



Adaptation

Malinda Lo

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Reese can't remember anything from the time between the accident and the day she woke up almost a month later. She only knows one thing: She's different now.

Across North America, flocks of birds hurl themselves into airplanes, causing at least a dozen to crash. Thousands of people die. Fearing terrorism, the United States government grounds all flights, and millions of travelers are stranded.

Reese and her debate team partner and longtime crush David are in Arizona when it happens. Everyone knows the world will never be the same. On their drive home to San Francisco, along a stretch of empty highway at night in the middle of Nevada, a bird flies into their headlights. The car flips over. When they wake up in a military hospital, the doctor won't tell them what happened, where they are—or how they've been miraculously healed.

Things become even stranger when Reese returns home. San Francisco feels like a different place with police enforcing curfew, hazmat teams collecting dead birds, and a strange presence that seems to be following her. When Reese unexpectedly collides with the beautiful Amber Gray, her search for the truth is forced in an entirely new direction—and threatens to expose a vast global conspiracy that the government has worked for decades to keep secret.

Adaptation Details

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Author : Malinda Lo

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From Reader Review Adaptation for online ebook

Cyna says

I feel like I've had a pretty good experience with Malinda Lo's books so far. Huntress and Ash weren't perfect, but I remember them fondly, and I was excited for Adaptation, Lo's step from medieval fantasy into contemporary sci-fi. Unfortunately, I don't know that I'll be able to remember this one with as much affection as the others. It was kind of a slog. An on-the-bad-end-of-mediocre slog.

Adaptation's saving grace is that its heart is in the right place. There's no uncritically perpetuated bigotry, misogyny, or racism, the cast is racially and sexuality(ily?) diverse, no stereotyping or tokenism, and it feels more accurately reflective of the world we live in than most things I read. Most importantly, Adaptation features a bisexual protagonist who finds herself caught up in a respectfully-handled bisexual love triangle.

If there's anything to recommend Adaptation, it's the protagonists' discovering her sexuality: Reese's experiences beginning her relationship with her female love interest, Amber, are by far the best parts of the book. I have issues with the plot and pacing and characterization and whatnot that I'll get in to soon, but the scenes in which Amber and Reese went out on dates and spent time together were when the characters felt most real, when they had a depth and a sincerity that was harder to find in the rest of the novel. Their relationship is first-love sweet, and I love the way that it was handled, how accepting Reese's everyone was of Reese and her relationship, and how frank and forthright the portrayal of the relationship itself is. It's a much-needed portrayal, and I'm glad that it exists.

That being said, it felt like something out of a completely different novel.

I have a bundle of problems with Adaptation, and I feel like they all come from roughly the same place: it's disjointed as fuck. The beginning of the book is intriguing, and it's got a great disaster movie kind of hook: all over the United States, Mexico, and Canada, planes are crashing thanks to literal flocks of birds suiciding into the engines. Air travel is suspended all around the continent, so naturally people get paranoid and suspicious, fearing terrorism or some other doomsday scenario, and shit goes Mad Max almost overnight. Our protagonist, Reese, her classmate David, and their teacher, stranded states away from home because of a school trip, attempt to drive back to San Francisco, but are met with a series of terrible accidents that leave the teacher dead, and Reese and David horribly injured in a car crash.

Days later, Reese awakens in a top-secret military hospital, where she's told that she and David only survived the accident thanks to "advanced experimental medical procedures". They're made to sign NDAs, and then they're sent home, to find the intriguing disaster of the opening is completely over and life has returned more or less to normal.

It's an interesting way to kick off the novel, very hectic and tense and cinematic and mysterious – I mean, birds? – but it makes promises the rest of the book doesn't keep. The apocalyptic feel is completely abandoned once Reese and David wake up, and while I'm intrigued by the idea of a post-post-apocalyptic America on the mend, that's not really what Adaptation is about, so what feels like a very sudden genre shift is jarring.

