



The Secret Science of Magic

Melissa Keil

Download now

Read Online [➔](#)

The Secret Science of Magic

Melissa Keil

The Secret Science of Magic Melissa Keil

A captivating novel about two extraordinary teens, and the unsolvable problem of life after high school.

Sophia is smart, like genius-calculator-brain smart. But there are some things no amount of genius can prepare you for, and the messiness of real life is one of them. When everything she knows is falling apart, how can she crack the puzzle of what to do with her life?

Joshua spends his time honing magic tricks and planning how to win Sophia's heart. But when your best trick is making schoolwork disappear, how do you possibly romance a genius?

In life and love, timing is everything.

The Secret Science of Magic Details

Date : Published April 1st 2017 by Hardie Grant Egmont

ISBN :

Author : Melissa Keil

Format : Paperback 317 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Contemporary, Romance, Young Adult Contemporary

 [Download The Secret Science of Magic ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Secret Science of Magic ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Secret Science of Magic Melissa Keil

From Reader Review *The Secret Science of Magic* for online ebook

Cassandra Page says

I know I've said this before (possibly in my last review of a Melissa Keil book), but I want to be Melissa Keil when I grow up. She writes the most amazingly geeky and relatable (to me) characters.

In *The Secret Science of Magic*, we have Sophia, a maths genius and *Doctor Who* fan who has all the hallmarks of being on the autism spectrum disorder (although she is bafflingly never diagnosed), along with a massive helping of anxiety attacks and self-doubt (presumably from the lack of diagnosis and treatment). She's also a POC, although her family is very "Australian" as far as I can tell -- if there were any elements from other cultures in there I missed them.

Sophia is struggling through the last year of high school, trying very hard not to think about her only friend's impending departure to study medicine in the US. She's acing most of her classes and doing university-level maths on the side, but was pressured into doing drama, which she hates and is terrible at. She has fixated on a Russian maths genius who went off the rails, trying, in her methodical way, to figure out where he went wrong so that she can avoid it -- a bit like Hazel in *The Fault in Our Stars*, but without the road trip.

Elsie, Sophia's best friend, is from a largish Indian family, with three brothers who look out for Sophia the way her own brother generally doesn't. But there is growing tension there, which Sophia doesn't really understand. The clues are all there, not just for the reader (as is often the case) but for Sophia too -- the problem is that Sophia simply doesn't know how to recognise or interpret them.

(I'm so mad at Sophia's counsellor, by the way. We never actually see said counsellor, but surely if they were halfway competent they could have recognised what was going on with her! Gah!)

Joshua, the other point of view character, has a long-standing crush on Sophia, a lisp that emerges when he's anxious, and a talent for magic tricks. He decides to finally start wooing her, getting her attention with tricks that are mostly cute and motivated by a desire to help her with her various problems, but that sometimes cross the line for me (for example when he stole her watch; even though she did get it back later, that was uncool, Joshua!). Happily, he does grow over the course of the book and, by the end, he comes good. :)

I really enjoyed this story, which -- more broadly -- tackles the YA issues of "coping with the end of school" and "what next", as well as the universal human issue of self-acceptance. The romance was tentative and sweet, and my heart broke for Sophia and her confusion and social anxiety. The *Doctor Who* references made me happy, and Josh's various magic tricks, while not really my thing, made me smile.

Melissa Keil's books are ones I wish I'd had as a teenager; I'm totally buying copies for my friend's geeky pre-teen when she's a few years older.

K. says

Oof. This was...yeah. I really REALLY wanted to love this book, because I adored *The Incredible*

Adventures of Cinnamon Girl last year.

HOWEVER.

There was just something about this that didn't work for me.

The gist of the story is that Joshua has had a massive crush on Sophia since the start of year 7 but she doesn't even know he exists. Mostly because she's too busy being obsessed with maths and Doctor Who to notice. Also, she has extreme anxiety.

Which, great! Except that the entire book reads like she's actually on the autism spectrum. Like, REALLY on the autism spectrum. And yet not a single character ever mentions this as even remotely being a possibility???

