



# Paper or Plastic

*Vivi Barnes*

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*Welcome to SmartMart, where crime pays minimum wage...*

*Busted.* Alexis Dubois just got caught shoplifting a cheap tube of lipstick at the local SmartMart. She doesn't know what's worse—disappointing her overbearing beauty-pageant-obsessed mother for the zillionth time...or her punishment. Because Lex is forced to spend her summer working at the store, where the only things stranger than the staff are the *customers*.

Now Lex is stuck in the bizarro world of big-box retail. Coupon cutters, jerk customers, and learning exactly what a "Code B" *really* is (ew). And for added awkwardness, her new supervisor is the totally cute—and adorably geeky—Noah Grayson. Trying to balance her out-of-control mother, her pitching position on the softball team, and her secret crush on the school geek makes for one crazy summer. But ultimately, could the worst job in the world be the best thing that ever happened to her?

## Paper or Plastic Details

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Author : Vivi Barnes

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# From Reader Review Paper or Plastic for online ebook

## Colette says

A fun Summer read paired with serious issues that made the characters more dimensional. Some of the plot seemed repetitive, but overall the story kept me entertained. 3/5 stars.

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## nick says

Oh this book! What a delightful little thing Paper or Plastic was! I enjoyed every minute of it and had butterflies in my tummy by the end.

I initially had some serious doubts about Alexis, our protagonist. She was caught shoplifting and in exchange for not reporting the case, the supermarket owner asks her to work for money at his supermarket, SmartMart. From the start, Alexis was quite condescending of the supermarket and the people working at the store. If she had maintained that attitude, it would have annoyed me to no ends. However, Alexis was someone who really grew throughout the book and as she got to know her fellow employees, she blossomed into this entirely different person who was loveable in every way. Sure, she had her typical teenage-girl moment, but Alexis was never an annoying protagonist. Overall, I was certainly impressed by how much she matured and learned from her experiences in Paper or Plastic. Her manager, and love interest, Noah, was also so adorable as well. He was sweet, down-to-earth and very loving. He worked as many jobs as possible to support his mother and his baby sister. You've got to love a boy who is ready to work his butt off to earn money to help his sister's hobby of entering beauty pageants and who does it without every feeling resentful that his money is basically being wasted a way. As you can tell, I was head over heels in love with Noah and his kind heart.

In addition to two lovely main characters, Paper or Plastic also had a quirky secondary cast. I was very invested in the lives of the supermarket employees and their idiosyncrasies. Ruthie, especially, was a fun girl who grew a strong bond with Alexis over the course of the book. But of course, while the characters were all great, it was the sweet romance between Alexis and Noah that really got me flipping through the pages. It was genuine, romantic and just full of heart. Theirs was a romance that grew out of a friendship and I loved watching them get closer together. They did have some obstacles in their way, in the form of a friend who had "suffered" at the hands of Noah (It's not as serious as I'm making it sound), and Alexis' conflict between choosing between her friend or Noah, but I liked how she finally stood up for what she really wanted at the end. What I really liked about Paper or Plastic though was how the author handled some serious themes in the book. Don't let that cutesy cover fool you into thinking that this is just a light and fluffy read. Topics such as Alzheimers', the ugly side of kids' beauty pageants, and abusive parents. Still though, it never got too angsty or sorrowful and managed to maintain that cuteness factor all throughout.

Paper or Plastic was a feel-good kind of read that managed to make me laugh and smile throughout. It's a sweet and heart-felt story and I highly recommend it to readers looking for cute YA contemporaries with a supermarket romance!

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## **Danni Maxwell says**

That was quite the ending. I thought the twist would be different but I'm glad it didn't turn out the way I thought it would. And thought the twist was good it came out of nowhere? And it was a little rushed at times. But overall 4.5 stars. A review will come on my channel sometime soon.

