. This isn't a book about girls in relentless pursuit of the right boys; it's about girls with crushes and girls who want to be kissed, but girls who know they're happiest when they're singing. And the scenes when the girls are singing, writing songs, or practicing guitar are what separate this book from any other young-adult book I've read. Every element of the learning curve of writing songs and playing the guitar is spot-on, given that Nerissa Nields is a singer-songwriter herself. The details about sore fingers and lyrics that still need tweaking are just right. The book is filled with references to the music world and to Nields's own music, which will delight readers who are also Nields fans (see how many Nields songs you can spot!). Don't be distracted by the cover -- this book is not chick lit, and Randi and Gellie demand to be taken seriously.

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