Given the set-up, you would expect the middle half of Adaptation to be the discovery part – you know, the investigation into what happened to Reese and David, what was going on with the bird thing, and how the two tie together, because you know they will. Instead, the focus shifts to the romance and Reese's awakening

sexuality, and the tone changes dramatically.

Like I said, I generally liked the romance between Reese and Amber, the girl who definitely has absolutely nothing to do with the other part of the plot, nope, but it doesn't mesh AT ALL with anything that's come before, or anything else plot-related that's happening alongside it. It comes out of nowhere, and even though you know, logically, that it will HAVE to tie into the overall plot later, while you're reading it, it feels like someone is flipping back and forth between a fluffy romance movie and the weird sci-fi flick that you started watching originally. There's just such a disconnect between the two.

That being said, I'd almost rather watch the fluffy romance full-time, because the weird sci-fi flick has gotten boring as fuck at this point. Basically Reese discovers that the advanced medical procedure has given her Wolverine-esque regenerative powers, as well as the ability to, er, feel people from the inside when she touches them. It's a weird power with no practical application that I can think of – worst X-Man ever, right? Meanwhile, David has developed the much more useful ability to hear people's thoughts, but before you start thinking that this could lead to interesting power-exploring places, understand that all of this comes out reeeeeeeally slowly, interrupted by a handful of date scenes, over the course of the junior detective investigation into the plane crashes that Reese's best friend and conspiracy nut Julian drags her in to. It's here that Reese just stumbles on to information linking the plane crashes to the government and the procedures that she and David underwent.

It's at this point that I should probably pause to mention how utterly lacking in agency Reese is. Almost every single thing that she experiences, and ALL of the things that make up the plot and move it along, just happen to Reese. I'm going to be saying "stumbled on to" a lot in this review, because Reese doesn't MAKE things happen, she doesn't even really go out looking for answers after the bad shit has happened to her, that's almost entirely Julian's doing. Reese just finds stuff when the story requires it. She happens on to or gets dragged along to or kidnapped off to places where plot-relevant things are happening, and I think that this lack of an overarching goal or mission for Reese has a lot to do with why the story feels so disjointed. The lack of a unifying personal drive towards...anything leaves Reese afloat in the river of the plot, drifting from place to place in a way that can often feel random.

Anyway, before Reese can do anything with the information that's been doled out to her, she stumbles upon a scene between her girlfriend and the doctor who treated Reese at the secret military facility and discovers that, OH NOES, her girlfriend totally IS plot-related, here to keep tabs on Reese for...someone. They break up, which is understandable but a shame, because on her own, Reese has all the personality of a cardboard cut-out. David, too, actually, which is why I have issues getting behind that pairing.

So time out again to talk about the love triangle – it's not exactly a love triangle in the sense that there's not really any simultaneous pursuit. Reese falls for Amber despite her crush on David, because she believes he couldn't possibly be interested in her. David is interested, but only confesses this after Reese has broken it off with Amber. There are lots of simultaneous feels, but it's never framed in a competitive way. Like, Reese never agonizes over who she should choose – her bag is more about whether or not she wants to date anyone at all, and after Amber's betrayal, whether she wants to take that chance with David. Obviously towards the end of the book things come closer to something resembling a romantic conflict – Reese commits to dating David, but Amber comes back, and the two love interests meet fully aware of their respective feelings for Reese for the first time – but the book ends before any progress is made on that front, so it'll be interesting to see how this whole thing plays out in *Inheritance*. I'm Team Threesome, personally.

Speaking of, the bisexual aspect is very respectfully handled – there’s never any questioning of Reese’s “true preference”, no slut-shaming or biphobia, and David is neither weirded out nor threatened by the fact that Reese’s ex is a girl. It’s nice. Granted, biphobia is absolutely a real thing that bisexual people face in the real world, but there’s something to be said for the portrayal of the sort of environment in which a character is able to explore their sexuality free from judgement.

