



Songs for a Teenage Nomad

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After living in twelve places in eight years with her drifting mother, fourteen-year-old Calle Smith finds herself in Andreas Bay, California, at the start of ninth grade. Fearful of putting down roots anywhere, but armed with her song journal, she moves to her own sound track through a world that bounces her between the school drama crowd, a mysterious loner, and an unlikely boy who will become her first love. But it's the troubling truth she uncovers about her father that forces Calle to face the toughest choice of her young life.

Songs for a Teenage Nomad Details

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From Reader Review Songs for a Teenage Nomad for online ebook

Good Golly Miss Holly says

I was definitely surprised to find myself picking Songs for a Teenage Nomad off my bookshelf a few days ago, after re-reading the blurb it came across as a lot more interesting than I'd first imagined and I was hoping it'd live up to the critical acclaim it seemed to hold with so many professional reviewers.

Initially, I was drawn to this novel for the promise of an honest music background but surprisingly, the bulk load of music references seemed to pass me by without really making an impact on my enjoyment of the novel but I do give the author kudos for dropping in a few different writing styles here and there (poems, lyrics, etc) it was nice to give these a go for once.

Rowan D. says

The only reason I even looked at this book in the first place was that I needed something to read in the beginning of each english class, and I'm glad I did. If I'm being honest, when I picked up this book I instantly judged it by the cover and the title. I like them both, and after reading the description, I thought that I would probably enjoy it. I was right, for the most part. I'm not really big on reading most of the time, but I genuinely liked this book, and would totally recommend it to other people.

Basically, in the story a girl is used to moving around a lot, living in all different parts of California. She's used to believing that the moving has something to do with her mom's relationships beginning or ending. She doesn't realize that it's a lot deeper than that. She spent her entire life on one huge lie, and when she finds out what it is, she's shocked and doesn't know what to do with herself. While dealing with her family issues, she's on a roller coaster of friendships and relationships, which really just add to her stress.

At first when I started reading it, I was mostly thinking, "well, it's pretty good, but it seems kind of cliché." I just thought that no teenager would ever say some of the quotes from this book, at least none that I know. But, after I got through the corny sayings, I started to really enjoy the book. It was filled with teen drama that made you want to help. But, it wasn't only normal teen drama. Instead, it felt like something even most adults can't handle going through. In a way I could relate to the main character. She had quite a few problems in her family life, and all she wanted to do was figure them out. Throughout the story, I began to feel bad for her, and I wished I could jump into the book and help her myself.

The writing in the story could have been a lot better in some places, but there weren't very many spots that I would have changed. The story was kept up really well, and it definitely never felt like it was dragging on. This was probably one of the few books I've read that I could read again and again, and still feel the same emotions towards it each time. It's absolutely worth reading if you're looking for something to give you a good amount of drama to make your heart hurt the tiniest bit.

Overall, this book was great. I'd love to find more books like it, where the situations hear and feel so much more real than they do in other books. In the beginning, I considered only reading it until I found a book I **actually** wanted to read, but then I realized this was the perfect book. It wasn't too long, and it wasn't poorly written. My emotions would change with the characters' and I think that's such an important trait for a book to possess.

Tanja (Tanychy) St. Delphi/James says

Review posted at Ja ?itam, a ti?

I've said this a lot of times and I'll say it again - music and books are perfect combination. I as a lover of both always enjoy in book that has some soundtrack in it or they talk about music. This one is not different. *Songs For A Teenage Nomad* has all that.

Calle our protagonist in this story is a teenager. She had a tough life so to say. She doesn't know who her father is and her mother remarried few times. It even came to that point when she calls all her step dads by the car they drive. Our story starts in Andreas Bay, California where Calle lives at the moment. She is ninth grade and again she has to go to the new school. Changing schools so often haven't helped her at all. She can't get a really friends because probably she'll be off soon. But she has something that always goes with her, without strings attached - music. She has a songs that reminds her of everything. But soon her life is about to change. Maybe she is finally at the right place with the right people and maybe about to discover the thing she always wanted to know.

I really enjoyed reading this book. Besides music and naive story there was another thing - this book was so realistic. So if you find some time get this little book cause you might enjoy it.

Ann says

Calle Smith never lives in one place long enough to call it home. While her mother runs from relationships, lonely Calle finds solace in music, creating a song journal as a way to cope with her uprooted life. Kim Culbertson's intelligent writing provides insight into the longings of this fourteen-year old with heart-rending emotion. Not only a must-read for teens, this book presents topics and ideas that make it essential for parents as well. A high school educator for over ten years, it is easy to see that Culbertson has an affinity for young adults. She lends encouragement for each of us to find our unique literary voice through the keeping of a song journal. I love her tag line: "What is the soundtrack of your life?" A great idea to explore and an inspirational story.