Anyway. Maybe she's not supposed to read as autistic. It just bugged me that it seemed SO OBVIOUS and characters kept being all "Nah, just anxiety" about it. You know?? (There's no "just" about anxiety, I know this. There's also not really an easy way to describe it otherwise, so go with it?? Please and thank you?)

I also had mixed feelings about how...romantically pushy Joshua was at times? Like, he wasn't making Sophia do anything she didn't want to do. But there were aaaaaaall these grand sweeping displays of love, and she was all "Sorry, who the fuck is Joshua?" It was liiiittle awkward and cringe-worthy.

I think I liked every single supporting character more than I liked the protagonists, which is less than ideal.

I had a LOT of very angry thoughts about Melbourne Uni being repeatedly referred to as "MU", because WHO THE HELL DOES THAT LITERALLY NO ONE THAT'S WHO.

There are.....no parents in this book? Like, they're mentioned repeatedly. But I don't think Joshua's parents, Sophia's parents, or Elsie's parents ever actually show up on the page. Which is kind of weird?

There are repeated mentions of both Sophia and her brother, Toby, having brown skin, but that's really as far as it goes? So, like, I don't know if they're meant to be diverse characters or they're just meant to be really tan white people???

So yeah. I was super excited about this one. But I just...didn't love it. Which makes me sad.

Trisha says

Lots of really great elements here.

Loved it.

Jananee (headinherbooks) says

I featured this book in a discussion on my blog “On Rating Diverse Books Higher: The Secret Science of Magic by Melissa Keil” —> you can read it here

I was provided a ARC of this book by Hardie Grant Egmont in exchange for an honest review. However, this is no way affects my thoughts!

When I first picked up *The Secret Science of Magic* by Melissa Keil, it was because it had an interesting premise and a beautiful cover (no shame). But then I started reading and I was hit with the fact that Sophia, our main character, was of Sri Lankan descent. For the first time in almost 21 years, I was quite literally seeing myself in a book and it almost brought me to tears. It is so rare to see PoC characters in contemporary YA fiction - and close to impossible for them to be South Asian - so to say that I was shocked (and low key jumping with joy) is an understatement.

Despite the fact that Australia is actually a very multicultural country, it is never reflected as such in the media, in films or in books and I applaud Melissa Keil for deciding to portray a very realistic Melbourne in her writing. Not only were Sophia and her best friend, Elsie, South Asian but many of their classmates were from also from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, and I felt that it reflected a high school environment true to the one of my teenage years.

Saying this, *The Secret Science of Magic* was a great book in its own right. It had wonderful writing, witty dialogue and a unique plot to back it up. Joshua was a strong character to stand opposite Sophia and I particularly enjoyed that he wasn't typical in the "YA boyfriend" sense. He was true to himself, had the hugest crush on Sophia and was unapologetically obsessed with magic - he was basically just an adorable geek. The discussion of anxiety on Sophia's part was also handled really well and realistically and the romance between the two was really organic.

Cindy ☆? Savage Queen ? says

I feel like I need this book in my life...

Madison says

I have come to really love Melissa Keil's writing and I was eagerly awaiting the release of this, her latest title. *The Secret Science of Magic* was one part wonderful, one part heartwarming, and totally teenagery (yes, that's a word).

Sophia is a genius. She excels at maths and calculations, but struggles with social situations. Without her friend Elsie, she would be isolated. Joshua sees Sophia. For years he has longed to connect with her, really get to know her rather than observing from afar. But he knows she deserves more than a guy who is only good at magic tricks and doesn't have a plan for his life. But as Joshua will tell you, timing is everything, and, maybe, it is the right time for Sophia and Joshua to finally connect.

I really enjoyed reading this book. I especially loved the characters. Sophia is awesome. She is incredibly

smart when it comes to maths, but she is also terribly unsure about everything else, from reading facial expressions to understand others' emotions. She knows she is different from the people around her, she longs to understand how to fit in better, and she really struggles with the feeling that different equals bad. Also, her favourite Doctor Who is Matt Smith, so clearly we are soul mates. Joshua is also an excellent character. A magician, he is constantly fidgeting or shuffling cards. He cares about Sophia but has a lot to learn about his role in her life and the role he should play in his own life. I loved his journey of discovery, I loved his friends, and I loved the way he loved Sophia.

