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In Some Other Life Details

Date : Published August 8th 2017 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR)

ISBN : 9780374380762

Author : Jessica Brody

Format : Hardcover 464 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Contemporary, Romance, Fiction

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From Reader Review In Some Other Life for online ebook

Briana Yanson says

I really liked this book because it showed a sense of mystery. Kennedy showed curiosity by trying to figure out who was selling stolen exams to other students.

Alyssa says

Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog

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Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR)

Publication Date: August 8, 2017

Rating: 3 stars

Source: ARC sent by the publisher

Summary (from Goodreads):

Kennedy Rhodes turns down an acceptance to an elite private school, instead choosing to stay at her high school and jump at the opportunity to date the boy of her dreams. Three years later, Kennedy walks in on that same boyfriend cheating with her best friend—and wishes she had made a different choice. But when Kennedy hits her head and wakes up in the version of her life where she chose to attend the private school, she finds that maybe it's not as perfect of a world as she once thought.

What I Liked:

I've read a number of Jessica Brody's books, including *52 Reasons to Hate My Father* and *A Week of Mondays*. I especially loved *52 Reasons to Hate My Father*, and I enjoyed *A Week of Mondays*. *In Some Other Life* is just as creative and sweetly romantic as her previous books, but something felt lacking in the story. The book felt all over the place, and not just in terms of the parallel universe jump.

Kennedy Rhodes is a model student at her high school. She is the editor-in-chief of the *Southwest Star*, a newspaper that she started up at the high school. She always dreamed of going to The Windsor Academy, an elite private school that churns out amazing students that go to Ivy League schools. But her life at the public high school is great. That is, until she walks in on her boyfriend and her best friend kissing... and it doesn't look like it is the first occurrence. When Kennedy falls and hits her head, she wakes up and finds herself in another life, in which she accepted her invite to attend Windsor, and she is now one of the elite students she always dreamed of being. But she quickly discovers that life as a Windsor isn't what she thought it would be, and her life in this parallel universe isn't perfect and happy.

I was nervous about this book because it clearly involves cheating and I hate cheating in a book. The cheating wasn't handled particularly well, in my opinion, and I'll talk about that later. Most of the story around the cheating was okay though. I was not in danger of abandoning the book, and I got really into the story once Kennedy entered the parallel universe.

I liked Kennedy immediately because I was so like her in high school and in college. She is top of her class, a hard worker, a workaholic, in charge of everything, never stopping. She's the girl that does it all, even at the expense of personal relationships. Not that her best friend and her boyfriend hooking up behind her back is excused. That is definitely not Kennedy's fault.

The idea of this book is pretty cool. At first you think it's simply Kennedy hitting her head and waking up in another world. But the author uses physics to explain this occurrence. You see, Kennedy's little brother has a fascination with physics, and while all of the physics talk confuses Kennedy, she remembers him talking about parallel universes. Her life at The Windsor Academy definitely happens in another universe, according to physical theory.

It's so interesting to see Kennedy's two different lives compared to each other. She thinks she has everything she ever wanted when she wakes up and realizes that she is an actual student at Windsor, but she realizes that very little is the same. Her mom is more stressed, her dad doesn't even live at home anymore, her best friend at Windsor might not even be a real friend, and "Other Kennedy" isn't as perfect as Kennedy in her "real" life.

I liked the love interest in the other life, Dylan Parker. He is funny and confident and he loves to antagonize Kennedy. He isn't a preppy student, despite attending a very elite preppy school. He and Kennedy have a lot more chemistry than she and Austin ever did. Although she and Austin were pretty much no longer in a relationship, from the start of the book.

I loved that Kennedy's parents have such a sweet relationship and they are so supportive and normal. I feel like YA parents are either not present or they are crazy. Kennedy's mom and dad are very cool, in the "real" life. In the parallel universe, they are probably going in the direction of divorce. But in Kennedy's real life, they are a wonderful example of married parents with teenagers.

