



## I Am Rebecca

*Fleur Beale*

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## I Am Rebecca Fleur Beale

When she turns 14, Rebecca will find out who she is to marry. All the girls in her strict religious sect must be married just after their 16th birthdays.

Her twin sister Rachel desperately wants to marry the boy she's given her heart to. All Rebecca wants is to have a husband who is kind. But both girls know the choice is not theirs to make.

But what will the future hold for Rebecca? Is there a dark side to the rules that have kept her safe? Can the way ahead be so simple when the community is driven by secrets and hidden desires?

This powerful psychological thriller, set in a cult community, is a sequel to the much-loved bestseller *I am not Esther*. Once again, award-winning Fleur Beale keeps readers on the edge of their seats with her gripping, tautly written new novel *I am Rebecca*.

## I Am Rebecca Details

Date : Published August 1st 2014 by Random House New Zealand

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Author : Fleur Beale

Format : Paperback 251 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Fiction, Religion, Contemporary

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## From Reader Review I Am Rebecca for online ebook

### Trish says

This book is a wonderful sequel to 'I am not Esther' and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It gives a clear, non-judgmental description of life in the cult that Rebecca and her family belong to. The final scenes are gripping, I couldn't put the book down as I read about Rebecca's final decision and the consequences she faced. Highly recommended. (Thank you Harper Collins for the review copy)

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### Hailley Dawn--X When you love somebody, they'll always leave too soon X says

I read I am not Esther years ago, and it was my first book by a New Zealand author. I thought maybe i'd learn more about the country, but not really, which is okay because it was a good book. This one was really good, too- it gave me many questions about belief and things like that. Apparently there's a new one out, so I will have to read that too.

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### Claire says

As a kid, I was OBSESSED with I am not Esther, the novel to which this is a sequel. I think I read it about four times when I was in Year 8, and wanted to be best mates with its narrator, Kirby. This book is narrated by Kirby's cousin, Rebecca, who has grown up in the sect that Kirby finds herself living in. I am Rebecca takes place in the years following the end of I am not Esther. At first I found the narrative stilted compared to I am not Esther, although I found it flowed better as the story went on (maybe this is intentional? Rebecca is becoming more used to really examining her thoughts??) and by the end I was on the edge of my seat mentally cheering and crying for Rebecca. Definitely a must-read for all fans of I am not Esther; and the two books are essential reading for all young adults.

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### Kathleen Dixon says

It's a year and a half since I read I Am Not Esther but it was still very current in my memory when I came to read this next book in the series. Fleur Beale is an excellent writer for teens - her characters and stories are most memorable.

Rebecca is one of the twins, cousins to Esther who came to live with them and the Children of the Faith, and who was then expelled (as were Rebecca's siblings Daniel and Miriam). Rebecca and Rachel are 13 at the beginning of this novel, and the family is moving from Wanganui to Nelson to be with another group (of the same sect) of fifteen families. In Nelson there are more girls of their own age, and more boys who'll be men in a year and seeking betrothals. In Nelson there is also a new community venture - a stall at the Saturday market in town - which Rebecca and Rachel are appointed to staff.

This is another great story about courage.

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### **Xyphir says**

I was so excited to hear the sequel to 'I am not Esther' had been written and after a long wait finally got to read it.

Really satisfactory sequel. starts off right where Esther ends and follows Rebecca and her life with her twin sister after the Children of the Faith move to Nelson.

Wont spoil anything but it was good enough that I started it this afternoon and just finished it two hours later . couldn't put it down. Been wantingbto find out 'what happens next'for aaaages and now I know. And now, youvhave to find out too!

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### **Melinda Szymanik says**

A terrific follow up to 'I am not Esther'. I think I enjoyed this more. Having been introduced to the Children of the Faith sect in the first book,in which we followed an 'outsider's experience', this one is written from the perspective of a teenager raised in the faith. The faith is all she knows, but as she matures, Rebecca has questions about her religion and about herself, life and others, that no one can answer without disobeying the Rules. Beale knocks it out of the park again. Great writing, great voice, important themes. Recommended.

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### **Suzie Bookgirl says**

I am not Esther by Fleur Beale was a powerful story of life in a strict and alternative religion. I am Rebecca continues the story of the Pilgrim family as they leave Wanganui and move to Nelson to join a larger community. Rebecca and her twin Rachel are of an age to be betrothed and are reasonably happy to live this life they have been raised into until Rebecca is given cause to question everything she has been taught. She must decide whether to stay and to comply.

This book is described on the cover as a powerful psychological thriller and by the time I got to the end I had to agree. I read the whole thing in one go as I could not bear to put it down without knowing what was going to happen to Rebecca. Would the terrible thing occur? Could she save herself? It left me wrung out and exhausted. I look forward to Being Magdalene to see what happened to the rest of the family.

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### **EmilyViolet says**

This book wasn't for me.

The writing did my head in.

Sorry, I just didn't enjoy it at all.