I think the messages conveyed in this book are so important. Sophia has a range of challenges to face, particularly regarding social interactions and her own thoughts about them. She is never diagnosed, and while it might seem simple to throw a label on her, I think it is brilliant that this never happens. Sophia is dealing with her feelings and day-to-day interactions. A label might have made it easier for her to understand what was going on or maybe it would have created a whole range of new problems, either way, that would have been an entirely different story.

There were a few things about this book that didn't appeal to me, particularly the endless crude humour and use of scatological and anatomical terms. The male anatomy was named 36 times (both anatomical and slang terms). I'd just like to point out that any female equivalents were only referenced 5 times. Although, I have to say this is probably realistic given how many particular drawings I have removed from textbooks, walls and tables. Teenagers. Sigh. Sorry, moving on.

Overall, *The Secret Science of Magic* is a charming book. Wonderfully Australian, yet relevant for readers around the world, as two teenagers connect, confront the realities of their lives, and maybe even take a chance on falling in love.

Find more reviews, reading age guides, content advisory, and recommendations on my blog [Madison's Library](#).

Bec says

This review first appeared on [Readers in Wonderland](#)

I'm apologising in advance that this review is going to be vague and probably poorly written. I finished this book a month or two ago but have been too busy studying for exams (which I passed btw) to actually finish this review until now.

5 THINGS ABOUT THE SECRET SCIENCE OF MAGIC

Loveozya

Our fantastic Australian talent is so underrated in the overseas market. A few big hits that to make it are super successful, but there are so many true blue masterpieces that are missed by most people. I think *THE SECRET SCIENCE OF MAGIC* deserves to be one of the hits.

A contemporary that hits close to home

While *THE SECRET SCIENCE OF MAGIC* has dual narration with chapters being shared by Josh and Sophia. Much of the focus is on Sophia though, and oh boy did I relate to a lot of the stuff she's going through. I'm not a math nerd, but you bet I'm an overachiever about to graduate with no idea of where my future is going. A lot of high school and uni students will relate to these coming of age experiences.

Anxiety is a strong focus

Another thing I haven't seen all that much in YA in the past is a look at anxiety and other mental health issues. It's a subject that is changing and getting more light shed on it thank goodness. Sophia experiences anxiety over her academic life, future, and social interactions, which are all incredibly relatable for me. She often has panic attacks which are written incredibly accurately. The spiralling thoughts and struggle to pull your brain out of the negative pattern can be so hard to articulate and describe to people who haven't experienced it personally. I hope that it helps people who don't have anxiety start to understand the struggles.

SMART GIRLS HELL YEAH

SOPHIA'S BRAIN IS AMAZING! She might not have the best social skills, but academically her talents are phenomenal. I wish I had even half her math brain (it was my weakest subject haha). While a lot of girls in contemporary are the quiet, shy, smart type, Sophia's genius is another level we don't often see!

They're so adorable together

JOSH AND SOPHIA ARE SO ADORABLE AND HJKALHDSJKLFHSFJKLSD. So many cute courtships and moments. It's beautiful. Everyone deserves a precious Josh. My memory is incredibly vague on all the things I enjoyed about this couple, but it was essentially everything about them.

In Summary

As a studious individual with social anxiety, THE SECRET SCIENCE OF MAGIC had many elements that were very relatable for me. I really enjoyed it and highly recommend this contemporary.

Nara says

I know a lot of bloggers that quite actively promote #LoveOzYA. For those who don't know what this is, this is a movement trying to gain more popularity for Australian YA novels. I personally don't do a lot of promotion for the movement, but I do have to admit, there is a lot to love about Aussie YA. Often, the novels are set in Australia and we're able to see familiar scenes and themes. There's something strangely gratifying about seeing novels set in Sydney or Melbourne although I don't live there and don't know them well enough to necessarily recognise places.

