


The Twenty-One

Lauren K. McKellar

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I look both ways before I cross the road. I knot my laces twice. Boring? Sure. But it's also settled. Stable. Safe.

And I like safe.

Because broken bones may be hard to heal, but broken hearts are even harder. And when the man I loved and lost reappears in my life, I won't fall for his charms again ... will I?

Joel Henley just might be my biggest risk yet.

My name is Ellie Mayfield. And this is my undoing.

The Twenty-One Details

Date :

ISBN :

Author : Lauren K. McKellar

Format :

Genre : New Adult, Contemporary, Romance

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From Reader Review *The Twenty-One* for online ebook

Cassandra Page says

Before I started reading this book, I asked the author whether I'd need to have the tissues on standby. She said maybe. MAYBE. Afterwards, she clarified that tissues may not have been absorbent enough. Related to this, I have a Goodreads shelf called "made me cry". There are now eleven books on there (I don't cry that easily while reading), and three of them are by Lauren K. McKellar.

Needless to say, this book is one that will give you feels. Many feels.

At the start of the book, Ellie (who is a side character in McKellar's *How To Save A Life*) could best be described as a bit of a doormat. Her mother is an a-grade cow and her younger sister is manipulative and getting worse. Ellie doubts herself when she shouldn't and lets her family take advantage of her, putting her own desires to one side and seeing herself as bound by a promise to her dying father to look after them both when he's gone.

That's when we meet Joel Henley, Ellie's high school boyfriend. He left her suddenly when she was 16, and within the blink of an eye manages to again sweep her off her feet, dragging her along with him as he works through a bucket list of twenty-one things he wants to do before he turns twenty-one. Everything seems to be going swimmingly till maybe halfway through the book ... and that's when (as is traditional in these sorts of books, I guess?) the wheels come off.

From that point on, everything gets harder on all fronts -- but there are sweet moments too, bright spots in the gloom like stars in the night sky. That comparison isn't just me being poetic; stars are a theme throughout the book, one I like to think McKellar put there deliberately for that exact reason.

I really liked Joel. I especially liked the way that he helps Ellie to stand on her own two feet, take (reasonable) risks and discover the spine that she forgot she had all along. Her character growth as a result of his influence is wonderful to watch, and those moments where she put her foot down and said no to others were simply glorious.

If you're a fan of heart-wrenching stories then pretty much anything by McKellar is worth a look. Most of her books largely stand alone, so you don't need to read *How to Save a Life* to be able to follow this one, but I loved that book too, so you definitely should.

Marina Skinner says

Emotionally heartwrenching story that you will definitely need a box of tissues while reading!!

This book is about Ellie. Her life with her mum and sister and re connecting with a friend that she hasn't seen in years! This is the 2nd book in the Emerald Cove series, although it can be read as a standalone IMO, you still should read the first book "How To Save A Life".

This book will make you very emotional. Like a lot of Lauren's books, you will be so drawn into the story that you will have so many feels!!

I really loved reading it!!

Granted there are some moments which you think omg, why....what...just....and then.....oh no!!!

I really liked Ellie, loved the way she became with Joel again!

I absolutely sobbed in parts that I know it will tug at your heart too!

Be prepared, have the tissues handy and dive in! You will not want to miss out on reading it!

Great work Lauren, can't wait to see what's next from you!!

Complimentary copy received for an honest review!

Jennifer says

Review to come!

Keri says

The Twenty-One...what can I say? I just finished it and I'm gutted. I felt Ellie's pain right along with her. I bawled my eyes out...complete ugly cry! Have tissues (a whole box) with you when you read this!

The story is beautiful and sad, hopeful and filled with heartache. I loved it! I know it's daunting to jump into a story knowing it's going to rip your heart out but aren't those some of the best?

Received ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Chrissy says

The Twenty-One is a beautiful and heartbreaking story that definitely pulled at my heartstrings!

Joel and Ellie's story is beautiful and I couldn't help but fall in love with these characters. Jolie has been watching out for her mom and sister since her father died and asked her to watch over them. Helping make sure they are OK is a full time job in of itself for Jolie, but she does it because she made a promise. She's just floating through life and not really living, until she runs into Joel. Joel, the one who left her three years ago without a word, and the man she is still quite in love with.

Watching Joel and Ellie reconnect was beautiful. Joel showed Ellie how to live and pushed her outside of her comfort zone many times. It took Ellie a while to see what Joel was showing her, but once she saw that there was more to life than what she was doing, she embraced it by the end.

This book is definitely one that you will need tissues for. As the story progresses you see how things are going to end, but you hope and pray things to be different for these two. As much as I hated what happened, I think it showed a log of strength in that character and helped with how the story would go on. This book definitely gave me the feels, and had me laughing, swooning, and balling my eyes out. I adored Ellie and Joel's love story, and am happy to see how things ended up for Ellie. I hope to see more of her in future

books in this stand-alone series as I think her story isn't over yet, but with that said, the epilogue was beautiful and perfect for this book!