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## **Lori says**

I loved this book! It was so much fun and romance-y and surprising and just enjoyable. I definitely recommend it for those days when you want a quick romance to get you through the cold days. Lex, the main character, was a bit off-putting in the beginning with her entitlement and bratty attitude but changed her ways by the end. And Noah was mysterious and hot and intriguing and sensitive enough for me to look past his overly-used name. There's also a few more serious issues looked at in this book so it isn't 100% fun but they do change the characters and help bring them together. I hope you guys will give this book a chance if you're a fan of YA romances!

\*I picked this book up for free from the publisher at ALA Midwinter. It did not affect my rating or opinions of this book.\*

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## **Michelle says**

[image error]

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## **Elizabeth says**

I received a copy of this from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

So, rich girl steals some lipstick and has to work at the place she stole it from for the summer. YA Contemporary isn't something that is brand new or comes up with new, revolutionary storylines, but it does push what you thought you knew about the genre. Our MC, Lexie, is rather self-aware when it comes to her trials and tribulations in life regarding her grandma's Alzheimer's disease, her mom's over-controlling pageant mom-ness, and the fact that she's not being totally honest to her friends that she's working with a guy who snitched out her best friend, Bryce, in the 9th grade. She knows she doesn't have it as hard as other people, specifically the people she works with. At SmartMart, there's a whole cast of characters including Ruthie, who seems to have some sort of developmental disability. Ruthie still has a decent amount of depth, though, especially near the end of the book when the tornado whips through the store.

I also very much enjoyed how much family was in this story. And yeah, SmartMart became like family, but also Lexie's family was a very central part of the story. She's close to her grandma, who just moved in with them because of Alzheimer's. She seems to get along pretty well with her parents, even if she doesn't get along with them ALL the time. I do like that she brought up that they didn't support her love and dreams of softball 100%. I know, it's kind of a tough thing, but it also gets into touching on how society thinks women should dress and act. It's not preachy though. Instead it comes by way of her mother telling her that Lexie's

wasted her looks and that she shouldn't put her hair in a ponytail. Lexie, of course, rebels by not wearing makeup or wearing her hair down. There's also a children's beauty pageant, but it's not so much about commenting on such pageants as it was more of an excuse to get Lexie and Noah together.

I totally thought there would be some sort of unveiling of an undying crush situation between Lexie and Bryce especially when he finds out that Noah works at SmartMart (and more). There was definitely an argument there, but there it was refreshing not to have a, "I've always had feelings for you person-i-thought-of-as-a-sibling!" Okay, maybe I watch too much Flash and Barry/Iris is getting to me. IT WAS NICE THOUGH. Also, her ultimatum at the end. That was AWESOME. I know I read a lot of MCs saying, "I don't care what my friends think! I like you!" But Lexie really had to battle through it and show it. Not that Noah ever said she had to prove it, but he did say a few times that she would ignore him at school because she's popular and he's a nerd.

I think one of the not-so-great things about this book is that it seemed like it fast tracked her grandma's battle with Alzheimer's disease. I get that it's sort of explained by the walking pneumonia, but eh. I think it was just to show how she would be effected by it while balancing work and friends, etc. Even though my grandparents didn't have Alzheimer's, it hit home in that my grandpa moved in with us after my grandma passed away. Just that whole grandchild-grandparent bond. TEAR ALERT: I totally cried when they found her grandma after she had wandered off. AHHH. (no one dies in this book, so that's good I guess)

There are some pretty funny moments in the book and it's also a pretty cute book as well with Lexie and Noah. Yeah, they both had stuff they didn't want to talk about, but they really pushed through AND pushed for each other. They weren't trying to save each other from anything, just more supportive. Even when Miller comes up to Lexie when she's working and tries to tell her off and she thinks about how Syd would do the same for her. It's not necessarily "old for her age" but it was refreshing for her to not just throw a fit or something.