Joshua and Sophia are great characters who are excellently developed by Keil. Sophia was actually pretty frustrating at times, as she had difficulty interpreting social cues from her friends and she was unable to talk to anyone about her many concerns. In part this was because of her social anxiety, so it was understandable, but was nonetheless frustrating to observe as the reader. Joshua was much easier to like, with his nerdy charm. The way he interacts with his friends and family (and Sophia) were wonderful to see.

I found the progression of the romance quite realistic, and was definitely shipping the two from chapter one. The romance was quite a dominant part of the story, but it didn't feel like it was overshadowing the other threads of the plot, which were mostly focused around Sophia and her struggle to overcome the label of "child genius". Josh didn't really have as much of a plot independent of Sophia, but I felt that this was okay.

The only thing I can criticise about how realistic the novel was that there were some odd choices of language for year 12 students. I honestly don't know anyone past the age of 10 who would say the word "willy", for

example. Certainly by year 12, students wouldn't be saying it.

Overall, *The Secret Science of Magic* was a delightful Aussie contemporary YA which I would definitely recommend to those looking for a light read that is still able to focus on some important issues.

Ratings

Overall: 8/10

Plot: 4/5

Romance: 4/5

Writing: 4/5

Characters: 4/5

Cover: 4/5

Jeann (Happy Indulgence) says

This review has been posted on Happy Indulgence Books. Check it out for more reviews!

What does a teenage genius and a guy who loves magic tricks have in common? In *The Secret Science of Magic*, both Sophia and Joshua don't have a clue what they want to do once they finish high school.

I haven't read a book featuring a genius with an eidetic memory before, particularly in a contemporary high school setting. While she's clearly intelligent, reading research papers and obviously miles ahead of her peers, she just has one problem: she has no idea what she wants to do with her intellect. Her fear of failure, of talent wasting away is projected through crippling anxiety which results in inaction.

While I'm certainly not a genius, I found her fear of failure to be quite relatable and human, particularly her anxieties when it comes to fitting in, or being what people expect of you. I also thought her social anxiety and lack of social skills to be characteristic of someone on the autism spectrum, and it was surprising that this wasn't really brought up or addressed by the people around her at all.

Joshua on the other hand, has had a massive crush on Sophia for many years and he constantly plans how to get to know her. His ambitions lie in playing video games and doing magic tricks, which he doesn't think will amount to anything in the future. The thought of moving into university and figuring out what to do in the future is also terrifying for Josh, so he preoccupies himself with his crush on Sophia. It kind of borders on obsession and placing her on a pedestal but despite that, I found the progression of their relationship to be quite natural.

With Sophia's struggling with anxiety and disconnect from the people around her, with Josh and his fixation on Sophia, there's definitely enough in *The Secret Science of Magic* to keep it moving. I liked the diversity, from selective mutism to social anxiety and autism being explored. Sophia is also Sri Lankan Australian, which I thought was fantastic. Her and Josh's parents were surprisingly absent though.

The only thing I was disappointed in is that there isn't that much science or magic in the book, despite being the key driver as mentioned in the blurb. Aside from plenty of name dropping and repetitive gripes about David Copperfield, I wish there was more of the magic that Joshua was interested in and the science and facts beyond names of theories and prominent people.

There's also this heavy "not like other girls" vibe which I found kind of annoying at some parts, particularly when illustrating Sophia as a character against others. She definitely had enough differentiators of her own without resorting to this path.

I received a review copy in exchange for an honest review.

Rebecca says

REVIEW TO COME

Emily Wrayburn says

Review originally posted on A Keyboard and an Open Mind April 21, 2017:

Melissa Keil would honestly have to try pretty hard to disappoint me. I may not read much contemporary YA, but I will pick up anything she writes. This is her most recent book, released at the beginning of April, and it does not disappoint.

Sophia is a certifiable genius, but she can't always read other people correctly and the mysteries of what the future may hold are giving her panic attacks. Joshua is obsessed with magic, and has harboured a crush on Sophia since Year 7. But how do you romance a genius when you're barely scraping by?

