



In This Way I Was Saved

Brian DeLeeuw

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On a chilly November afternoon, six-year-old Luke Nightingale's life changes forever. On the playground across from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he encounters Daniel. Soon the boys are hiding from dinosaurs and shooting sniper rifles. Within hours, Luke and his mother, Claire, are welcoming Daniel into their Upper East Side apartment -- and their lives.

Daniel and Luke are soon inseparable. With his parents divorcing, Luke takes comfort in having a near-constant playmate. But there's something strange about Daniel, who is more than happy to bind himself to the Nightingales. The divorce has cut Luke's father out of the picture, and as his increasingly fragile mother struggles with the insidious family depression, Daniel -- shrewd, adventurous, and insightful -- provides Luke both recreation and refuge.

As Luke grows from a child to an adolescent to a young man, he realizes that as much as his mother needs him, Daniel needs him more. Jealous of Luke's other attachments, Daniel moves from gestures of friendship into increasingly sinister manipulations. In the end, Luke finds himself in a daily battle for control of his own life -- wondering whether he or Daniel will emerge victorious.

Brian DeLeeuw's debut is a haunting and provocative story of a family's love and madness that you will not be able to put down.

In This Way I Was Saved Details

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Hannah Coombs says

I am so, so confused by this book. I really don't know what to say, as I don't fully understand the ending at all...

It was highly readable, and it was well paced with well developed characters, but I just don't quite understand the premise of the book. I get that Daniel is another personality of Luke, but I'm confused as to whether Daniel is a supernatural spirit who moves from one person to the next or whether it's just a metaphor for split personality disorder. Is that open to interpretation or am I missing something? And what was it Luke was trying to work out by seeing Dr Clayton at the end of the book?

I'd like to discuss this further with someone as I did find it interesting, but I just don't fully understand the ending.

I probably wouldn't recommend it as it's just odd and hard to understand what exactly the point of the novel is (?) but it's something different and I don't regret reading it as such. 2 1/2 stars.

April says

I felt like this novel had a lot of potential, though, to be honest, I was literally judging it by the cover--so cool. Unfortunately, I was disappointed. DeLeeuw, a first-time novelist, does a lot of things well. He has a great voice, and the pacing is nice, but ultimately, I didn't feel like there was much heart to the book, and perhaps that's just the nature of narrating from a non-human perspective--it isn't really relatable. It was interesting, and though he shows you what's ahead early on, I still found myself fighting against it to the end, which at least tells me I was engaged, but I really wish the story had been stronger.

karen says

i am immune to this book. it did not "keep me guessing until the very last page." it was not "so terrifying (i would) not be able to put it down." it was not "suspenseful and terrifying." in fact, i had forgotten that it was supposed to *be* scary, and when i returned to the back cover and remembered i had intended to be scared, i was a little pissed. "highly readable." okay, i can agree with that one. in the same sense as a spoon is highly spoonable. one can read this book, that is what it is for.

it's not that it is a bad book, it is just very medium.

it reminded me a lot of *good and happy child* - another "literary psychological horror" novel that left me flat. this one is about an imaginary friend with ambition. that his corporeality has been achieved is evident in the first chapter, the rest of the book is an explanation of how it came to be.

and it's not poorly written, it is just a new twist on any old story of evil twins or demonic possession or mpd: there is the vulnerability in childhood, the suggestibility to "do bad things", the animal casualties, the violent escalation in adolescence, the complications of sexuality. but this is old indian burial ground, with a fancier building erected on its ashes.

of course, this particular story has a more specific built-in ambiguity than most, as the mother of the "imaginative child" suffers from a number of mental disorders, so the interpretation-field is a little wider than most, and it can be read simultaneously in a number of ways. although the ending pretty much shows the author's intent, and it is something of a let-down.

the pacing is very good - it is a very fast read, and i did want to know how it would all play out, but ultimately, it was a cool story idea that never brought anything new to the table. and i hate leftovers.

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

It was hard to put this book down. You see all the characters through the eyes of an imaginary friend, or a doppelganger, or a personality - it is hard to tell, but an intriguing premise that is fleshed out into a disturbing tale. I feel like thanking the author for taking such a unique perspective!

Danni The Girl says

I kind of understood what happened at the end it was just so sad and depressing, my partner couldn't even finish the book.

Jamie says

Very disturbing and unsettling to read. I found it very well written and absorbing though.

Mckeyk says

HUGE SPOILER

I'm only 24 pages in but already know the main characters are the same person. It was given away too easy, no parent doesn't insist that a six year old child check in with his parents.

Tiziana says

This was definitely a, "Don't judge a book by it's cover" moment for me. I have had this book sitting on my book shelf for over two years and almost gave it away because I didn't like the photo on front cover, but the reviews on the back cover caught my attention. I decided to read the book and once I started it I couldn't put it down. What an amazing book! Also, amazing that this is the first book by Brian DeLeeuw and hopefully, not his last.

"In This Way I Was Saved" is a mind bending, twisted and amazing story about two people, Luke and Daniel that will keep you guessing until the very end of the story of what just happened! The circumstances are typical situations that can happen growing up between early childhood to college years but the characters are totally twisted and unique, but make for a very creative and well-written book. Actually, I think this would make a really good movie.