The ending is a happily-ever-after and wraps up well, though it is a little open-ended in terms of one aspect. I wanted that aspect to be expounded upon so I'm kind of hoping that the author writes some sort of epilogue. No sequel, but a few pages of an epilogue would be lovely.

What I Did Not Like:

I really hated the cheating part of this story. Austin and Laney, Kennedy's boyfriend of three years and best friend of... forever, are quite possibly the worst people in this book, in any universe. I can get behind the fact that they fall in love. I CANNOT get behind the fact that they sneaked around and hooked up many times for over three months, while Kennedy and Austin were still a couple. Three months! And who knows how far they took things? This bothers me so much! To me, there is never a good excuse for cheating. If Austin was so bored of his relationship with Kennedy, or if he was so in love with Laney, why did he not break things off with Kennedy? If Laney is such a good friend like she is noted to be, how could she betray her best friend like that?

And what pisses me off even more is it was three months of that happening. Were Kennedy and Austin sexually active? Were Laney and Austin sexually active concurrently? We don't know either case for sure, but you see why this would disgust me, right? There is no good excuse for allowing this to happen (on Austin and Laney's part).

To make matters worse, Kennedy only seems to blame Laney. Every time she thinks about Austin and Laney

together, she thinks about how her best friend could have done this to her. How dare her best friend have the audacity to cry and look so sad (when Kennedy walked in on them). How dare her best friend betray her. Okay, I agree with all of these feelings, they are very valid. But... what about Austin? Is he not the CHEATER in this case? It definitely takes two to cheat and your best friend shouldn't be the only one to be blamed.

I hated that, in the end, Kennedy forgives Austin and Laney like nothing. It is something that she does like flipping a light switch. Look, guys. I don't care if Austin and Laney were meant to be together like it was fate or destiny or whatever. I don't think they felt guilty enough or suffered enough. Yes I realize that people should practice forgiveness. But I also think that people should acknowledge that they did something wrong and pay the price. Kennedy's forgiveness seemed way too sudden and too easy.

And then of course Kennedy and her romance (with Dylan) is in the other universe. Think on that.

I think I would have LOVED this book if the Austin/Laney thing had not happened. Maybe the author could have done some other catastrophe, like Kennedy getting booted as editor-in-chief, or the newspaper getting cut, or something with her parents. I don't know. The cheating thing was handled so poorly.

Would I Recommend It:

While I didn't hate this book, I also didn't love it, and I can't say I'd recommend it. Brody's A Week of Mondays kind of deals with a similar concept (in that book, the protagonist wakes up every day and it's still the same Monday, so she is living that same Monday over and over.). I liked that book. This would have been terrific had it not had the cheating part of the story.

Rating:

2.5 stars -> rounded up to 3 stars. I'll still be looking forward to reading more books by this author, because my experiences with her YA contemporary novels have been good overall. But here was one bad apple and I didn't totally enjoy the book. It's not a terrible book overall but not really for me.

Nicole says

I honestly loved this book! I always think about how my life would be different if I'd made other choices, especially since I moved around a bit when I was a kid, and this book really captured the feeling. The ending was also perfect, and while there was little romance, I felt myself getting lost in Kennedy's story of self-discovery more and more.

For the people who DNF'd this book because of how Kennedy made fun of her other self for having makeup and girly things, get over yourselves. It's in the book very briefly, and it worked as a device to make Kennedy feel like she was in truly uncharted territory.

Mary says

An entertaining The Road Not Taken meets It's a Wonderful Life high school mashup. Although the story is

predictable, it does have a positive message about following your bliss and being true to your values.

Shelley says

Source Publisher

Genre Young Adult, Contemporary

Rating 3-3.5

Full Review Pending

Not an original concept, but it is an intriguing idea of parallel universes. However, I guess I will remain against those who willingly cheat on another person be it with their spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, or best friend. It is inconceivable to me that our heroine would be willing to forgive so easily. Life is too short to just allow yourself to be abused and then laugh it off.