Melissa Keil writes authentically geeky characters that I've always felt were "my people". I think, though, that this was the book where I felt this the strongest. On top of that was the racial diversity that was never presented as a "thing": Sophia is from a Sri Lankan family and her best friend is Indian-Australian. Sophia also suffers from anxiety, and while it is never stated explicitly, it's fairly clear she is somewhere on the autism spectrum.

The romance was a cute slow-burn, exactly how I liked it. I got invested in these characters and their relationships, as well as in their other issues. While both POVs were in first person, it was never confusing. The side characters were also well-constructed; no one felt two dimensional. I read my reviews of Melissa Keil's other two books when I started writing this one, and I mentioned in one that it did feel a little bit like she had reused some ideas from her first book in her second. That was never a concern with this book.

(This review is part of the Australian Women Writers Challenge 2017. [Click here](#) for more information.)

Taneika says

This is the story of a girl named Sophia and a boy named Joshua. Sophia is a child prodigy and a genius with debilitating social anxiety. She has no idea what she wants to do with her life once she finishes high school and becomes obsessed with Gregori Perelman, a recluse mathematician.

Although I am not a genius, nor was I a child prodigy, I found myself really being able to relate to Sophia because I had NO idea what I really wanted to do after school. I knew I wanted to go to uni, but was I going

to be successful? Would I choose the right degree? What would happen to me if I hated it? Spoiler: I'm 24, have changed degrees twice, and have since learned that while I now love what I study, high school and uni is not the end of the world in any way (although, I am admittedly still a blundering mess of an adult).

Initially I wasn't sure whether I would like Sophia as a character as she is incredibly different to read about in comparison to other teenagers in YA. However while she struggles with people/social situations in addition to living with social anxiety, she's incredibly easy to grow attached to and I found myself constantly wanting the best for her. The depiction of Sophia's social anxiety was incredibly well done and seeing the tensions rise between Sophia and her friends/family was incredibly painful and honestly made me feel incredibly sad for Sophia.

Joshua is a boy who also has no idea what to do with his life after high school, he's intelligent, but he's also obsessed with magic tricks. He is incredibly shy and complex, and I loved that he wasn't your typical YA love interest. He is SO different from the usual mold of boyfriend you see in YA literature and it was incredibly refreshing to see! I may have also gotten a little bit excited about Joshua's love for magic because my boyfriend is also obsessed with magic tricks (albeit, not to the extent that Joshua is, and he can't DO the tricks but loves them all the same) and seeing all of the little references to different illusionists and magicians such as Penn & Teller made me SO FREAKING HAPPY???

The diversity in this novel is something I really want to make a point of, because it was so well done and wonderful to see as well! Sophia is an Australian with Sri Lankan descent and her best friend Elsie, is Indian. Seeing how their ethnicities were incorporated into the story and how they were written was so great!

Melissa Keil's writing was wonderful and felt so incredibly authentic in regards to the dialogue and how she developed her cast of characters. While this is primarily a character driven novel, each of the events they experience, and the things they go through was so much fun (sometimes sad) to read about and the dialogue between various characters made me laugh out loud several times! There were geeky references in regards to science and maths as well as pop culture. Sophia's favourite TV show is Doctor Who, and anyone who knows me knows how much I adore Doctor Who myself so seeing how much Sophia loved this show in addition to Joshua making references to magic shows, made me smile SO MUCH.

Overall, *The Secret Science of Magic* was written incredibly well and has a super unique and diverse cast of characters. Despite at first seeming like an "unlikeable character", you can't help falling in love with Sophia and Joshua and their beautifully developing relationship.

C.G. Drews says

Ohhh I was so excited for this book about a magical boy and a sciency girl. Plus Melissa Keil is SUCH an amazing author and I've adored her other two books (*The Incredible Adventures of Cinnamon Girl* and *Life in Outer Space*) so so much!! This new book, however, **did fall a little short for me** but that's mostly because I didn't really understand what it was trying to SAY. The characters were so nerdy and adorkable and the sibling relationships were the besst. And I LAUGHED QUITE A LOT. So much solid win there. But I always feel like a rather undercooked kumquat sandwich when I don't *get* a book.