Allison Thompson says

This was a very disturbing book. Sometimes I could hardly bring myself to read the next sentence for fear of what was going to happen. And I LIKE suspense and thrillers and horror. There was just something so awful about Daniel that I had trouble reading this.

Sandra says

So bizarre, yet so good. Nice to see something that hasn't been "done" a hundred times before.

Dovic says

My thoughts are all over the place. I am still digesting what I read.

This book is weirdly disturbing, sinister, and sometimes surprising.

Amy says

I love this book! I've read it 3 times now and each time I've just loved it more and more, although it doesn't keep you guessing as much as some books do everything is up for interpretation and each time I've read it I've had a different idea of what's going on and what the epilogue could mean.

I can see why it has such low reviews because it's an open ending and a lot of questions aren't resolved, but that's what I like about it because it forces you to think and question both the book and yourself.

It is woven beautifully, details that are seemingly not important are at the end of the book and there are so many hints and nudges to different parts of the book. I found the characters great, Daniels especially is sick and twisted but it really puts you into the mind of a manipulator. Another thing that makes this book great is how uncomfortable it makes you feel during some scenes and the vulgarity of it. For example, at one point you are reading from Daniels point of view as a child and you witness someone having sex, and it is written in such a way that instantly you know Daniel isn't all he seems as he describes the scene with unfounded maturity and eagerness making it uncomfortable as you are reading from a child's point of view.

Overall for a first book especially it is beautifully crafted and woven, even for multiple reads.

Ace says

So many readers rated this novel unfavorably that I almost didn't read it, but there were some who seemed to love it. So, I figured what the heck. My impression is the author clamped onto an idea he thought was novel (it wasn't) and doggedly pursued it to completion. I can see how an author could fall in love with his own idea, but the folks at Simon and Schuster? That's mind boggling. Anyway, there were moments when I actually had hope that the story would vindicate the effort, but, unfortunately, it fell flat with an unimaginative cliché of an ending. If you were thinking about reading this one, forget about it.

Linda Lipko says

Daniel and Luke are the same person residing in the mind of a multiple personality. While at first the writing was good, and in the beginning the story line was well developed, 3/4 of the way through the author seemed to feel the need to mesh a credible tale with unnecessary sex, drugs and violence and from there the book went rapidly down hill.

I finished the book in a few hours and was left with the clear thought that there were oh so many better ones waiting to be read.

NO STARS FOR THIS ONE!

David Hebblethwaite says

In his debut novel, Brian DeLeeuw brings us a story about two boys. One of the boys is real, while the other isn't – but you may have a hard time deciding which is which. Our narrator is Daniel, who met Luke in the playground, when the latter was six. Luke is the only person who can see him; yet Daniel seems no common-or-garden 'imaginary friend', having apparently attained consciousness. Daniel returns home with Luke, to find a household under strain: Luke's mother, Claire, is fragile, still affected by her own mother's suicide; when an incident brings matters to a head, she leaves, taking Luke with her.

One day, Claire has a surprise for Luke – she's bought him a pet dog. This new friend starts to take Daniel's place in Luke's life, so much so that Daniel finds his very self disintegrating. In a bid for survival, Daniel tricks Luke into poisoning the dog with some of Claire's medication. She, of course, doesn't believe her son when he says that Daniel told him to do it, and takes Luke to see a psychiatrist. Soon after, Luke is able to restrain Daniel, eventually locking him away inside his head, for twelve whole years. But, when Luke is eighteen, Daniel re-emerges – with his own ideas of what Luke should do, who Luke should be.

In This Way I Was Saved is quite a difficult book to evaluate. How do you judge characterisation, for example, when you can't even trust that the narrator is – well, is, full stop? Well, let's see: DeLeeuw has created a chilling presence in Daniel, a narrator who's just that bit *too* knowing, whose voice is that bit too articulate. Not to mention that his opinions are also pretty vile; Daniel has little patience for humans and their messy emotions: when Luke finds a girl in whose company he can relax and forget his cares, Daniel just takes the view that Luke is being insincere – and the situation Daniel then engineers is not a pleasant one. As a portrait of such a cold individual, the book is a great success.

Yet there's ambiguity here, too, as it's possible to read Daniel as being entirely a product of Luke's delusion. This is a more difficult reading to make, because the narration naturally invites us to view Daniel as a separate entity; and I'm not sure that the novel sustains its ambiguity through to the end. But it's fascinating to read a scene and see it happening in two different ways simultaneously; DeLeeuw interweaves the possibilities well. The reading of Daniel-as-delusion also deepens the book's portrait of people and lives unravelling; it's harrowing for characters and readers alike.

In This Way I Was Saved is not without its flaws. I feel a sense of distance in the progression of the plot – as though it's happening rather than being made to happen – which I think arises because neither Luke nor Daniel is able to truly drive the story directly. Nevertheless, I am impressed with what DeLeeuw has done in his novel. It's easy to assume, from the first few pages, that you know who Daniel is and what has happened. I read most of the book thinking, it can't be that simple – and, happily, it's not.

No more of that, though, for it's the road to spoilers. To conclude: *In This Way I Was Saved* is an intriguing puzzle of a book which takes you into a mind that's not a comfortable place to visit, but that visit is compelling all the same. Whose mind is it, though? There's a question to ponder...
