

## **You Say it First**

**Katie Cotungo**

**Reviewed by: Ritika Chhabra, 13**

**Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity**

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Meg wouldn't call her life exciting, but at least it's predictable. Emily, her friend since kindergarten, and Meg share almost everything in common- from favourite memories and movies to a plan to go to Cornell in the fall. With a passion for politics and law, Meg volunteers at WeCount, where she calls up swing states and convinces people to vote. But one strange day, Colby, a cynical and critical boy picks up the phone. With just a few careless words, he dismantles everything she believes about her perfectly predictable world. And even though Colby and Meg couldn't be more different, they're drawn to each other in a way they can't quite explain.

My favourite part about this novel was the different perspectives portrayed through the storyline. Although Meg is strong and opinionated, Colby's contrasting view adds a whole other dimension to the plot. In addition, the characters show remarkable development throughout the story, learning to express and stand for their ideas in a way that is more mature and well-informed. It's extremely interesting to observe this growth, as both Meg and Colby experience many parallels in their journeys. I also loved that the book has a slight introduction to politics without overloading or swamping the plot in unnecessary details. Even though it doesn't really deal with the concepts of youth voting, as advertised, it is still a cute and lighthearted read with plenty of interesting content.

On the other hand, the writing style is a bit clunky and hard to follow. In juxtaposition with the initial short and sweet style, there were many random instances of long and flowery metaphors. This aspect broke up the reading flow, making it more complicated and difficult to understand. Additionally, the relationship between Meg and Colby was negative and strained, often ending in screaming matches or fights from across the phone. The main selling point of their friendship was their ability to be honest with each other, but it is unrealistic to believe that this one quality would be enough to draw such different characters together. The story does contain some expletives and would be best suited for an audience ages 12+.

### **Recommended Titles:**

Breathe Like Water by Anna Jarzab

By the Book by Amanda Sellet

The Upside of Falling by Alex Light

Verona Comics by Jennifer Dugan

The Kingdom of Back by Marie Lu