Paula Phillips says

For the past three years, Kennedy Rhodes has been keeping a big secret from her family. All her life, she wanted to attend Windsor Academy and that dream nearly came true until she gave it all up for a guy named Austin. Yes, you heard correctly - Kennedy chucked everything away for a high school romance. Now three years later, she has accomplished resurrecting a school newspaper and winning awards but is she truly happy as she constantly checks the Windsor website and wonders What If ? Especially now as Kennedy has just caught her best friend hooking up with her boyfriend. Running to her safe place, she heads to Windsor Academy and bumps her head. When Kennedy wakes up, she discovers she is a student at Windsor Academy and that she did accept the place after all. With this new life, Kennedy will finally experience what her life could have been? Will she like this version of Kennedy, her friends, and family or will she realize that life in a public school is better for all? I loved this book as I have always had a thing for parallel universes and I am the type to wonder "What If" for a few of my decisions. I have always thought it would be an interesting concept if there was a way we could view or experience our parallel universes? Maybe our dream worlds are our versions of parallel universes? This is one YA Book that I suggest all should read and give a go, as it will get you thinking about the what if scenarios in your life.

Taylor Ramirez says

What's this? I actually like a YA Contemporary book? This hasn't happened in a very long time. This book was excellent with an interesting premise, a wonderful message about regret and even pretty good anti-establishment message that didn't come off too preachy. At time it was incredibly predictable and the main character wasn't the smartest in the world but there are some great twists and Brody wrote some excellent characters. I look forward to reading more books by Brody.

~Spoilers~

“May I suggest that you refrain from Googling ‘possible catastrophes at print shops’ from now on”—Page 1

Ha!

There's always either a teacher or friend who knows something about parallel universes in these types of stories. I should be glad, since if you don't have those characters then you get something like the Future of Us.

I really like Frankie, he's well written smart character. He clearly knows a lot about science and is interested in the stuff but he doesn't get everything completely right. Kennedy can still stump and they tease each other. He's still a kid where there's a parallel universe with no showers.

"Because we're totally, absolutely, one-hundred-percent in tune with each other."—Page 25

Your boyfriend likes coffee and you don't. He has mannerism that you don't like. And likes a comedy show that you don't. Opposite attracted but you don't see to have much in common.

"And she loves saying balls."—Page 30

I like her.

"She stops typing as an unreadable expression blankets her face. 'That's weird,' she says flatly."—Page 31

You're fucking her boyfriend, aren't you Laney?

"You have to go over to Austin's and watch it with him!"—Page 37

Okay, Kennedy is kind of stupid.

"Because they're too busy kissing."—Page 48

What a shock.

"Dad nods pensively. 'Okay then, break a pen! Bust a laptop! Burn a book!'"—Page 63

Her dad is great.

Well, that interview didn't go well.

If I were Kennedy in this situation, I probably would ask a lot less questions and just go with the flow. Then I would start freaking about what homework I would have to do and where my classes are.

"We've been in how many of the same classes—not to mention the other things we've done together—"—Page 163

A fling?

Y'know getting into a good college is important but high school is where you should have fun. Not stress out. You should definitely work hard, be ambitious and strive for excellence but these kids are nuts.

Okay, so I thought Kennedy was having a headache because something with the switching to a different

universe thing but apparently it's just caffeine withdrawal.

I also thought that Lucinda had killed herself due to the stress but apparently she just cheated.

"...but I never would have imagined anyone would resort to cheating."—Page 197

People cheat in average classes all the time.

"The time we misspelled a word in our front-page story about teen literacy."—Page 251

That's hilarious. Kennedy how could you not realize that without you all the stuff you did at your other high school wouldn't have happened?

"That shouldn't be allowed to be a club. Who approved this? Who thought this was a good idea? Those are the best computers in the school! They shouldn't be used for something so pointless, not to mention...violent."—Page 256

Oh, give me a break.

I'm glad that Brody made Laney and Kennedy both in the wrong. Kennedy was taking her friendship with Laney for granted and Laney was cheating with Kennedy's boyfriend.