Anyway, the Amber thing happens and before Reese can do anything even slightly proactive on the “investigating-my-powers” front, she triggers a cut scene and we’re subjected to yet another setting/goal shift. This time David and Reese are taken to a completely different secret military base to be involuntarily experimented on, and the goal becomes escape. Also, because we’re like 3/4 of the way through the book, it’s time for some Answers. Both of these things are totally underwhelming.

The Answers are yet again just dropped in Reese’s lap. A little expositional dialogue here, a secret report mysteriously uploaded to her phone there, a couple lab reports, a Presidential address and voila, your answers, mademoiselle, on a silver fuckin’ platter.

Before we get into spoilers though, we need to talk about dat writing. Even putting the weird pacing and the lack of agency and the fractured feel of the story as a whole aside, the writing is just bad. I hate saying it, but it’s really, really bad. I mean, I had issues with the writing in *Huntress* and *Ash*, but both of those books had a sort of style to them, a Ye Olde Storytelling affectation, in *Ash* especially, that made all of the telling and the weird feelings-exposition at least kinda make sense. But here there’s not even a pretense of a style, it’s just normal contemporary prose and oh my godddd no. Stahp.

The characters are all incredibly shallow and/or boring, like Reese has one emotional hangup that she has to get over, but aside from that she has no interest or personality trait to speak of, aside from debate, apparently. David is just as bad, and their romantic interaction is bland city. It’s all tell, no show, all the time, with everything, to the point there’s a noticeably weird recurring redundancy where a character will say something that implies an idea or emotion, and then the descriptor tag following that statement will outright SAY the thing the dialogue implied. Like “Oh, this statement suggests that I am freaked out,” THE CHARACTER SAID, FREAKED OUT-EDLY. IN CASE YOU DIDN’T GET IT.

Plus, a lot of the background information on the military projects and the government conspiracies and the aliens and stuff is conveyed via “articles” and “medical reports”, which I get is meant to fill us in while cutting down on explain-y dialogue, but none of these articles or reports or news broadcasts or even the presidential speeches sound even remotely like what a news article, radio broadcast, medical report, or presidential speech would ever sound like. They read like a child’s approximation of what one of those things might sound like. I know, it sounds like a small quibble, but these things turn up ALL THE TIME and it’s really distracting.

Anyway, back to the story. ANSWERS. Speaking of childish approximations...

SPOILERS – YOU’VE BEEN WARNED

It’s aliens. Yeah. The “advanced medical procedure” was combining alien and human DNA to make Reese and David alien/human hybrids, which actually raises a whole lot of issues about medical consent, because the aliens are supposed to be the good guys in the end, but they did some previously lethal-ass experimental treatments on the two of them and fundamentally altered their bodies without asking anyone. On the upside, Reese actually brings this up, so hopefully that’ll be something addressed in *Inheritance*. I’d hate to see it brushed aside.

Also Amber is an alien, and knowing that one of the love interests is an alien is completely and totally a spoiler, THANKS ROBIN.

So I mean, it's not a terrrrrrrible explanation in itself, but it comes so close to the end of the book that there's no development of any of the alien stuff, and I just find it really hard to buy. It just seems so...silly, like, I WAS A TEENAGE ALIEN-silly. The whole approach this book takes to its aliens and conspiracies and its junior detectives and secret military labs is so middle grade, none of it feels like anything that could conceivably happen in the real world. Not because the premise is outlandish, I've bought books about dumber things, but because the execution feels so cartoonish and...loosely drawn. It just doesn't have the right details for me, I guess.

Honestly, without more development of the alien stuff, that whole revelation means not a whole lot. Impact is minimal. Well, that's not true. The real impact is sequel bait, and I'll admit, in the last ten pages or so, Adaptation FINALLY picked up that intrigue ball that it dropped after the accident, and went somewhere unexpected. It succeeded in making me curious about the sequel and where it could go, even as I was thoroughly underwhelmed by the road it used to get there.

