



A Big Dose of Lucky

Marthe Jocelyn

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Moving forward doesn't always happen in a straight line.

Malou has just turned sixteen—hardly old enough to be out in the world on her own—and all she knows for sure is that she's mixed-race and that she was left at an orphanage as a newborn. Beyond that, it's a mystery—a mystery that takes her to the little town of Parry Sound, where she finds lots of young brown faces like hers. Are these her relatives, and why doesn't anyone want to talk about it?

A Big Dose of Lucky Details

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From Reader Review A Big Dose of Lucky for online ebook

Kendra says

That was pretty funny. And historical!

Teisha says

****A solid 4.5 out of 5 stars****

I was initially intrigued by this book because I found out it is part of a series that follows the lives of seven girls living in an orphanage in Canada during the 1960s. This is the first in the series I've read and I was pleasantly surprised by this book. This story follows sixteen-year-old Malou, the protagonist and the only girl with dark skin from the orphanage, as she embarks on a journey to discover her past and find her (possible) family. The layout of the book made Malou's voice more authentic, not just words on a page (but that's just me). Her journey to discover her past and the family that may (or may not) be out there unfolds, and she grows up right before your eyes. There were times throughout where I questioned why Malou made certain decisions; however, it totally fits the evolution of the character as she discovers a world outside of the orphanage. The book covers a number of social issues, from racism to homophobia, and I liked how Marthe Jocelyn was able to relate the issues to Malou specifically, not just in a general sense. The ending did seem a little rushed for me but overall a great read. I'm looking forward to reading the other books in the series to learn more about Malou's friends. Her journey was such an interesting one, so I'm curious to see what's next...

Brittani says

A girl named Malou who just turned 16 and all she knows she was a newborn in the orphanage. She is mixed-race and gets messed with just because of her skin color. She stays with seven different girls and they all wonder who their parents were. Read and find out the mystery she finds out.

Cecelia says

I'm at the end of A Big Dose of Lucky by Marthe Jocelyn. This was a random book that I selected entirely based on the cover. I couldn't resist the afro on the front. And, this book actually turned out to be a quick, entertaining, and highly enjoyable read. It is about an orphan who goes on a quest to discover her biological parents. So, there is some mystery mixed in with a bit drama. It is aptly named because Malou (the main character) has a lot of luck getting answers and finding the truth. It's a just a happy, feel-good kind of book. And, it's part of a series, so I will be adding the other books in the series to my to be read list!

Jessalyn King says

Loved it!

(The reader was also good, but the production quality was pretty bad. You could tell where it was cut and new takes were inserted, which were a little jarring, but otherwise she had a good voice for Malou.)

This is a random opinion not (exactly) related to the book: What really pisses me off about racism and sexism etc. is that reading things like this, set in the 60s, you see that we've literally not gotten any better (at least not in Canada). Yes, homosexuality isn't illegal anymore, but otherwise? People still hate on people who are "different", and women still have little say in their lives. Argh.

Alice says

CAUTION: This whole review might be a giant spoiler. That's because I didn't necessarily dislike reading this book, I just think a sequel would be SO MUCH BETTER. Here are things I would love to see:

1. First, the big run-in with evil grandma!

2. Malou solving the mystery of Andy Bannerman.

What was the reason behind him being forced to leave town? It seems like a pretty big point, and one of the main reasons he wasn't in Malou's life. Why did he stop writing letters to Eve, if they were so in love? Everyone seemed to say he was smart, competent, and very nice; but he also was involved in something possibly unethical. What happened there?

3. Malou and the gang. What now?

What will their chemistry be like now? Pete definitely seemed like he was getting ready to turn heel on everyone. (Sorry, professional wrestling language is coming through.) Will that ugliness tear the group apart?

4. Becoming a family (or not?) with the Delaneys?

Eve seemed like she had a way to go in really being ready to accept Malou into her life. Will new husband be a jerk about it? The kids?

5. And those racist (and probably sex offender) guys from the docks.

Have Malou and her friends completely escaped them? Will they get revenge on them somehow?

6. Frankie.

He seems like a really good guy, and Malou is finally past (mostly) all those weird nicknames for body parts and not knowing how babies are made. I think they could have a very sweet story.

Okay, so THAT is the book I want to read. And I am going to finish this dissertation with one of my favorite quotes from the book...

"What if you're blind and your friend is a painter? You will never know how she shows herself to the world. Or maybe you're deaf and your sister is a singer. You will never hear her voice.

Or what if you were born with white skin? And your daughter is the color of coffee with a splash of cream? How can you ever really know who she is?"

Melissa (YA Book Shelf) says

Loved this book. From racism, homophobia, and poverty, there is a lot of intersectionality shared more in this book than in any of the others because Malou is the only character among the orphans with brown skin. (Many of the books mention these issues briefly, but it's much stronger in this case.) It's interesting to experience how racism affects Malou, Jimmy, Abby, Lucy, and Pete. I could understand the fear, terror, and humiliation that they felt in the moments where they are confronted by bigots in a visceral way through Marthe Jocelyn's descriptions, and it helped me explore the world through their POV.