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**?★Em loves Hollenstein★?♥the summertime and butterflies all belong to your**

## creation❤ says

I am Rebecca

Very good and seriously readable. Very different to the first but in a good way. I'm really pleased Fleur chose to focus on one of the twins. Maybe next she can write about Miriam! It could be a prequel, maybe. From when she loved with the others. I hope so! To be honest I didn't know there would be a second until I saw it in stores. I'm glad there is at least a sequel because although things in I am not Esther wrapped up well, I loved reading more about the community. I hate the fact they are betrothed at 16. I know that since I'm not entirely sure of whether I believe in a God or not, I should probably not speak too much of the religious parts, as that would be biased. But I have to say that some of the stuff was ridiculous. The fact that they can't have pain relief because pain means you have sinned and suffering cleans the body of sin was horrible. And the way the females were treated- one woman forced to have 18 children- was awful too. I don't believe God would want that. I love Magdalene and Abraham. This book was nearly impossible to put down. From the first sentence, I was Rebecca. For the whole 251 pages, I was her. I lived in the cult, I was betrothed to (not saying!) and I was the twin sister to Rachel, who is also awesome. Fleur has a writing style that flows beautifully. The Kezia storyline was interesting. Just saying:

Why do tears always flood peoples eyes in books? It's like the most common sentence ever used! It was mentioned in this book about 5 times! The rules and everything were interesting to read about, and I loved pretty much all the characters. But Elder Stephen and Ira are disgusting. I kept seeing Willow Shields as Rebecca

(Willow shield pics)

Mainly because the girl on the cover looks like her from the back. I want an "I am not Esther" movie!!!

Spoiler sessions!

This is spoiler talk! Written during and after the reading of the book.

Malachi leaving was just.....(surprised gif)

When Rachel got pregnant I was like.... Really? That's kind of disgusting, isn't she 16?? I hate the whole betrothal thing anyway. But still. Sixteen!

So happy that Ira never gets to marry again!!!! I was worried that he'd marry Rebecca!

(Katy perry firework dancing gif)

But it'd be better if he had....

oh my god.... Elder Stephen and Rebecca?? But the marriage bed.... And... Eww... No! I honestly feel like I might throw up.... She's sixteen and he's seventy six! I really don't believe that The Lord has said this should happen... I completely understand Rebecca's reaction and I'm so pleased she didn't go through with it!!!! And I agree with the counsellor Rebecca saw- how can anyone tell you for certain what happens after you die? I'm so happy she got back to Miriam, Daniel and Kirby. But I felt so sad for her leaving Rachel and her family.

The ending was perfect. I loved it so much. I can't bring myself to decide if it was even better than the first book, but I know it was an amazing book.

FIVE STARS. :D

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## Kelsey says

*I was truly happy for her - for both of them.*

*I'd never felt so alone.*

My review to I Am Not Esther wasn't exactly glowing. Hell, the entire time I read it, I wasn't exactly having the time of my life either - but there was something in it that kept me interested and reading, and to I Am Rebecca's credit, I think it tapped into whatever that was with more strength and more confidence. I enjoyed this one a ton more, although I've got my gripes on some pretty obvious things.

The subtlety of the writing style suited the banality, the routine, the lack of autonomy that Rebecca experiences in her faith, and despite that, I found myself really liking Rebecca. I thoroughly enjoyed following her around on this montage of curious events and quiet take on oddities and the small special things in her life. Things like the patterned petticoats and the worldly market really stuck out as precious, no matter how simple they were, without parading it in the narrative.

And this is gonna be the most obvious thing to say, but in stark contrast to Esther, I just really enjoyed the...events? I don't know? I found it interesting and fast-paced (although the synopsis calling it a thriller is such a ridiculous joke, call it a bloodbath horror why don't you), with a gentle touch of drama and emotion.

But on the flipside, that gentleness, that banality, was also to blame for its biggest failings for me. It felt one-note and emotionless even though it had plenty of tense, frightening moments; it all read the same, and it seemed to greatly struggle at breaking past its surface of tedium to actually get into some real emotions. Don't get me wrong, I cared for Rebecca's fate, and was appropriately scared, disgusted, and angry for her, but it all felt so passive and shallow.

Next up is the religion deal. This book is about religion, but it's not a religious book - and ok, if it decides that it's not its goal to preach to me, then fine. But you can't write a character in a deeply religious community, where religion is all she knows, and be afraid to talk about God. God was ever-present for sure, but in a way where it felt like they were talking about a piece of furniture instead of a being of some sort that mattered SO MUCH to everyone. All thoughts about God were at arm's length, as if Beale was afraid of making her character wonder something about God in case someone would get mad at her (like, I read a lot of 'I prayed to the Lord' but none of 'I hope the Lord listened', 'Why would the Lord speak to Stephen if Stephen is such a major douche', 'what does the Lord think?'). Whether Beale wanted it or not, Rebecca's faith begged for God to be a character, even a distant abstract one. To Esther, God was some weird imaginary thing. To Rebecca, God is a very important person in her life, and I bought absolutely none of it when we couldn't break the surface of her faith into any real feeling or any real connection or perceived connection.