So yeah, Adaptation, man. Not great, but not awful, either, and if Inheritance is good, it might get a sort of retroactive boost for setting all this shit up. As a stand-alone, though, it's pretty disappointing. I'd say that even if you liked Malinda Lo's fantasy stuff, as I did, there's still no guarantee that Adaptation is gonna do anything for you. I'd make it a rental.

Here's hoping Inheritance makes it worth it.

TWO ****AND HALF**** STARS

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Hallie says

(More like 2 for enjoyment, but I'm trying to give credit for -- something.)

One of those books that you expect to like, and then find about as easy to fall into as molasses. Very cold, bordering-on-solid molasses. There were plenty of elements I thought should have been appealing, but I kept getting thrown out by the characters being flat, flat, flat. Reese sure told us a lot about her crush, and exactly how each kiss made her feel, but it never connected for me in any way. When the big Twist *finally* came, I was so disengaged it just seemed eye-rollingly silly. (view spoiler)

Breanne says

[(i.e. after the car accident) (hide spoiler)]

Mike says

My (old) review for this book can be found on my blog, the lowercase gimmick.

It can be hard to admit that a book I really liked and that really impacted me emotionally is flawed. But there are big parts of this book that don't work - mainly, the fact that Reese is a very passive protagonist, and the sci-fi elements don't fit well with the contemporary elements.

That said, it's still very emotional to see aspects of myself represented in this way, and this is a well-written book with a lot to like about it. I recommend it highly.

Nikki says

I've been meaning to read this since it first came out, and at one point I even had an ARC of it, I think for the UK release. I ended up grabbing it and the sequel on our way to the airport, and read it on the flight. Which was possibly not a good idea given all the plane crashes at the start, heh. I don't quite buy the explanation given in the book for that — genetically manipulated birds all somehow released at once and in multiple places worldwide? Seems a bit of a hole in the story there.

Still, if you elide the science stuff (e.g. I'm also not sure introducing alien DNA via mitochondrial DNA would have reliable effects), this is still pretty fun. It's definitely YA, with the preoccupations of teenage readers fairly front and centre. What stands out is less the plot and more the characters. Even then, it's not characterisation I'm talking about, but character diversity. The main character is, for instance, actually bisexual! And she actually initially read to me as ace, maybe grey-A, because she doesn't seem to grok attraction as a general thing.

So that's pretty cool. I'm not overwhelmed by plot and character, though there are some great moments — Reese's mother, for example, and her adult life going on in the background — but it's enjoyable and easy to read.

Originally posted [here](#).

Tandie says

Adaptation was different from the YA I've been reading lately. Very sci-fi, X-Files feel with government cover ups and conspiracy theories. There's an unusual love triangle, but it's not the focus of the story, so it didn't annoy me.

Reece and her debate partner, David, are in an Arizona airport when strange bird behavior results in all flights being grounded. They attempt to drive home to San Francisco and end up in a strange military hospital after a horrible car accident. Neither has any memory of what happened after the accident, and they've been in comas for 28 days.

Reece has had a longtime crush on David and feels awkward and shy around him. She notices that she's different after her mysterious hospital stay but writes it off as a result of her severe concussion. She literally

runs into a beautiful, charismatic girl named Amber and is inexplicably drawn to her. It quickly turns into a crush & her first kiss. I couldn't tell if it was genuine attraction or Amber's ability to draw others to her & manipulate them. Reese is confused around David because she's also attracted to him. Reese seems more affected by their ordeal than David, she had headaches and a strange ability to feel the emotions of others. He admits to hearing voices, and their bodies both experience rapid healing.

People are keeping tabs on them and it's difficult to tell the bad guys from the good guys. Secrets and lies abound, and Reese needs to figure out who to trust. Lots of action and adventure. The story seemed to stall in a few places, and the end was drawn out. Reese got overly dramatic & the plot lost steam, turning my 4 stars into 3. Still, an enjoyable read overall.