So here am I. Undercooked kumquat sandwich. Hi, how are you.

BRIEF LIST OF THINGS I LOVED:

- absolutely super cute dual-narrating protagonists
- who were both totally on the Autistic spectrum (just undiagnosed)
- SUPER cute sibling relationships
- Sophia was POC
- Joshua had a lisp
- magic card tricks which are actually my favourite (yaaaas I'm teaching myself on youtube and I'm a dork and I'm not even sorry)
- excellent writing
- exceptionally good dialogue and the kind of banter that had me snickering quietly like a deluded piece of tree and had my dog looking at me strangely
- AND OH THE BEST CAMEOS EVER!!!! Sam and Camilla actually play a role in here and just afdjksaldf I only just realised how much I *miss* them and excuse me while I need to re-read Life in Outer Space immediately
- huzzah for diverse Aussie YA!!!

So one of the things I had a little trouble with was how Sophia seemed very obviously Autistic but the book wasn't interested in diagnosing her. I guess a lot of people are anti-labels. But isn't it better not to grow up thinking you're broken? Isn't it better to understand yourself and have tools to get *others* to understand you? In a way, I'm just peeved that the book gave Sophia some of the symptoms (ie: no social skills, high intelligence, inability to read faces, wrong emotional cues, seemed robotic but was not, sensory processing issues, high anxiety) but wouldn't commit to actually talking about ASD. It's missing suuuuuch a good opportunity here to give voice to ASD girls. I also kind of felt like it ended with the idea that "different isn't broken" (YES YES YES) but "different is just fine once you accept yourself" (nooo people with ASD often need more help than that and Sophia had SO many cues that she needed therapy/counselling). I even felt like it just at the end said "oh she just has social anxiety and needs medication" and it felt like a bit of ASD erasure. **But I may be just misinterpreting it.** And obviously this could JUST be headcannon and I have no idea what the author truly intended. **I just feel like I've gotten a lot of mixed messages.**

Plus I feel like I missed a lot of points??! Like apparently Josh wanted to "save" Sophia. I got that he had a bit of an insta-love infatuation with her, but I didn't really see evidence at the beginning of him trying to save her?!?? I just thought he had a massive crush and figured now was the time to go for it. (view spoiler)

Which leads me to:

SMALL LIST OF DISTINCT GRUMBLES:

- instalove
- the romance went like dOWN LIKE A DEAD OF SOCK but IDK understand why?? (view spoiler)
- I fell like I really didn't get aNYONE'S motivations
- my legit favourite part was the cameo's from the other book's characters which...is a problem tbh
- absent parents
- like literally there are NO PARENTS in this book
- Josh's storyline was like 90% "ooh Sophia!!!" and he really had no plot for himself which makes me saddddddd
- plus Sophia had like 60% of the chapters and I think it was unbalanced

Egad, I'm a rain cloud. Don't get me wrong!! I LOVED THE BOOK. I LOVED THE WRITING. I really

really loved Josh. <3 I think he was so dorky and cute and I love reading about boys who prattle along when they're anxious to impress a girl. I think Sophia was adorable and I found her social awkwardness very relatable. I *really* love books with magic card tricks in them. Because obviously I plan to be a magician when I grow up and magic more books onto my shelves because #priorities.

ALL IN ALL: It was a really nerdy book full of relatable characters and a far amount of SAD FEELS. Josh was just ADORABLE and I hope he does magic card tricks forever. **I absolutely loved the themes that people who are different are. not. broken and they DO NOT need to change!!** That is a precious message and pls put it everywhere.

Ioana says

Rating : 2.5 stars

This left me feeling...a little disappointed?...a little confused about how to rate it?...It's definitely a good 2 stars but like what even is that and I'm not making sense right about now.**It was GOOD it just could've been so much better?**

Things I liked:

-SOFIA! She was well the cutest most adorable character! I mean...she didn't understand emotions so she wasn't exactly adorable...BUT she watched doctor who like a nerd and was confused about the humans (me too girl me too) and was trying her best and awe. What a soft child. Also she's POC and super into STEM and I'M ALWAYS HERE FOR GIRLS IN STEM!!