I highly recommend *The Twenty-One* if you are looking for an amazing stand alone that will take your breath away! Lauren K. McKellar wrote a beautiful story that will definitely take you on an emotional ride!

Chantal says

The Twenty-One. I don't know where to begin. This is a story that will pull on your emotions from the moment you start. Ellie made a promise to her father I promise she intended to keep. If it only were so easy. Her life evolves around only one thing, keeping her sister and mother safe, but then Joel re-appears in her life and turns her world upside down. She thinks all is finally good in her universe until she receives the most devastating news.

Be prepared for an emotional roller coaster from the prologue to the epilogue. But be also prepared to not be able to put it down once you start. Tissues are a must. Thank you Lauren♥?

Melony Hobgood says

Ellie has lost her dad and is trying to hold everyone together until Joel comes back into her life. It's unexpected but not completely unwanted. What she didn't know was he has a secret a big one, but a long the way he teaches her to take up for herself. This story had me in tears so many and was so touching.

Paula White says

Beta read this and it was wonderful and such a heart felt read - can't say anymore without giving spoilers...loved the story and writing style

Lauren Firminger says

Thank you to Lauren and Give Me Books for giving me an ARC of *The Twenty One* in exchange for an honest review. It has taken me a few days to be able to form words regarding this book but here goes.

Just wow. I was expecting to ugly cry with this one, because those who know Lauren McKellar know she takes great pleasure in making her readers ugly cry in EVERY book she has written, but to have my heart ripped out of my chest was a shock. Lauren knocked this one out of the park though and didn't disappoint with Ellie's story.

The Twenty One is the story of Ellie. While dealing with a death of someone close to her, Ellie takes on the responsibility of taking care of her family and making sure they are okay. Her world is shaken up again when Joel, the first boy she ever loved comes back into her life.

Joel, who has his own story, comes back to Emerald Cove with a purpose. He didn't expect to fall for Ellie

all over again.

What will happen with these two? Will they finally get a happy ending or is history about to repeat itself?

One click this beauty and find out!

****WARNING**** Make sure to have tissues, comfort food, vodka, Valium and maybe even a shoulder to cry on. You ARE going to need it.

Kristine GPI Bookblog says

Ellie Mayfield acts like she's got life all figured out, she has a job that doesn't completely suck, she has friends, she has a mother and sister that while being high maintenance she loves dearly, Ellie is the epitome of the play it safe kind of girl, she doesn't take risks, she doesn't push herself outside of her comfort zone, she's stuck in a rut of her own making. The one boy she ever truly opened herself up to was Joel Henley, and he left her without a second thought, she thought what they shared was the forever kind of connection but when he left he never looked back and she was left playing the role of the dutiful daughter, the protective and caring sister, the good friend.

When Joel Henley strolls back into Ellie's life she's shocked, here in front of her is the boy who once lit up her world, he's back and he's looking at her like he always did, and she has two choices she can keep playing it safe, she can keep playing the role she's become accustomed to or she can take a chance on the boy she once loved, on the man who could truly change her life.

There's so much more going on here than just a second chance romance, *The Twenty-One* is part coming of age, part romance, the hero of this story is very much Ellie, as she figures out who she is, what she wants, and who she wants to be. There's a reverence to McKellar's words, a wistfulness to her prose, and elegance in everything she does that lures you in, and captures your attention, her words wrapping around your heart and soothing your soul, preparing you for the inevitable moment that she will punch you right in the feels. It's impossible for McKellar not to take you in a journey, not to challenge you, not to push you to the limit where you experience the highest of highs and the lowest of lows, there's a line in a Lifehouse song, where the singer croons "how can I stand here with you , and not be moved by you?" that sums up every feeling and emotional thought I have when reading McKellar's work, because for me, it's a natural as breathing, it's impossible to read her stories and not be moved by them, she begs the reader to take a journey with her, to strip themselves bare, to live within the pages with her, it's a passionate plea from author to reader that I can't help but heed every time I dive into the worlds she creates.

The Twenty-One is simultaneously heartbreaking and uplifting, it's solemn and joyous, it's real and raw, there's a fragility to Ellie that scares her, but a strength and courage that Joel see's, *The Twenty-One* has a beautiful message about taking the reins, about being the author in your own life, about appreciating what you have, and not taking this life for granted. McKellar reminded me of the beauty that is all around us, if we are willing to take a chance to let both love and life in.

dreamerinxile says

The constellations will look after you 5 fucking gold stars

Wow. From the first pages of this book to the last, I've been taken on an emotional ride that will have an everlasting effect on me. I am truly grateful to my friend Kate for recommending this book.