Near the end, it touched briefly on some real solid lines about her doubt (*"the Lord got mixed up with Elder Stephen. I didn't have a scrap of belief in Elder Stephen"*), and it found the foothold it had been scrambling for the whole rest of the book - but having Rebecca doubt these enormous claims (*"or hell in eternity when I died. Unless that wasn't true either"*) felt flimsy when all I had about her faith before was "well I guess she believes because she lives there." It's just frustrating to have the book try and make me feel and doubt and tip off the edge into a new character arc when there was nothing before it. This is my big hang-up with I Am Not Esther all over again. Ughhhhhh.

Whatever. Despite that, forget about God, forget about religion - forget about all of that and I really liked it. The characters were really lovely, the simple ideas and simple situations were pleasant and their drama & stakes were weighed with a careful hand. I really loved Rebecca herself, and I'm even in a space where I wanted a more conclusive ending not because I'm being a gremlin about the technical aspect, but because I wanted to know she was okay. Just again, it only scratched the surface with its emotion and its themes.

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### **Wendy says**

I heard Bob the Bookman talking about this and he made it sound quite thrilling, and a real page turner it was too. I hadn't read Esther but that didn't matter. This book tells the story through the eyes of a teenage girl coming of age in a strict religious community, and although she is able to be positive about the future being planned for her, an unexpected twist in those decisions is quite startling. Great young adult/ teen read, age 11+.

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### **Taniplea says**

This was even more interesting than the first book. I would just really have liked to know how her twin sister copes, but I think it was good to not tell the reader, to show what she herself feels like.

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### **Rose says**

#### **Book review: I Am Rebecca**

I Am Rebecca, by Fleur Beal, is a continuation of I Am Not Esther about the two young twins, Rachel and Rebecca. As they grow older within the community, they are expected to become godly women and be led by the manly figure in their household, whether it is their father or husband.

Rebecca has always known her future. It is to be a godly women with a godly husband. She has always known where she stands, but when her whole family and community pack up and leave to go to Nelson, her life seems changed around. The new leader, Elder Stephan, is judgmental, and her parents are distant ever since her older brother and cousin, Daniel and Esther left the community. When they arrive in Nelson, they are immediately welcomed and told their new guidelines. As part of an experiment to get outsiders to join the community, she and her twin sister, Rachel are assigned a job, one that they are not used to and one when they have to talk with outsiders. They are to go to the morning markets and sell eggs and a special relationship soon blooms with a kindly sweet stall lady, who gives them advice on how to talk with customers. It is near Rachel and Rebecca's fifteenth birthday, and they are expected to marry soon. The communities possible suitors are expected to meet with the lady's father and speak to them if he wants to marry her. Rachel very quickly gets a young suitor by the name Saul, who also helps them set up for the market. Rebecca's father also tells her that she is to marry a man named Malachi. They are both very happy and content and know what their future is. But as Rebecca's new life continues, her life starts to stray away from the very clear path she was meant to have. Her husband to be is suddenly transferred from the gardens and greenhouse that he loves so much and set to work as a plumber with no obvious explanation. This drives him to leave because the Elders were controlling his life to much. Then Elder Stephan's wife is nearly dying with cancer and requests all unmarried girls to look after her in the afternoons, but he seems to take a special interest in Rebecca, and asks her questions like if she was being godly and seemly and following the "rule". But what will the future hold for Rebecca? Is there a dark side to the rules which have kept her safe? Can the way ahead be so simple when the community is driven by secrets and hidden desires?

I would recommend this book to people who love a sense of mystery and ages 12 to 14.

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## **Deb says**

This book picks up a few months after the end of "I am not Esther". I actually enjoyed this book more. Despite the fact it turned out a bit predictable towards the end. This second book looks at life in a religious group where marriage partners are selected by the elders and love has nothing to do with it.

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## **Kataraina says**

Yus! When I got the message that I was receiving a giveaway copy, I plonked myself down in front of the T.V and watched a lot creepy true cult series. This book was just as satisfying. (No joke, just because I won...)

If not, this is by far one of best thrilling reads I have ever read in my life!

I would be mortified if this book doesn't receive the right amount of credibility it deserves.

Jaw droppers, life stoppers, crying& melting moments. Aaaaaaaahhh, what a great book that was. It was a fast and addictive read, I couldn't put the book down and I had papers to submit. So no, theres no excuses. At the end of the book, I was praising the Lord for creating Fleur Beale for creating this piece of an eye opener, bravery and courageous book.

You learn so much in a book that has 200 pages than you can learn in a lifetime.

I had to put the book down and pace around till I was able to look at another word.

Rachael and Rebecca's relationship is exactly, and I mean exactly like me and my twins' it was on point we did exactly what they did before sleep etc.. the mind reading as well.. It sounds crazy if your not twin, but meh...

I had to put the book down and pace around till i was able to look at another word.

There is one thing that we did promise each other though. Is that no matter what, we would kill for each other. Literally I threatened a guy who liked her because she was spending way to much time with him than me. I wouldn't care if she pregnant; I would still drag her by the hair and chain her hands with mine and tell her ass is mine and no one else's. I KNOW SHE WOULD DO THE SAME!

Lastly, Le gassssp! Her parents are staaaaank!

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