TL;DR - super cute book, but it also has really awesome themes and characters. It has diversity by way of showing a couple of characters with disabilities. The support characters give one another is A++ and I liked their relationships whether they be family, friends, or dating. I did want to punch Bryce in the mouth a few times, though. This book also features a beauty pageant and a tornado. I mean, not in the same place, but it was a wiiiild ride. And I'm pretty sure this book is everything I needed right now.

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## **Lindsey Rey says**

[3.5 Stars]

I received this from Entangled Teen in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Shannon (leaninglights) says**

Full Review: <http://leaninglights.weebly.com/home/...>

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This one started really weak for me - I almost DNFd it but got about 50% through and the story picked up. I liked the climax of the story but felt it was unfinished. Still a cute and quick read though!

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## **Marla Mei says**

Way too shallow for my taste, both the characters and the story. I tried. But then I still ended up skimming a lot of pages. This book is just not for me.

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## **Sara Santana says**

I absolutely ADORE Vivi Barnes. I was lucky enough to get an ARC of her debut novel, *Olivia Twisted*, which I thought was fresh and fun, and super addicting. You can actually read my review for that here. Naturally when I saw that Vivi was releasing a new book and that it was available on NetGalley, I immediately wanted it and was very excited when I got it!

I've worked at two grocery stores in my life, and so I immediately was totally in love with this book. This is the horrors and hilarity of working in retail, and I couldn't stop laughing. The coupon lady, and the messes all over the place, and cleaning up vomit or poop or whatever because a customer left it behind, employee drama, all of that is so familiar, especially since this was my first job ever when I was 18 years old, right around my high school graduation. It all felt so familiar and fun. It made me remember my first job both fondly and gratitude that I'm not still there. But Vivi gets the whole thing completely right and it's just plain fun.

I also super enjoyed it because of the fun between Lex and Noah. My ex boyfriend (of 6.5 years) and I met when we both worked at Albertsons, my first job, so that was also fun as well. We had a good parting of ways, so it was fun to remember our relationship fondly while also remembering how it felt to fall in love over a cash register, basically. Haha. It was very very familiar to me so I immediately connected to that story.

But you guys don't just want to hear the personal connections I had to the story! You want to know if YOU should read it. And the answer to that is: definitely! It's SO fun. SO SO fun. I laughed so much while reading this, and even if you've never worked in this particular situation, if you've ever worked with people, period, you know exactly what this is like and it's just hilarious. It feels familiar, and it makes you think of every crappy job you've ever had. The antics of the store, the customers, the zany employees that Lex works with and also the awesome ones as well, the work crush that you inevitably always have...it was all fantastic to read, and just super fun.

But what I really loved about this book was the relationship between the characters. Lex and her relationship with her parents and sister, and especially her grandmother. That was incredible, especially since Lex's grandmother is sick and you have to watch that through her eyes and it's incredibly difficult. Watching Lex struggle to bond with her mother, because they have such different interests. It's great to see the relationship build between Lex and Noah, especially learning all the stuff that Noah goes through in his own personal life. And I especially love the relationships that Lex builds with her fellow coworkers whether they're a little odd or a bit older than her, it's just beautiful. That's what makes it such a strong book: the relationships, and the real human quality that the book has!

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## **Meredith says**

Paper or Plastic was amazing, adorable and unputdownable! No, seriously, I read it in four hours! And I only put it down once to take care of the dog and do dinner! The characters in this book were all incredible and realistic and they all tugged at my heartstrings. Pair all that with Vivi Barnes' incredible writing and you've got a winner!

I loved Alexis (Lex). She's pretty, fairly rich and popular. She had some moments where she was a bit oblivious and didn't realize how fortunate she was compared to others. But she never seemed stuck up or snobby, though she had a few moments where she acted as though she were above it all. I know that's a bit contradictory, but it's just how she was. She took her mom's criticism in stride (for the most part). Her relationship with her sister seemed very typical of siblings (they were fine one moment, fighting another). I loved the relationship she had with her grandmother, though some of those moments were hard to read. I was really pleased with Lex's character development from beginning to end.