Sofia read as autistic (according to other #ownvoices reviewers and I agree)...but that was never written ON PAGE. Which was...frustrating. More good autistic rep is needed in books in general and autism in girl is rarely diagnosed and it's even more underrepresented!

-It's set in Australia. I just love it when things aren't set in America all the time ok I read the words "Melbourne" and "arvo" and I got excited.

-The writing!!!! Which is the main reason my heart is breaking a bit for rating it 2 stars! Because IT'S BETTER THEN 2 STARS!! The writing really sweetened me for some reason my lizardy heart appreciated it a whole lot. ALSO I laughed!! Which is a huge plus!

Things I didn't like:

-I felt like this book had no actual plot? Wherefore hast thy gone?? I left like by the end nothing happened?? There were some really great messages about not trying to change yourself to make it easier for others to understand you BUT other then that?? NADA. I seriously didn't know what was happening until halfway trough the book.

And the ending was confusing too. It's great that Sofia learned that she's going to be ok the way she is it really is....but she still needs counseling. A doctor. Something! Don't let readers under the impression that doing nothing when dealing with mental health issues is in any way healthy and we should just accept it.

-I didn't like Joshua. Gasps can be heard I know. I didn't like half the protagonists (now you get my rating?). From the prologue I knew I wasn't going to like him and yes my expectations were proved correct. He went from seemingly this cocky kid who thinks he's better than anyone to a nerd who thinks he's better than everyone.

-Ergo I didn't like the romance and the trope it was based on. I just...no. Nope. Nope nopity nope. **I don't like the whole "guy is obsessed with girl for years and he just knows deep in his soul that even if they have never spoken before they are meant for each other he just KNOWS" trope.** And he knew now was the perfect time to make his move? What??

-Really weirdly annoying lack of parents. Look I'm a YA reader I can deal with silly parents that apparently forget they exist but THIS?? This was just strangeeee. Sofia's mom is mentioned to have brought a sandwich once! And she doesn't even get a line.

OVERALL: It was a good book but not in the "THIS IS BETTER THE CAKE!!" response so. Disappointing.

Amanda says

The Secret Science of Magic is the much-anticipated third book from Melissa Keil. Seventeen year old Sophia Reyhart is in Year 12 at a Catholic high school in Melbourne. She's incredibly smart, especially when it comes to maths and science. But she's started experiencing panic attacks, especially when she thinks about her future. Sophia finds herself obsessively interested in a former maths prodigy, Gregori Perelman, who now lives as a recluse in Russia. Joshua Bailey is in Sophia's year at school, but despite his massive crush on her, she's barely noticed him. Josh excels at magic tricks and is also unsure about his future. He's smart but lately he hasn't been trying very hard when it comes to homework or studying, which he fears is a bad example for his younger sister, Gillian.

Keil excels at writing about realistic characters that readers will be able to relate to, and both Sophia and Joshua embody experiences that teens will understand. Sophia in particular struggles with making friends, not understanding jokes, feeling insecure and embarrassed. But she's also proud of her intelligence. Josh feels similar things but is able to be himself a lot more and not care what classmates think of his hobbies.

I adored the friendships in this story. Josh's friends include some characters from Keil's previous books so fans will get a kick out of that, I know I did! And Sophia's best friend, Elsie Nayer, was supportive and understanding, while at the same time struggling with similar worries about the future.

It was also wonderful to read a story about a diverse set of characters. Sophia and her family are Sri Lankan, Elsie and her family are Indian. But while we're introduced to Sophia's older brother, Toby, we don't meet her parents (I read an ARC, so maybe this changed in the final version, or perhaps I'm mistaken) and the absence of her parents was something that stood out to me. Josh's family are more present, as are Elsie's, and I think a lot of teens will relate to the pressure Josh feels from his father to pick a uni course.

