

Puddin'

Julie Murphy

Reviewed by: Rina Guo, 16

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Millie Michalchuk is an endearing and confident girl despite being plus-size. She's also a bit of a dreamy romanticist when it comes to love or her secret dreams of pursuing journalism. Despite this, most people only see her as the unpopular "fat girl" at school. Even though all her life, nutrition and health has been religiously lectured to her by her diet-obsessed mother.

Callie Reyes is one of the most popular girls at school. Known for her attitude and arrogance, Callie gets everything she wants. Whether that be dating the school's football sweetheart or having a bright future as the dance team's captain next year. But when the dance team decides to pull a nasty prank too far, and Callie is caught responsible but refuses to rat out her fellow "sisters", she loses everything important to her including her boyfriend, her dance team, and her parents' trust. To avoid getting pressed with charges, Callie agrees to work for free at a local gym that Millie also happens to work at. Despite their differences, the two girls gradually develop an unlikely bond.

This is a young adult novel for readers at least fifteen years old. There is some strong language and also mentions of sex.

I really enjoyed this book. The writing style was passionate and flavorful. The characters were very well-developed. I was really surprised how easy it was to understand Millie and Callie's very different thoughts and perspectives. The voices of each of these characters were realistic and powerful. I loved the character development throughout the novel, especially in Callie. Her thoughts and values changed a lot, and it was wonderful to see her go through her personal journey from start to finish. The plot was very well-written. Every moment complimented the story well and there was sufficient build-up and conflicts leading up to the bigger climax of the story. There wasn't much I personally disliked except some of the personalities of the characters like Bryce or some of the dance team members. But these characters still helped compliment the storyline and they were still realistic.

Overall, I absolutely enjoyed this book. If you're looking for something about body image, friendship and girl drama, this novel is a wonderful pick.

Recommended Titles:

- Dumplin' by Julie Murphy
- There's Something about Sweetie by Sandhya Menon
- Mean Girls by Micol Ostow
- Size 12 Is Not Fat by Meg Cabot
- Before and After by Andrew Shanahan