The story begins at a poignant moment in Ellie's life, her world shattered a year ago and she's come to the very site where it resides now forever sleeping among others. On that fateful day, she had a promise to do everything to keep her family safe. Ellie Mayfield has done everything in her power since then to keep her world going on, despite the restrictions she had placed upon her. She is the good girl; taking care of her wayward sister and helping her rigid and ice queen mother with her business. She has no time for herself or to pursue her dreams.

She accepts her life and is happy being the savior, when one fine freezing day, she stumbles upon her past love. Her breathe caught and her heart lurched, Joel Henley, the boy who broke her heart is back and he looks even better than before. Their chance encounter is just that, at least that is what Ellie and Joel believes until fate decides to play a role in their coming together again.

The connection Ellie has with Joel seems to have strengthened with time even after the three long years of separation.

Joel cannot deny his heart of what it wants the most and he pursues Ellie, the girl he loves with all his heart. Joel finds that the girl he had left all those years ago is nowhere to be found, he finds himself unable to leave her sight and tries to bring alive that girl that has vanished for some reason.

He finds out more and falls in love with her hard. Thus begins the journey of healing from past pain and building the bridge for the insanely beautiful future that they envision for each other.

Just when things are going about smoothly, fate, the cruel and evil mistress strikes again. The past that she thought they had left behind strikes again. Will Joel's and Ellie's love survive this vicious beast? Will this sneaky yet cruel anvil lift off of them to shine the ray of light onto their true love? To find out, 1-click The Twenty-One and be on a journey of healing, life's cruel jokes and last but not least LOVE.

Pamela Lilley says

Oh my.....I don't know where to start. I love YA reads, they're one of my favourites, I don't however do heartache. This meant I struggled with this book. A wonderful story following Ellie, sweet, sensible Ellie, as she reconnects with her childhood sweetheart, all while trying to juggle a bitch of a mother and a drug abusing sister among other things. Reconnecting with Joel after 3 years and not understanding of being given a reason as to why he up and left with no communication. Joel and Ellie soon fall in love (I don't think they

ever fell out of love). Joel has a list of 21 things he wants to do, and Ellie has no problem assisting him. A wonderful story, beautifully written, that soon becomes heart wrenchingly sad and completely and utterly left me a sobbing mumbling wreck.

Stacy Aube says

I received this book as an ARC for a honest review. This book was read and reviewed by Stacy Aube for Cutting Muse Blog Review.

This story pulls at the heart strings.

It took me a while to finish because I could not see through all the tears.

After the death of her father Eleanor promised to take care of her mother and sister. When Eleanor meets up with someone from her past she is shown how to live for herself again.

A wonderful love story with lots of pain thrown in.

Julie Reveles (ILST BLOG) says

*** I Love Story Time was gifted an arc in exchange of an honest review ***

4.5 Stars!

"Sometimes in life you choose to take the risky path. Sometimes you choose to push the limits, to see just how high you can go. Taking chances won't guarantee you any safety—but neither will following the rules."

Oh my gosh! Does anyone have any tissue??! I really did not see that story coming. I have tears streaming down my face, and I'm not even sure when they will stop. All I can say is... WOW!! Joel and Ellie's story is beautiful and heart breaking all at the same time. I loved that even though Joel left with out a word when they were younger, their love for each other never stopped. They were truly meant to be together! Joel brought so much out of Ellie. He was constantly trying to get Ellie to see the bigger picture...

"Life isn't about playing safe, Ellie. It's about pushing yourself for something more."

In the end, Ellie saw everything Joel had always wanted her to see! I fell in love with Joel, and I can see why Ellie fell for him twice! I really didn't want this book to end. I just wanted to read more about their story. I

loved it, and I would definitely recommend it to be read with a box of tissues!

-Juls

Izney Bae says

Review Posted @ Barely Bae Blog

ARC Provided for an Honest Review

If I had saved my tears it would be in a huge pail right now. This is only the second time in my history of reading that I encountered plots like this. I don't want to say much aside from the fact that the book was perfect at the same time heart breaking.

I absolutely forgot what the book was about before I started reading. I know I read its blurb before I went out of town and I don't know why I completely forgot it. Like, I have no recollection of what it is about aside from the Hero's name. So I said, whatever I'll just carry on and read it. I thought it was the perfect second chance romance only to find my world collapse when I got to the twist. I could not, for the life of me, save myself from the tears that started to come out of my eyes. Since that part onwards, I was a mess. No Joke, When I woke up the next day after reading the book my eyes felt so heavy and they were so thick.

Honestly, I did not read the first book on this series because I knew I would hurt but I think the hurt I endured in this book is so much more painful than if I had read the first one. I felt real pain and this is why I am giving this book the 5 stars it deserves.

Joel and Ellie were exceptional characters. Ellie's life was so heavy at the same time sad while Joel is living his life to the fullest. The love story was perfect, I thought this book was very well written and the aftermath was so inspiring that I had to hold my kindle for a minute and hug it so tight when I finished it. I love this book. I don't know how to congratulate Lauren anymore than praising this.