I understand why Malou pushed Frankie aside here and there as she was so focused on her search for her mother, but it seemed a little weird that he'd been an important figure and got pushed aside. I wonder whether anything will happen between them in the next instalment.

I liked how the characters learn things that are completely shocking and unusual to them, and they make this known. Things that are commonplace in contemporary times were experimental / outside of the status quo in 1964, so their reactions are fitting and helps ground the reader in the time period.

I'm very interested to see what happens with Malou and her new friends as the series continues.

Becky says

This was fantastic!

I'm kind of afraid to say anything because spoilers would really, really spoil this book, I think. The basic idea is that this orphan brown girl in Ontario in the 70's is trying to figure out her history. It spirals out pretty quickly from there as she meets a bunch of really excellent (and some really not excellent) people, and things take a turn for the weird.

I was handed this book to read for a book club, and it looked interesting enough, and I thought I could read it fairly quickly. I'd never heard of it, nor did I know the premise behind the Secrets books, but now I'd REALLY like to read the rest of them!

I highly recommend this. It deals with a lot of historical issues of racism (among other "-isms"), but from a Canadian perspective, which is very cool.

At one point I yelled to my roommate, "She just went into a Beckers and bought pink popcorn and now I'm really nostalgic!"

It was really well executed too, very hard to put down.

Yeah, definitely very good!

Serena says

It was a good book unfortunately I don't know that I can have it in my library as there is some pages that are quite descriptive about sex. I run a Catholic elementary library and I don't think it would be something that would be well received by some of the parents. It is a good story has great feel to it even though the ending left me feeling that I wanted more of a resolution but maybe there will be another book

Barbara says

I had high hopes for this novel, partly because its subject matter--adoption and family secrets--but also because of how it's set up with nifty subheads within the chapters. Those capture the sections quite well and serve almost as visual soundbites about what the section will cover. However, as the book moved to its close, I became increasingly dismayed by the utter disregard for medical ethics on the part of the main character as well as the interns who were involved in the baby-making business. The story concerns sixteen-year-old Malou, who is thrown into the wilder world after a fire destroys the orphanage in which she lives. She's left with a couple of clues as to her origin, and she heads to Toronto to see what she can learn. She's quickly befriended by several individuals, and begins work as a cleaning woman at a hospital in Parry Sound. When she gains access to hospital records, she finds a list of names and starts trying to eliminate those individuals who couldn't possibly be her mother. The secrets she discovers are disturbing in many ways, but how she reveals those secrets leaves a lot to be desired and can possibly be blamed on her youth and naïve ways. Yet, I found it troublesome, and it detracted from my enjoyment of the book. When she finally tracks down her mother, she learns just how much prejudice can exist in the form of one woman--in this case, her maternal grandmother. For parts of the book, Malou is deeply concerned about how others treat her because of her brown skin. Probably my favorite part of the book would be how she gravitates to books about orphans, seeking clues from those books about how to live her life.

Jasmine says

This is so Canadian, and so 60s, and so cute, and so quality.

Stacy Books says

This book was read and reviewed by my co-worker, Nicole

I would say this book is part of a collection more than part of a series. It is one of seven books titled Secrets. The books are about an orphanage catching fire in 1964- and the seven oldest girls must now go out into the world and discover their own histories for themselves. A Big Dose of Lucky is Malou's story. Malou is the only brown face in the orphanage. She is convinced her parents are dead because, that is what being an orphan means. Malou is smart, shy and clever. She loves reading books, mostly about orphans such as *The Jungle Book*, *Anne of Green Gables* and *Heidi*.

After the fire, she is given a baby bracelet and the story about how she showed up at the home. Malou's inquires take her to Parry Sound, a mostly white town in Ontario, Canada. While she is there she starts seeing other brown faces, like hers, and youth of mixed races. The thing is, the parents involved are not

talking about this small group of teens and Malou, wanting to find her mother's name wants to know why everyone is keeping everything so secret.

The book was well written, each chapter is divided into sections, making it a quick read. As the mystery unfolds I wanted to read more and more. I won't give away Malou's discoveries but it did have a satisfying ending. I want to read the rest of the series now.

Shelley says

When an orphan sets out to find out about her family she didn't know that finding her roots would be so difficult. But she is African American and the year is 1964 so this might be a little more difficult than she thought. What she finds might undo an entire town or at least a small group of her friends and families.

Catie says

2 1/2 stars

Kate Stericker says

Perhaps because I've already finished other installments in this series, I found the first part of the story, in which Malou receives her clue and gets settled in Parry Sound, very tedious to read. However, the last half of the book contained revelations that were genuinely surprising and wound up drawing me in far more effectively than any of the other Seven Secrets books.