Noah was so swoony and adorable. In the beginning, he was a bit of an ass to Lex and really, really hard on her. For someone who had been horribly misjudged, he was a very judgey person. He definitely had some trust issues going on and he had a hard time opening his heart. I don't blame him for that, considering the things he was dealing with. But it killed me to see him shutdown just when he should have been opening himself up. I don't think he had as much character development as Lex, but he definitely made progress.

I completely, 100% shipped Lex and Noah. They were so funny and adorable together, I found myself chuckling throughout their encounters. I think I might have even blushed a few times. In some ways, they were complete opposites, yet they complemented each other perfectly. Even when they fought, I still rooted for them.

Court and Syd were... interesting, to say the least. Court was the slightly bitchy friend and Syd was like the peace-keeper. I definitely liked Syd better, but Court had her moments where she pulled through for Lex. Bryce was a fun character, though his ability to hold a grudge kind of knocked him down a few pegs, in my opinion. He was so mean and bitter and, considering he and Lex were supposed to be such amazing friends, he wasn't very nice or fair to her.

I loved Bessie! She was such a kind person, yet pretty sassy, considering Lex saw her as a grandmother-type figure. I was scared to death for her at the end, though! Ruthie was an annoying character in the beginning. But the more I got to know her and her story, the more I sympathized with her and felt bad for the hand she was dealt.

I couldn't stand Lex's mom in the beginning. Just six pages in and I was ready to slap her. She was so dismissive of Lex and her dreams and aspirations. But she sort of made up for her behavior by the end of the book. Lex's sister definitely had her brat moments, too. And don't even get me started on Roxanne... Wow. I wanted to punch her face in on more than one occasion!

And Lex's grandmother... I can't. I LOVED her grandmother, but those parts were the hardest for me to read. I teared up a few times. I can't say much more without spoilers, but I will say I feared for her fate and it was just really tough to read the parts with her.

The ending was... insane and epic and so, so intense. Seriously, my heart was in my throat the whole time. The ending was definitely one of my favorite parts of the book. It kind of reminded me of Magnolia by Kristi

Cook!!

Overall, Paper or Plastic was an amazing, heartwarming read! I'm probably a little bit biased because I ADORE Vivi Barnes! But if you love contemporary and you're looking for a feel-good book that you can't put down, look no further! I highly recommend this one!!!

You can also find more from me on my blog: Pandora's Books

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## **Jackie (Jackie's Book World) says**

**\*\*\*Review can also be found at Jackie's Book World\*\*\* :)**

**Rating: 4.5/5**

*Paper or Plastic was just a cute romantic read that will leave you wanting for more.*

From the very start I was intrigued with the synopsis, it sounded very promising, and it did not disappoint at all. Every single character is put in the same setting, and as readers we get to see and learn their stories as well. SmartMart is widely known for its employees, and for the events that happen there that others would find laughable. When Alexis Dubois is caught shoplifting, she only has one option if she does not want what she did in her permanent record, and that is to work there for the time being. She immediately regrets what she did, but her overbearing mother is not about to let that do until Alexis learns her lesson. What her mother does not know is that Alexis is so tired of being "perfect" that she wanted to challenged her mother, and what she got out of it was a summer job. What she also did not realized that she was about to learn just how real, and loyal everyone at SmartMart really is.

Noah Grayson has his own problems to worry about. Even though he is smart, his reputation at school makes him nonexistent. Everyone blames him for what he did to Alexis best friend, and non one wants to be associated with him. Working at SmartMart has giving him the experience that he needs for a job, as a supervisor he knows everyone in the store, and everyone seems to like him there. It becomes a home for him, one that he is proud of. But being surrounded with so many characters in the work force, he is bound to see just about anything that could happen in the store. But when he finds out that Alexis Dubois is about to be his co-worker, things slowly start to spiral out of control when he finds out just how much he really likes her. As the two start to spend time together at work, sharing meals together, it is evident that they both want to be something more than just friends. But what is keeping them apart can hurt Alexis friendship with her best guy friend, and that is something that she is not so sure if that is what she wants.