Diane Prothro says

I read this while on a 12 hour road trip and I needed something to distract me from the driving habits of my chauffeur...having said that, I did enjoy the book. It's for a young adult, you know coming of age/high school angst type of thing. Anyway, Calle finds herself in a new city (again) and hoping to make new friends (again)and we see all the teenage problems associated with newness/weirdness added, or I should say burdened by the marrying habits of her mother, (6 times). It has some nice twists and good dialog, overall it was a very easy and good read.

Precious says

see full review [here](#).

Culbertson did an awesome job in showing readers what life really was about. At some point, it was hardly about the constant moving at all. It was all about Calle – who she was and who she could be. It was about discovering the truth, learning to accept that her life was not perfect and finding the answers to her questions. The writing was so beautiful, easily reflecting whatever emotion Calle was feeling in the subtlest ways.

I loved the format of *Songs for a Teenage Nomad*. It was unique and very personal. I loved the idea of a song journal and I have to admit – I am starting my own song journal too. The incorporation of music in the novel was something effective. Through song types, we got to see glimpses of the personalities of a wide range of characters who were all distinct and real.

The plot was great. This one was unpredictable most of the time. It had me shocked and surprised. There was a fair amount of sadness and longing – longing for truth, longing for friends, longing for a father, longing for a home and longing for a steady life - in the pages. The book was a collection of memories, questions and musings of a teenager. It was a fit novel that captured almost everything a teen could think and feel.

Songs for a Teenage Nomad is an enjoyable contemporary read that I truly loved more and more with every page and every song. Beautifully written with an awesome cast for characters and an unpredictable plot with constant teenage questions and thoughts that will appeal to teenagers and music lovers. It was a journey with Calle through the best and worst, sweet and bitter, experiences.

Jenna says

So very lame and boring. Just felt like I was eavesdropping at some high school and their melodramatic lives, with name-dropping of musical artists peppered in for good measure.

I was intrigued by the book because I thought it might be connected to music in an interesting way. Not so. Instead I got the story of Calle, who is deeply connected to listening to music on her portable CD player and writing in her "song journal", and her nomadic lifestyle instigated by her mother moving her around (eight times in 14 years) the state of California every time she breaks up with a guy.

The story follows Calle's freshman year in Andreas Bay, where she has the usual teenage drama: unrequited love; popular girl as arch-nemesis; overly concerned teacher; mother who won't listen to her; being photographed in her skivvies and pic posted on MySpace. Every piece of the action felt so disjointed, which is odd because all of it is very relatable to teens. I just don't think that transcribing the high school experience for no reason whatsoever makes for very good storytelling.

There's the sub-plot, or maybe it's actually supposed to be the main plot, of Calle wanting to find out more about her long lost father that walked out on her and her mother when she was a baby. The conclusion to that is so wildly unbelievable that it was offensive.

And I'd never thought I'd say this about a book, especially a book I regard so poorly, but I actually thought all of the supporting characters were way more interesting than the narrator! They all rose above Calle in

personality and spunk, and I found myself wishing the story was about any one of them instead.

Haley says

The tagline is: “What is the soundtrack of your life?” I was hooked immediately. From the title to the last line, this book is authentic and truly beautiful.

True to the title, 14-year-old Calle Smith is a teen that loves music and drifts from town to town with her mother. She’s not used to putting down her roots anywhere, so she resists. It’s hard, though, when her sound track bounces her between her new crowd of quirky thespians, a mysterious loner, and a boy that at first glance has a perfect life. Harder still when she learns the truth about her wayward father.

Each chapter is a song title and the memories it brings Calle. Here’s an example, the very first chapter:

“Get Out The Map”

“...the air smelling like honeysuckle, I dangle my arm from the passenger window, aware only of the honeysuckle air, Indigo Girls on a scratchy radio, and a white sun. And that everything we own has been packed in to the back of a battered orange moving van....again...”

Here’s some praise on the back of the book:

“Culbertson has crafted a world true and honest to the teenage experience, with characters you love immediately. Her storytelling reminds me of the classic teen book and movie titles of the ‘80s, like ‘The Breakfast Club’ and ‘Pretty in Pink’, and I’m thrilled to be working with her on the film adaptation.”

-Loretta Ramos, MFA Producers Program, 2008 School of Theater, Film, and Television

“Beautifully written.”

-Literature Alive

"As if being a freshman in high school isn't hard enough, Calle Smith has to endure a rootless life with a mother who can't seem to settle down in one town or with one guy. Told through a blend of prose, song lyrics, and musical references, Songs tells the story of a girl whose life resembles and random-shuffle playlist struggling to become comfortable in her own skin."

