



Wish Girl

Nikki Loftin

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A dying girl gives a boy the strength to live in this lyrical novel that will break your heart and lift your spirit

Peter Stone's parents and siblings are extroverts, musicians, and yellers—and the louder they get, the less Peter talks, or even moves, until he practically fits his last name. When his family moves to the Texas Hill Country, though, Peter finds a tranquil, natural valley where he can, at last, hear himself think.

There, he meets a girl his age: Annie Blythe. Annie tells Peter she's a "wish girl." But Annie isn't just any wish girl; she's a "Make-A-Wish Girl." And in two weeks she will begin a dangerous treatment to try and stop her cancer from spreading. Left alone, the disease will kill her. But the treatment may cause serious, lasting damage to her brain.

Annie and Peter hatch a plan to escape into the valley, which they begin to think is magical. But the pair soon discovers that the valley—and life—may have other plans for them. And sometimes wishes come true in ways they would never expect.

Wish Girl Details

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From Reader Review Wish Girl for online ebook

Armina says

tried so hard not to cry.
Simply lovely. :)

Sara Grochowski says

Wish Girl is one of those special books that so clearly demonstrates the magic and agelessness of children's literature. This third novel from Nikki Loftin is an incredibly beautiful novel, filled with characters and prose that will undoubtedly wriggle deep into your heart.

"Turns out, it's not running away when no one notices you're gone."

Peter Stone is a quiet boy who feels perpetually adrift. Quiet and introspective, he struggles to make friends and bullies find him an easy target. Even at home Peter feels alienated; his family, loud and extroverted, struggle to understand and connect with him. After his mother discovers dark and hopeless entries in his journal, the family packs up and leaves the city behind, hoping that escaping the bullies and negativity will allow Peter to start over. Of course, Peter can't outrun what's in his head. The pressing need to be alone drives him out into the nearby tranquil valley, where he finally feels like he has escaped and can be himself. I love that it is through nature, this beautiful but sometimes dangerous valley, that Peter finally finds and accepts himself.

"'It's part of the art,' she explained, motioning toward the stream. 'The bringing together of the pieces, then the way they disappear when it time - the wind, or water, or gravity, whatever - makes the art lose its hold. It's not meant to stay forever. Some people,' and she paused. 'Some people wouldn't get it. They'd do all sorts of unnatural things to make it stay just like it was. Glue it, staple it, cement it. Even though that would ruin it.'"

When Peter first encounters Annie Blythe, he's angry. Finally, finally he has found a place that is his, where he can be alone, and there she is. But, despite his initial reaction, he finds he likes Annie. Instead of cutting conversations short, he can't help but ask her questions and, before he knows it, he's aiding in her crazy artistic pursuits. Much to Peter's surprise, with Annie he finds companionable silence and reflective conversation. She isn't like the people Peter wants to escape and she isn't quite like Peter either. Instead, she is just unapologetically herself. Artistic, opinionated, bossy, and devoted to living the fullest, most artistic life she can in the time she has left. The friendship between Peter and Annie is hands down one of my absolute favorites. It's honest and deep and powerful.

The valley where Peter and Annie meet begins as a way for each of them to escape the 'real' world, where they feel overwhelmed and unwelcome. Readers soon realize, however, that the valley is more than just a place, it's a character in its own right - a unique, stubborn, magical character, just like Peter and Annie.

"'No,' she said again, 'I don't want to die. Not at all! But don't you see, I'm going to anyway?' She pointed at her chest. 'What is death, Peter? It's when you stop being you, right? When that something, that spark or whatever, goes out. And that's what's coming for me.'"

Because Annie is terminally ill and Peter struggles with depression and suicidal thoughts, conversations of death do play an important part in this novel. While Annie doesn't want to die, she thinks it preferable to the brain damage and loss of self and autonomy her impending treatment will likely cause. Peter's friendship with Annie, seeing her fear and lack of choice, forces him to confront his own depression and thoughts of self harm. I often hear adults protesting to the inclusion of these themes and discussion in MG literature because they feel their young readers need something lighter or cannot handle talk of illness, depression, and death, but I truly feel that younger readers need books like *Wish Girl*. As much as these difficult and often taboo topics are uncomfortable and scary to talk about, they are real and they affect people everyday. Hiding from them, choosing ignorance, benefits no one.

"'Sometimes,' she said, after a few more seconds of silence, 'sometimes you got to act. You can't wait. You got to do what needs doing, before the world makes the decision for you.'"

I know it's early, but I feel this book is a likely 2015 Newbery contender... It's one I'll be recommending for years to come, award or no.

Highly recommended.

Rebecca McNutt says

Annie and Peter's friendship is as timeless as infinity, but a terrible illness threatens to change all this. *Wish Girl* takes the magic and nostalgia of childhood and mixes it with the unity of family, the love of friends and the power to do anything; it was vibrantly written with loveable characters and vivid imagery, with powerful, obscure messages about the meaning of life and the meaning of love.

Cory Oakes says

I gave this book five stars only because there was no option to give it six.