Rick Riordan says

YA sci-fi thriller.

When birds start to mysteriously fall out of the sky, Reese is in Arizona with her debate partner David and her debate coach. Soon, it becomes clear that something disastrous has happened all across the continent. Flocks of birds are going crazy everywhere. Dozens, perhaps hundreds of airplanes have crashed. Reese is stranded at the airport, and whatever the true nature of the disaster, the US government seems to be covering it up. Reese, David and her coach grab the last rental car available and start a dangerous cross-country trip to get home to the Bay Area, while all around them the social order begins to break down. Mobs raid stores. Military convoys and panicked refugees clog the highways. Soon Reese finds herself heading straight toward that most mysterious of places: Area 52. Then disaster strikes.

And this is only the first few chapters of the book!

In the aftermath of the national disaster, which comes to be known as the "June Incident," Reese struggles to put her life back together. Something very strange has happened to David and her – something she does not understand and has been forbidden to talk about by shadowy federal agents. Reese is sure the government is watching her. She finds a surveillance device in her bedroom. Her best friend is running an investigation of government conspiracies for an underground website, whispering about secret programs and even . . . yes, aliens. The stranger her life becomes, the more Reese is tempted to believe his wildest wild theories.

All of this would be crazy enough, but during the summer, Reese also meets the beautiful Amber Gray. Reese has been nursing a long-time crush for her debate partner David, though Reese also has told herself she has no interest in getting physical with anyone at this point in her life. Meeting Amber, Reese begins to question everything she has assumed about herself and her sexuality. But can she trust Amber? Can she trust anyone?

Part love story, part thriller, part sci fi, *Adaptation* is a great young adult page-turner that keeps you guessing and packs a lot of excitement!

I found this book thanks to the website Queer Books for Teens: <http://queerbooksforteens.com/>

Kaethe says

One day, traveling back from a debate tournament, everything goes crazy and awful: flocks of birds cause several plane crashes. Okay, birds are creepy. Then there's a national state of emergency which leaves Reece, her teammate and their debate coach stranded far from home with phones out/down/whatever and no flights. Highschool students unable to get home or contact their folks during an emergency, that's a hell of a situation. And then things get worse. And worse. And still more worse.

Plotwise, there's a hell of a lot to work with. Sadly, there's so much going on that things don't necessarily get a chance to build. On the plus side, the emotional relationships do get a chance to build, so they come off really well. I think the book is weakest in the scifi/thriller aspects, but those are still good ideas. I'll definitely be picking up the sequel.

Library copy

Wendy Darling says

Whoa. THERE HAD BETTER BE A SEQUEL.

Review to come.

Josephine (biblioseph) says

Bisexual love triangle? *With sugar, please.*

Yusra ? says

I need to find a way to get this book off my hands ASAP it's physically hurting me to own it. thanks to my local library for giving me a copy of this book BUT Y'ALL SHOULDN'T HAVE . I'm not being sarcastic.

Reese has got to be one of the most annoying characters to exist in the book world.

and a bisexual love triangle in which the male love interest is bland and dry, and the female love interest has no build-up does NOT work for me. I'm sorry. Diversity matters and I'm sure this is the only book I'll ever end up reading with one of these love triangles, but that doesn't mean I loved it.

goddamn Malinda Lo please learn that you can't just give me a burst of action at the beginning and then leave me with 300 pgs like ? what ? i've never been so bored & the suspense wasn't killing me. the book itself was, though.

no seriously, if you want this book I will gladly pay shipping and give it to you, wrapped in really fancy wrapping paper and with a bow on top. but uhh keep in mind you might want to keep the wrapping paper safe so you can reuse it when you re-gift it to that bitch you hate

Niamh says

This was an extremely quick read for me! I don't think I've been this excited to finish a book since I read *A Thousand Pieces of You* in one day (and killed my sleeping pattern in the process).