-- AzTeen Magazine, a “Book Club” selection for Jan/Feb '08 issue

Kerri says

I'm generally not a reader of YA books, but had to read Kim's! This gem had all the elements—real, multi-dimensional characters acting and talking like kids, but Culbertson's voice does not talk down to them. Lots of little mysteries keep the pages turning. The musical references were a nice way to tie it all together. I finished it quickly—not because it was a necessarily a fast read, but it actually had me turning pages. Culbertson respects her characters and her readers.

Aimee says

I loved this book. The characters are well fleshed out. The only issue with the characters was that Calle, 14, seemed much older. As did her friends. The story is still believable and likable, as there are intelligent and "old" fourteen year olds. I highly recommend this book. Songs of a teenage nomad is one of the best books I've read in a while. Its been a bit since I've just had to finish a book, staying up late and spending hours to finish it.

Krista Ashe says

What's not to love about a book that starts off with a quote from Bob Dylan? As someone who loves to use songs for everything from mood music while writiting to using song lyrics to teach figurative language in classroom, I have never really read a book that used music as such a part of the setting to where it's almost another character. The closest would be Just Listen by Sarah Dessen, I suppose.

You have the character of Calle who has criss-crossed through the state of California with her mom. They've never lived in one place long, and her mom is also one whose also had several boyfriends and several husbands for them to move away from. But in their latest town, Calle actually hooks up with a group of theater friends: Eli, Alexa, and Drew. And for the first time, she's happy and likes it in a place. She's also intrigued by Sam, a football player who shows signs of being anything but the typical jock. And in those moments when he can get away from his A-crowd friends, he talks to Calle, works on a project with her, and ends up kissing her. Then he gives her the cold shoulder. But you can't hate Sam too much because there's a lot going on at home. First, we're led to wonder if his dad is an asshole, then his mom's an alcoholic, and then we find out the sad truth that she's mentally ill, and Sam is taking the brunt of caring for her.

In the midst of all this, Calle comes across a picture of her father--the one that was supposed to have left her and her mom when she was just a baby. A desire burns in her to find out about him, and she tries an internet search. Then when she's digging in her mom's drawers, she finds letter from her father to her. She finds out her dad's last name isn't Smith but Winston. When she confronts her mom about it, her mom says her dad wasn't someone they should be with. Then later Calle discovers a locked box, and inside, there are newspaper clippings where her dad had been arrested.

Later on as she's at a coffeeshop, she runs into her father, and they have a talk. He's everything she always dreamed he would be. She doesn't tell her mom about meeting up with him. And when he tells her a few days later he has to leave town, Calle is sure she'll never see him again. A couple of days or weeks later, she comes home to find her dad talking to her mom, or fighting. Turns out, he was a drug dealer, and has been on drugs all these years, and that's why Calle's mom has always been running from him. When he starts to hurt her mom, Calle comes in and tells him he should leave. Calle's mom tells her they have to pack and leave, but Calle refuses. She says it's always been about her mom, and she wants to stay.

Backtracking here some, but there's a great scene at the dance when Eli and Calle go as friends and Sam doesn't like them dancing together, so he shoves poor Eli. But Sam continues to have problems being with Calle, until he finally tells her that he likes she's different from everyone else and he wants to be with her, but it's just been hard for him. We also find out that Cass, the rebel, wild child of a girl at school, is Sam's half sister....she turns out to be a great friend and support of Calle.

Okay, so I've rambled long enough in this review, so let me wrap it up. At the end when Calle and her mom are going to have to leave town, they come upon a wreck. Someone plowed into a tree, but there's no skid marks. It's Calle's dad. The last few paragraphs of the book are GUT WRENCHING! A friend of Calle's dad's brings her stuff of his, and there's a journal just like she keeps and in it he talks about how proud he is of her, that he's seen her places, and to top it all off, there's a recording of him singing Mr. Tambourine Man, a song Calle always hears in her dreams and thinks of her father singing. AUGH, I was in tears!!!

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Becca Boland for TeensReadToo.com

Music has a great effect on listeners. It can lift you up when you feel depressed or help to heal a broken heart. For Calle it is more than that. Music is her home and her memories. Music is the tie to the father that she's never known and the memories of all of the places she has lived.

Calle moved to Andreas Bay after her mom remarried (again) and threw a penny onto a map of California. Unlike all of their other moves, Calle finds a place in Andreas Bay. She makes friends, joins theatre, and meets a boy that she really likes. Of course, like a great song, her life is complicated. Calle is getting closer and closer to finding her father, and does not understand why her mother will not give her any information about him or why she is keeping her from him.