WISH GIRL is a truly special book and I can't say enough good things about it. It's about friendship, it's about self-discovery, but really it's about two beautiful characters (Peter and Annie) who manage to be solidly real while maintaining more than a hint of magic. It is the kind of book you will think about for a good, long time after you have read it. Read it with a box of Kleenex and read it when you have some time to get truly lost in its pages (because you will!) – but read it. It will lift you up.

Maria Espadinha says

O Vale Encantado

Esta é a estória da Amizade entre um Rapaz buscador de Silêncio e uma Miúda com cancro que gostava de arte

O Rapaz é estranho, introvertido, não sabe lutar e adora fundir-se com a Paz do Vale , onde se refugia do

mundo e formula desejos

A Miúda tem dores de cabeça e desenha, cria Arte naquele Vale Mágico, onde foge do mundo e mergulha no Mundo

O Vale é Belo, Poderoso, Especial...

Castiga o Mal , recompensa o Bem e só comunica com aqueles que com ele se fundem...

Abby Johnson says

I love the beautiful imagery in this book - the magical valley and the art that Annie and Peter create, I feel like I could see it in my mind. It's interesting to see two young characters struggling with the impermanence of life but in vastly different ways. I do kind of wonder about the portrayal of depression in the novel - it kind of seemed like Peter wanted to kill himself because he's an introvert? (I mean, I guess because his family didn't like introverts?) But that's really beside the point, I guess.

Would hand to kids who liked The Honest Truth by Dan Gemeinhart or the strong beautiful setting of Keeper by Kathi Appelt.

Abby Franks says

If I could spend my life in this valley, I would. Beautiful description and cute, likable characters.

Kendall says

4 1/2 precious stars♥?♥?♥?

There will be some minor spoilers but big ones will be hidden. :)

So, first off, EVERYONE needs an Annie in their life. EVERYONE.

I'm not so good at writing very organized reviews but I'll try....

CHARACTERS:

Annie- I loved Annie!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! She is a girl with cancer who came to the area where Peter lives because she is about to have a life-saving cancer treatment involving radiation. Which could have really dangerous effects (more about this later). So she wanted to go to an art camp that summer because she loves art, but the camp was really bad. That's as nice as I can say it. So instead she goes down into this valley to create art from nature.

Peter- Peter is very QUIET. So I'm going to tell you why now but it's going to have spoilers so (view spoiler) Peter feels like he doesn't really fit in with his family, because they are all loud. His family doesn't really accept him for who he is, and only want him to be what they think he should be. So Peter keeps being quiet and pretty much isolates himself. One day Peter wanders off and finds this valley where he can be quiet and it just feels right. To be continued after I introduce the other characters. But also, Peter's character developed so much!!!

Peter's Family: His parents are so.... not understanding. They just wanted to force Peter to be the son they thought they should have- enrolling him in sports and camps when he doesn't want to change at all. I REALLY felt Peter's feelings on this end and all his frustrations about never being understood. His sisters

were Laura, the teen, and Carlie, the baby. They were interesting, I guess.

Doug & Jake: They are these neighbor kids who like to go down into the valley to shoot at the animals. They pretty much carry guns around with them. (view spoiler) Without reading the spoiler, long story short: I HATE THEM. Just NO.

The Colonel's Wife: She was supposed to be crazy because she said the valley was magical but (view spoiler) My favorite thing about her was when she was speeding like a crazy person.... on a go-cart. That scene was just funny.

SETTING:

I loved this setting so much!!!!!!!!!!!!!! The valley is so interesting and magical, and it never gets old. I really felt like I was there myself. I really don't know what else to say so..... IT WAS GREAT.

PLOT:

So going back to where I left off with the characters, Peter and Annie both find the valley and they meet each other. Annie is pretty excited because she doesn't really have any friends, but Peter is upset because he thinks that Annie is annoying and will disrupt the peace. Then fast-forward..... They become friends, start doing art together, and Peter learns about Annie's cancer. (view spoiler) More fast-forwarding.... Annie wants to run away before her treatment so that the thing I said in the spoiler won't happen. Peter doesn't want her to die, because... BECAUSE. But Annie thinks that if she has to die eventually, she wants to do it her own way. Peter & Annie's friendship was AMAZING. It developed so much and I liked how they really understood each other. They made each other's characters develop in the best ways. And I loved their relationship with the valley, which I can't even really describe.

I loved how this book was centered around their friendship and how it had real-world things like the cancer mixed with magic in the valley. IT WORKED SO WELL.

And I'll just leave off with a quote (one of my favorites from it) because that's the best way I can think of to end it:

They wanted to change my mind, to make me see their way. Make who I was disappear and replace it with who they wanted me to be.

They never wanted to listen.

Maybe I couldn't stand up to them, but I didn't have to be them.

I wasn't going to do that to Annie. I was going to listen, and more. And if she didn't want to change her mind, if she was set on running away, I was going to help her do it.