The synopsis had me intrigued, because evil birds? Who doesn't love to read about nature going haywire?! This book was well paced, with action here and a lull there. I sometimes felt that the lulls in the middle of the book were stretched out a bit too long though, as the storyline did get a little boring. But this was made up for by all the tense action at the end. Also, bisexual love triangle! And a gay, black, Jewish conspiracy theorist (that started out like the iconic line from "Kingsman")! Thank you Malinda Lo! This is what I needed in a book!

The big answer to "what made the birds go crazy?" was nothing like what I expected, neither was the answer to "what the hell happened to Reese and David?", because of course they have to be interconnected somehow.

All in all, I found this book to be quite engaging and interesting, but also with somewhat simplistic writing, a fact that is to be expected with Young Adult books.

Ash Wednesday says

Pretty package wrapped around a skeletal core, padded by lots of glittery styrofoam.

Hey, at least they're glittery.

On their way home from a debate meet in Arizona, Reese, David and their coach, Mr. Chapman's flight back to San Francisco got grounded. Birds have caused four planes all over the country to crash for some mysterious reason. In true post-apocalyptic fashion, the three of them opted to travel by land, getting waylaid by the pandemonium generated by the uncertainty surrounding the strange events. Reese vaguely remembers an accident happening on the road, a strange chamber, a military base and 27 days she has no memory of. When they're returned to their families, she doesn't feel like herself. There are strange dreams plaguing her at night and stranger compulsions in the morning; suited men following her around and a beautiful girl simultaneously disturbing and drawing her in.

"It's like we're in a movie, and every time I am with you, the camera zooms in for a close-up and we're the only two people in the frame.

Do you know what I mean?

You're my close-up."

There's not enough F/F pairings in contemporary romance, true. In the few that I've seen, they are often pushed in the periphery or implied rather than blatant so this was quite refreshing to read about. The writing wasn't frilly but carried the tension in the mystery pretty well.

I feel that this book ran on two fuels:

A) what's going on with those birds?! (Not one quip about Capt Sullenberger? Book, I'm disappoint.) and

B) what happened in those 27 days? (Are we looking at a Matrix scenario here? X-Files? Independence Day?)

For a stretch, this read like a post-apocalyptic/sci-fi novel and I found the action gripping (up to a point) and the imagery bizarrely intriguing. It's what kept me reading, sustaining the interest well into a point that made DNFing moot.

But take away the avant garde atmosphere derived from poetic graffiti in a lesbian bathroom, the eggolk chambers and birds slamming against airport windows, the essentials I look for in a good book felt lacking:

There was no unifying theme. I do not strictly look for a bigger message in books but there has to be a clear and apparent point to everything. This felt a little scattered, the details discordant and unemotional. It had a very sterile feel to it. I like that there's an underlying feeling of randomness to the context of the things happening here but I was waiting for a turn in the story that will elicit some visceral, human reaction from me as a reader. Possibly because...

There was barely any character development for any of the protagonists. Sure I appreciate the novelty of a bisexual heroine in the cusps of sexual awakening but at its core, this still fell prey to the clutches of love triangles and unfounded attraction. I'm having a hard time reconstructing Reese, Amber or David's personalities from memory, possibly because they had none.

The revelation felt milquetoast and dull. Totally robbing the book as a whole. The way this was resolved felt dated and unworthy of the creativity in the possibilities implied by the early chapters. I can't help but see the last quarter as a bit of a throwaway. The book being easily summarized thus with a great early sprint ending with a huffing and puffing walk to the finish line.

Given the balls, the swagger and the KILLER BIRDS this book had to offer, I still can't help but feel a bit disappointed. But then again, *The First Malinda Lo Experience* did manage to sustain my interest despite the *Veronica Mars Distraction* of March 2014, so there's that. Considering I have the attention span of a goldfish, I suppose there's something *Adaptation* has to offer that's worth checking out.