A really sweet element of the story was Josh's love for magic and all the little tricks he created for Sophia. He's loved her for years and it was nice to see Sophia to open herself up to the idea of love and relationships, without having her fall in love instantly. I liked how cautious she was because I'm sure there will be teens who share her feelings.

I recently read another book about a science-loving girl, *Stargazing for Beginners* by Jenny McLachlan, so if you like stories about smart girls, I recommend that once you've read TSSoM.

Ableist language: crazy, dumb, insane, lame, idiot, demented.

The Secret Science of Magic is a story filled with heart, hope, and possibilities. You'll feel for Sophia, you'll be enchanted by Josh, and you'll be inspired to just be yourself.

Thank you to Hardie Grant Egmont for my copy.

Kelly (Diva Booknerd) says

Australian with Sri Lankan heritage, Sophia is an intelligent young woman, a prodigy mathematician enduring debilitating social anxiety and becoming increasingly infatuated with Grigori Perelman, a recluse Russian mathematician. Sophia is a wonderful character, ingenious and accomplished which often leads to a lack of perception. Unlike Elsie who is leaving for the United States, Sophia isn't optimistic about university and consistently devalues her own intuition. The depiction of Sophia's social anxiety was wonderfully portrayed. As her narrative progressed, she begun to recognise how her anxiety manifested but also sought professional guidance. The tension between Sophia and her brother Toby furthered Sophia's anxiety, especially spending time with Elise and the effortless relationship with her siblings.

Joshua is enchanting. As an illusionist he believes in the impossible. Joshua doesn't place importance on his education and is ostracised by his peers. He's a modest young man who has been captivated by Sophia since the tender age of thirteen but as an introvert, feels intimidated by Sophia's presence. I loved the relationship Joshua shared with thirteen year old sibling Gillian, who has perfected teenage angst. Often a formidable presence, Joshua continues to persist to rebuild his relationship with Gillian despite her defiance.

The romance was captivating and a wonderful progression from a gentle, tentative friendship. Discounting the student body, Joshua has a wonderful company of friends who are accepting, supportive and encouraging. I appreciated how Joshua allowed Sophia to set the boundaries of their friendship, understanding that it was important for Sophia to remain in control of her societal environment due to her anxiety.

The Secret Science of Magic is magnificent. A charming coming of age narrative of existing within the moment. Phenomenally sublime. Magical.

<http://www.divabooknerd.com/2017/03/b...>

Theresa says

2.5/5

This one just fell a bit flat to me. I had no care for the general story or characters, in fact, I didn't really feel there was a strong story at all and what was there of a story felt a bit *rushed*. I will say the characters felt three dimensional, each harboring different personalities, but I still just didn't really care for their story in general.

Also not sure if the kindle version or the book in general, but there was a couple editing issues with not separating different people speaking in different paragraphs

Aimee says

I received a copy of *The Secret Science of Magic* from Hardie Grant Australia to review.

I don't read a lot of contemporaries but when I picked this up I was glad to take a break from the books I normally read.

I really liked both Sophia, Joshua and their friends. I didn't understand why some people got so annoyed with Sophia for not picking up on how others were feeling sometimes. It was obvious her brain worked differently to the people around her and she can't pick up on a lot of facial cues. I don't know if the people in her life didn't know or they just forgot. But I didn't think it was something Sophia should be blamed for. Or blamed for not picking up how people were feeling when they were so good at hiding it.

I liked that Joshua seemed to understand Sophia, he liked her the way she was and didn't try to change her, to make her socialise if she didn't want to. I also like the magic tricks he did, especially the last one. Not that I can see them when I'm reading but that last illusion was pretty epic.

This book is not only funny but also diverse and intelligent. The love story between Sophia and Joshua went from a tentative friendship and acceptance to something that took Sophia completely by surprise. I enjoyed this book. It was definitely magical.

Diem says

4.5

This was lovely.

All the 2017 #LoveOzYA titles I've read so far continue to set the bar very high.

Listen to a Bookish Friends review of 'The Secret Science of Magic' on Omny, iTunes or on the blog.

Alison says

THIS. BOOK.

I have so much to say, but I'll save it for a review closer to release date. Just. Ugh, loved it.