Nurhayati Ramlan says

A magical valley

A wish girl

A misunderstood boy

And all you have to do is be still,

And listen.

Jennifer says

"You have to learn to let go when it's time."

"You've got to learn that sometimes you have to fight back. If you don't, your whole life is going to be one long series of losing--maybe more than just fistfights."

"Have you ever had the people around you make a decision for you? One they don't think you can make, one they won't trust you to make? Not even the tiniest little part of it? They just tell you what's going to happen and expect you to fall in line?"

Soundtrack: Wilderness by Jon Bryant

Kimberly Castellanos says

I really loved this book ! The story in it was just beautiful. I think anyone can relate with the characters at some point in their lives because I know I did. This story has very vivid imagery. It describes how the characters feel and how accepting one each other can really really help one person. In this story all the things happen in this magical valley we're peter and Annie meet. Every time they go in the valley and they have a wish it comes true. After there both dealing with some problems at home everything turns out fine for them in the end. If this book was good I can imagine how the other ones the author wrote are. I highly recommend this book for anyone who feels that magic really exists in this world.

Joy Lane says

Such a magical book. I was sold on it at page 41 when the work of artist Andy Goldsworthy was introduced. There are many angles for discussion for readers. I can see a teacher assigning students to write an epilogue. And if you aren't familiar with Goldsworthy's work, check out the documentary "Rivers And Tides" to give you a way looking at the world of nature.

Carmen says

This book should be a Newbery contender for 2015! I loved every magical word on the page!

A tender story about a young boy's internal fight to be seen and understood by his family and the special wish girl who gives him the courage to reveal who he is to himself and his family. Peter Stone is bullied so horribly that his family relocates just outside of Austin to give him a fresh start. Unfortunately, Peter's inner demons along with a new set of bullies follow him into the magical valley surrounding his hillside home. But with the help of Annie, the wish girl battling cancer, he opens his heart and learns to trust himself and his family again. Loftin is a master at creating stories that tug at your heart and WISH GIRL is full of hope

and promise
even in the face of life's unfairness.

Barb Middleton says

Nikki Loftin has realistic, gritty plots with a touch of magic in her books. Her first book, "Nightingale," shows poverty and how it affects lives and decisions tied in with the Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale. This book shows two kids that don't fit in with their peers and a protagonist that isn't accepted by his family. The magic in this story is an oasis where nature soothes the soul and heals. While entertaining, this one doesn't come together particularly well in character development and plot.

Peter Stone's family has moved from the city to the countryside so Peter can get a fresh start. Something terrible happened to him and while his family is supportive on the outside, they keep trying to change him on the inside. His mom and dad fight more than is healthy and Peter has to get away from the noise. While wandering the countryside he finds a peaceful valley that literally speaks to him through the animals and insects. He meets Annie Blythe, artist extraordinaire, with a cancer riddled body. Together they face their problems trying to overcome bullies and adults that subvert their voices.

Peter's family comes off as neglectful at first then overly protective later. They don't communicate with Peter and the parents are having marital problems since his dad lost his job. The beginning presents the parents as not really caring about Peter who goes off for hours and no one notices. Then they suddenly notice and everyone is worried to the point he is grounded. Peter is supposedly fragile but his internal voice seems awfully clear-headed to me. I didn't see him as having serious problems. The author shows his fears and inability to speak, but that is it. I wanted more. The one-dimensional bullies never really come to life either and while it is revealed their parents abuse them and one of them is not as cruel as the other, I thought the accident would expose them and their parents with a telling scene. That action is left hanging and unresolved.

Sometimes the plot is predictable and other times it is not. The magic is conveniently used when the plot needs to move forward or the humans make a bad decision. This made it feel contrived and at the end when Peter talks to his family he doesn't come across as a broken kid that has learned life lessons, he comes across as a kid that has been wronged by the adults in his life who have misunderstood him and forced him to do things that he didn't want to do. He says some mean things to Annie but I think the first person narrative worked against giving the reader a well-rounded view of who Peter really was and what he had dealt with in the past. He's not very melancholy or raw emotionally. Instead he tells too much versus showing it.

The artistic Annie has some interesting insights into art. She tries to teach Peter that art transforms and he is transformed to some extent by their friendship. At the end the resolution happens off the page and the wrap up was a bit anti-climatic. The bullying Annie endures doesn't make sense either. Again, I think the point of view worked against rounding out the characters in a more sympathetic way or in a way that I could get sucked into the storyline. As is, I kept noticing the craft which kept me from magically disappearing into the story.

I kept thinking the story might be like "The Fault in Our Stars," but it does not look at cancer in the way that one does. It does remind me of the Romantic writers of the 1800's, such as Frances Hodgson Burnett's, "The Secret Garden," that uses nature to the extent where it is almost a religious experience for the characters in its power to heal. While I like Loftin's word choices and voice, I just couldn't get into this one like her other

one.

Janine says

Oh my goodness, I loved this book!!!! Such a beautiful story that shows the power of faith, the magic of nature and the spirit of will. This is a great book for all readers.