ARC provided by the publishers in exchange for an honest, unbiased review.

Also on Booklikes.

Elise (TheBookishActress) says

I want to remind people before I write this review that my opinion here is subjective. With many dystopian books I dislike, there are clear complaints and issues to point out. This is a book that I think many will enjoy, and maybe one I would've enjoyed a year later. I read this first semester of 8th grade, right before I started questioning, and I vaguely remember having a strong reaction to the fact that two girls were kissing. So while my complaints stand, **it's quite possible I disengaged from the book for personal reasons.** If this seems like your thing, try it out.

? My main issue is the pacing. The pacing of this book is really terrible. The book starts out so action-heavy and then... nothing happens for 200 pages. The book ends with a little action, but in terms of dystopias and scifi, this was sadly kind of boring. There's too little action for a scifi thriller.

? I think it just gets too weird, frankly. **There's no slow build to a climax; it all feels completely thrown together.**

? I wanted to love the concept of a bi main character in a love triangle, but frankly, David's character is too flat. Their romantic storyline is incredibly flat.

The thing is, though, that I might've just missed a lot due to my 2013 Confusion. I see so many people praising this one for character work, and I didn't feel that upon reading it. It's quite possible I just wasn't in the right place.

Nafiza says

If you have read the synopsis for this novel, you will understand exactly why it is so intriguing. The mystery it promises reeled me in and I began with the intention of reading a few pages but about two and a half hours later, turned the last page. Lo knows how to tell a story. She knows how to reel a reader in and while Adaptation had some flaws, you have to give credit where it is due.

It is inevitable that I will end up discussing the romance in this novel because of two reasons: one, it is a large portion of the novel and two, it is the weakest part of the novel in my opinion. The love triangle here is inevitable but it is an interesting one because one of the players for our heroine's affections is a girl. I couldn't connect to Reese at all and I felt that someone who has such overwhelmingly strong feelings for the boy in her life, falling almost immediately for the next person (regardless of their gender) was a bit unbelievable. The hurricane fast progression of Amber and Reese's relationship is a bit baffling especially considering that Reese has not even considered liking girls before she met Amber. A bit more caution, a bit more hesitancy on Reese's part would have made the whole thing a lot more realistic than it ends up being.

The only way I can make myself accept the hurried pace of their relationship is by a bit of theorizing and this will take place under the spoiler tags. (view spoiler)

David is portrayed a bit too ideally for my taste and he is way too understanding and accepting for it to be realistic. Moving on to the actual narrative, the premise that is unsurprisingly overshadowed by the romance, things are interesting though the entire secret that the book is built on is not really as surprising as I was hoping it would be. And I was surprised how the reason for the plane crash is added in almost as an afterthought.

Despite all my complaints however, I did enjoy the book. It is very readable and Lo shows with eerie precision how helpless ordinary citizens can be when the enemy is the government. When people who are supposed to be working for your good turn around and decide you are expendable, now that is real terror and Lo is uncannily adept at narrating the fear, the terror associated with these instances. I can't tell you whether to read this book or not, but I can encourage you to make up your own mind about it.

Kat (Lost in Neverland) says

This is how mystery is done.

This is how representation is done.

It has some slow parts, but 'Adaptation' is a truly enthralling read. The romance and suspense is equally distributed, the parental figure isn't brushed to the side like most other YA books, and a mystery you can't wait to know the outcome for.

Nemo (The Moonlight Library) says

Birds are attacking planes and dropping dead from the sky. Reese and David are trapped in an airport when the planes are grounded, and make a mad dash to drive home. On the way, a bird attacks their car, and they crash. Waking up a month later, Reese finds that she and David have weird new abilities and are being stalked by the government, and also by someone who is not the government...

Um... not sure if my above summary really describes this book that well. Sure, all the above happens, but it's a lovely slow burn. The car doesn't even crash until about Chapter Five or so. The book is a mish-mash of sci-fi, thriller, suspense, and contemporary romance.

