

We Are All Made of Molecules

Susin Nielson

Reviewed By: Jasmine Han, 14

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

www.bethestaryouare.org

After the devastating loss of his mom, an academically brilliant thirteen-year-old named Stewart experiences major life changes. Stewart, his dad, and his cat move in with his dad's girlfriend, Caroline, and her daughter, Ashley, who is a year older than him. Stewart tries to be optimistic about this move, but Ashley is completely opposed to this, as they are polar opposites. While Stewart is incredibly smart, he is socially awkward and does not have many friends. On the other hand, Ashley is by far one of the most popular girls in school but faces many academic challenges. Ashley is mainly upset about them moving into her house is because she is still heartbroken about her parents' split, which happened after her father came out as gay. While she isn't homophobic, Ashley is confused about her emotions and feels as if she doesn't truly know who her dad is. At school, Stewart makes a couple of friends but is bothered and bullied by Jared, the mysterious new hot guy who Ashley has a crush on. When Stewart finds out Jared is interested in her, he uses the fact that they are step-siblings to get on both of their good sides. However, as Jared and Ashley continue to spend more time together, Stewart and Ashley learn about his homophobia and his true predatory intentions with Ashley. Throughout this book, Ashley continues to grow as a person, as she makes an effort to get to know her dad again and be more empathetic towards others, especially Stewart. In the end, both Stewart and Ashley realize they are made of molecules, just like everyone else.

This book was a pretty good read and I liked how there were a lot of serious subjects integrated throughout this book, such as homosexuality, sexual assault, and death. This made for an entertaining and relatable, yet informative read. The author did such a great job of depicting the struggles each of the characters faced and how they were able to overcome it. I was captured by this story and did not want to put the book down.

Personally, I feel as if there were some parts of the book that were less appealing than others. Some issues or parts of the book were dragged out for too long making me become a little bored. The main plot didn't come until a little later in the book, which made me dislike the book at first. I believe this book would be most appropriate for readers in the age range of 14 or older. It does include some heavy and mature topics towards the middle/end of the book, so I think it would be more appealing for high schoolers. While this book may be a good gift for someone, I believe it would be better to get it from the library because it may not be as entertaining to others as it was to me.

Recommended Titles:

Optimists Die First by Susin Nielson

Dear George Clooney by Please Marry My Mom, Susin Nielson

Tell Me Three Things by Julie Buxbaum