SONGS FOR A TEENAGE NOMAD is a wonderful book. It is a high school classic reminiscent of THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER, only it is more appropriate for a slightly younger audience. Calle is a wonderful character and, as the reader, you want her to succeed in all areas of her life. You cry when she cries and laugh when she laughs. You ask the same questions and try to find the answers. Who is Calle's father? Why doesn't she see him? Why doesn't he want to see her? Is there something we don't know?

The most unusual part of this book is that it has a great soundtrack. You are able to listen along with Calle, giving more dimension to her character and the book. The end of the story comes quickly, but it does not take away from the enjoyment of the reading. While some of the story lines are neatly tied up, others are not, which makes the story feel very real. This is a novel that you will want to experience over and over again, just like a great song.

Kori says

When I started reading this book I wasn't quite sure about it, but as I moved forward I started realizing that I had never really read a book like this before. The writing was very different and unique than what I was used to reading. The writing was more "modern" to me, it felt like I could relate to most of it. The story was kind of typical but at the same time this author made it her own original thought process. I enjoyed reading this book and if you're a teenager I think you will too.

Pen-rye-n says

I actually got this for free on Kindle and quite frankly, I wasn't expecting much from it. Kindle freebies are

pretty hit & miss, with emphasis on the miss. I wasn't prepared to be completely hooked from the beginning & unable to put it down until the end.

I think one thing that appealed so greatly to me was how gloriously average the main character, Calle Smith, is. She's the kind of believable average that you just don't see in many YA novels. She doesn't have every guy at school falling all over her, the entire grade isn't lining up to be her best friend, she has enemies! Or, at least, the teenage equivalent of enemies. It's deliciously real. It could be about any new girl at any school anywhere in the country and even the cliched aspects of it (girl moves a lot, mom goes through boyfriends/husbands like one would go through underwear) it's written in a way that's not cliched in the slightest.

Add in a killer playlist, side characters with just as much depth as the main character and I couldn't NOT give this story 5 stars.

Sandra says

I only listen to a song if I could relate to its meaning.

There are a couple of songs I like because of the beat or the melody but mostly I have to like the lyrics first before I really like a song.

I have always been fascinated with music.

I never leave the house without my Ipod.

It's a constant companion.

Sometimes I feel like a part of me is missing when I am not listening to music.

Music has that same value to Calle the main character of this book.

Calle and her mother have never stayed in one place for long which was why she never had any friends. The only friend that she did consider was music and it was her only constant companion aside from her mom.

She even made a song journal which contains the songs that she loved and could relate to.

Calle never knew her father.

Her mother was constantly making some excuse not to talk about him.

She wanted to know where he was and why he left and what really happened.

But what she doesn't know was the truth she was looking for could devastate her.

Songs for a Teenage Nomad is one of the reasons why I love reading contemporary YA books.

This book was realistic.

There was nothing unique in this book but still it was a fantastic which is why it's great.

I thought the main character was also one of the reasons this book was great.

I liked how Calle tells her story.

She tells it like it is.

No sugar coating.

It was honest.

The book started when Calle and her mom moved again.

You don't just get her story after the move but you also get short snippets of the before the move.

I could only imagine what it must have felt like to be always on the move and never really having anyone else besides your mother.

I liked Calle as a character but I mostly was able to relate to her mom.

I am a single parent and like Calle's mom my daughter's dad left me when I was just pregnant.

He wasn't a druggie or anything but he left because he didn't want the responsibility which left me to provide for my daughter alone.

I think Calle's mom was only trying to protect her and I understand that but I don't think I will ever hide something like this from my daughter because eventually no matter where you hide the truth will always come out.

ALWAYS!

My point is the more open parents are with their kids and vice versa the more that they could understand each other.

If that's the case I think the constant moving didn't really need to happen.

It was stupid and selfish on the side of her mom.

She wanted to move all the time because she thought she's protecting her daughter but she's not.

She compromised her daughter's chance of having a good and normal life.

I know I am already ranting about the mom here but I just want to share my personal thoughts on this just like I always do on my reviews.

I am not an expert parent but I think the reason why we're here is to support our children and do what is best for them and not us.

Also another issue I had here was Sam.

Oh God I wanted to strangle him.

I don't know what it is with people not wanting to deal with their issues so they try to pretend they are someone else.

They brush someone off because they think just by associating or talking to them will make them less "cool".

That's loads of crap!

I honestly hate guys like Sam.

Okay he has family issues but that's no reason to brush off someone.

He was able to redeem himself but for me first impressions last.

Seriously I thought Calle deserved someone else.

I really recommend this to people who want a clean YA book that deals with real teen issues.

The writing was lyrical which was great.

The main character is likeable and so were all the other main characters.

They were so real that I wanted to punch Sam in the face, smother Calle's mom and give Calle a big hug and say how proud I was of her.

4 stars