I really loved the way Lo wrote all the relationships to Reese. Reese and her mother have an amazingly strong, awesome relationship, and she's not absent like other YA parents. Reese's relationships with her love interests (love triangle alert!) are also achingly realistic, from the embarrassment of a first crush to the swooning of a first kiss and 'coming out' to your mother.

Lo's writing has the perfect balance of description, depth and action to move this book forward and she's not afraid to skimp on the non-action details. That's not to say that this book is primarily a romance, because it's not. The romance definitely takes a back seat, but of course there must be some time dedicated to it. But it's not like the first half is relationship and the second half is action, it's all weaved through and to be honest, I thought the blossoming lesbian relationship was really sweet. Lo wrote in third person limited which made the inclusion of news items Reese was reading a clever way to insert the the extra information needed instead of switching to omniscience.

I'm not sure I can really talk about what happens in the second half of the novel without spoiling, so suffice to say that I was pretty much horrified when Reese's liberty was denied over and over, and there was absolutely nothing anyone could do about it, which was the most terrifying aspect of the novel: sanctioned kidnapping and mandatory testing. I'm still struggling to understand why anyone would do such a thing to two minors without their (or their guardian's) prior consent, and I also have an enormous pet peeve about the representation about a particular group of characters, and even in a sci-fi novel where I can accept birds attacking airplanes and psychic abilities, my suspension of disbelief will only go so far.

But you know what? Lo's an amazing writer who doesn't shy away from not whitewashing or, I dunno, 'sexuality-washing' her cast. Her cast of characters are as diverse as real people, with all different sexualities and all different colours, which is a lovely thing to see – and even a female President of the United States.

Lo's more progressive than most other writers out there. This book is clearly designed to set up something epic in the second book, but until I whittle down my massive to-reads pile I won't be getting to it.

Thanks to Hodder Children's Books and Netgalley for providing this advanced reader copy for an honest review.

karen says

i have *got* to learn to read the *entire* dust jacket in the future...

this is what i saw:

Across North America, flocks of birds hurl themselves into airplanes, causing at least a dozen to crash. Thousands of people die. Fearing terrorism, the United States government grounds all flights, and millions of travelers are stranded.

Among them are Reese and her debate team partner and longtime crush David, who are in Arizona when the disaster occurs. On their drive home to San Francisco, along a stretch of empty highway in the middle of the Nevada night, a bird flies into their headlights. The car flips over.

that is as far as i got. i thought "evil birds!!!?? it's about time!! the world must know!!"

but it's not about evil birds at all. the initial action sequences are the result of birds, sure, but it quickly turns into a more "traditional" sci-fi, YA x-files book. which is fine, but i am just not the audience for it. but you know a book about the evil of birds, and i am first in line.

i liked a lot of the character development, and i appreciated the sweet LGB first-love stuff, and the sweet hetero-first love stuff, and the sad-sweet first heartbreak stuff.

but (view spoiler) are just not my thing. and that first violent scene: (view spoiler) that whole scene just seemed implausible and rushed, just to get them away from adult protection. (view spoiler) that is the equivalent of pulling the covers up over your head to avoid monsters. you should be dead.

so this is really a high-three star. i think it is a fun book, and is a very sensitive book, and for those of you who like a little paranormal in your romance, this one is probably a good match, and i hope you enjoy it!

but warning: cliffhanger ending!

Kelly says

[COME ON ALIENS ARE AMAZING. THEY'RE TERRIFYING AND MYSTERIOUS! How can you NOT like an alien story if it's well done? (hide spoiler)]

Shenwei says

the scifi thriller aspect was intense but i have to say it's refreshing read a bi girl book where there is both a guy LI and a girl LI they're both given development and the MC isn't framed as a slut or whatever for experiencing/expressing attraction to both ppl.