I absolutely loved the secondary characters in the book, they are all well thought out, and their stories are the ones that bring a little extra to the story. I enjoyed reading about Alexis work at SmartMart, it was entertaining to see her working with her co-workers. There is one employee that likes to play tricks on the customers, and other employees as well that I just found hilarious! Her interaction with Noah Grayson is sweet. He cares for her, and they have a lot in common, since their mothers are into beauty pageants and so Alexis and Noah's little sisters end up in competitions. Noah is one of those characters that has been through a lot, having an abusive dad is what drives him into working ten times harder than others just to maintain his mother, and sister. Whereas Alexis does not have a live like that, she does worry about her grandmother,



who suffers from Alzheimer's. So they both suffer emotionally, and that is just one of the reasons they fit well together. Overall, I enjoyed reading *Paper or Plastic*, it was a cute read that I highly recommend. :)

*\*\*\*ARC provided by Entangled: Teen in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.\*\*\**

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## **Sophia Sardothien says**

Overall Entertaining read, not the best but not bad either

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## **Megan • Reading Books Like a Boss (book blog) says**

I saw this book on Goodreads not too long ago and thought that the whole premise sounded really great. After reading Nick's review a couple of weeks ago, I decided to jump right in. *Paper or Plastic* was such cute, sweet, feel-good young adult romance that left me with a smile on my face.

Alexis had her summer break all planned out. She planned on volunteering at a youth softball camp and hanging out with her friends, Syd, Court, and Bryce, at the pool. A lazy summer. All of this fell through when she and her friends got caught trying to steal lipstick from SmartMart. Instead of pressing charges, the store manager offers her a deal — work at SmartMart for the summer in exchange for a clean record. Her mother takes the deal and Alexis is less than thrilled.

On her first day at SmartMart, she meets several of her coworkers — Bessie, an older woman who is in charge of training Lexie, Ruthie, the enthusiastic greeter who has some limitations, and Noah Grayson, her manager and high school classmate. At school, Noah keeps to himself and is considered a geek. An incident involving Noah and Lexie's best friend that occurred two years made Lexie and Noah mortal enemies. Now, she's being forced to work with him. But she soon finds out that he's not as bad as she thought. She actually starts to like her sweet boss.

Meredith, Lexie's mom, is a former runner-up for the Miss Florida and imposes her obsession with pageants on her children. Her younger sister, Aurora, is very involved in pageants and therefore, the apple of Meredith's eye, whereas Lexie is more focused on softball. Lexie and her mom aren't very close since her mom is so involved with Aurora's pageants. I was so frustrated with the way Meredith treated Lexie. She expected her to be a Aurora's pageants, forcing Lexie to call into work. But at the same time she was trying to teach Lexie accountability and responsibility with a job. I found Meredith to be very selfish and shallow, and it made me really hard to like her. The mom/daughter dynamic was one of many problems the characters faced in this book.

Speaking of problems, Noah and Alexis have them. I really liked Noah. He had the world on his shoulders, yet was so kind and thoughtful to everyone. Noah is from a less affluent family. He works two jobs to help support his mother and little sister, who also happens to be involved in pageants. His work ethic and family man attitude made me love him even more than I already did. In addition to her mother problems, Lexie's grandmother was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and moved in with Lexie's family.

Throughout the book, Lexie is struggling with coming to terms that her spunky and sassy grandma is losing her reality.

I really liked the secondary characters in this book, namely all of the people at SmartMart. I also liked that the author had the characters working through real family issues. I liked the progression of Noah and Lexie's relationship. Their friendship and romance was sweet, natural and flowed beautifully. I found myself smiling most of the time reading this one. I did think that the book was a little on the long side and felt like the ending was a little overly dramatic, but I still liked this one!

**3 stars**

*\* I received a copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.*

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**Gabrielle says**

Actual rating:3.5 it was super cute!

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