"Starting next week, we will begin docking one percentage point a week from every student grade until the person responsible decides to make the right choice."—Page 268

In what universe would this happen? I'm pretty sure the parents of every student would have something to say about this. I can't imagine this is legal.

"No. I won't let you start a newspaper because you're too hard on yourself. You're already stretched far too thin and I'm worried about you."—Page 276

Well, that is a good reason but there's also the fact that you're basically turning this into a witch-hunt. Kennedy, already thinks that Dylan did this just because she doesn't like him.

"It actually seems pretty biased. And a bit lazy."—Page 281

This. I really like this. Brody has a character with flaws, Kennedy clearly doesn't like Dylan and that's leading her to be biased and make bad choices. It comes off as annoying but then Brody has another character immediately call her out. I've been seeing this so rarely in other YA contemporary books. Characters should have flaws that lead them to make bad decisions but that doesn't mean that the character either shouldn't be called out for it or realize their flaws themselves.

"I know it was you. And I'm going to get to the bottom of it. With or without your help."—Page 282

"I'm going to prove you're guilty with or without your help." That sounds kind of stupid.

Dylan ranking people's mental breakdowns is kind of awful.

"He smiles a handsomely devilish smile. 'That I've achieve enlightenment!'"—Page 294

I really like this kid.

“She’ll have to attend community college.”—Page 296

Hey! Also, y’know that kids in public school get into good schools all the time and that Ivy League schools aren’t the only option.

It’s totally Windsor-Kennedy who’s selling these tests.

“It takes him a while to reply. But when he does, he say, ‘Yes. And admittedly a little turned on.’”—Page 336

Haha, Dylan is becoming one of my favorite characters.

“Thomas Sullivan Magnum IV” “TSM4” that’s a really great twist.

The essay was heartbreaking.

“When I woke up this morning, I called a cab to the airport, I bought a plane ticket, and I left.”—Page 380

Well, that was unexpected.

“‘I don’t regret anything,’ Dad whispers into my ear. ‘I promise.’”—Page 394

I love her dad so much.

“It’s fear. Fear of not living up to your potential. Fear of failure.

And, in that moment, I realize something for the very first time.

The students aren’t the only ones who are pressured to succeed in this place. The students aren’t the only ones pushed to exhaustion to fulfill an Ivy League quota. The teacher feel the exact same thing. They suffer the exact same debilitating stress. Fitz probably gets even less sleep than I do.”—Page 409

Favorite quote.

Damn, Sequoia turned Kennedy and Dylan in.

Well, Kennedy’s back in her old life. Does that mean that Windsor-Kennedy was living our Kennedy’s life? I kind of want to read that story.

Yay! This universe’s Dylan is now going to the same school! They’re really cute together.

Dania says

So much fun. I enjoyed this book immensely. It did drag a little bit, and it was a little predictable, but it didn't take away from the overall experience. I was jubilant with how the story turned out, especially the ending.

Leah says

To start off, I didn't have any expectations for this book so I wasn't disappointed by it. I did have many problems with it and the biggest one is that I found Kennedy to be naive and kind of clueless. She wanted to attend the Windsor Academy since 6th grade and when she applied she was wait listed until right before her freshman year when a spot opens up. This is exactly what she wants, but just a week earlier the boy she has a crush on asked her out. She has to choose between attending the school of her dreams or dating the boy she thought she was in love with. She chose the boy because she didn't think their relationship would last if their at separate schools. I get that at the time she was young and he was probably her first boyfriend, but she turned down the school of her dreams for a guy she most likely wouldn't spend the rest of her life with. I thought this was an incredibly stupid decision on her part because she passed up a great opportunity for a guy.

I also felt she was pretty stupid not to notice that something was going on with her best friend and boyfriend. I mean, the day she finds out she gets to school and Austin tries to kiss her but she gets grossed out when she smells his coffee breath and he tells her he was at Peabody's that morning. Not ten minutes later, when she's working on the newspaper with Laney, she smells coffee on her breath and Laney also says she was at Peabody's. Kennedy asks her if she saw Austin and Laney starts acting weird. If it were me, this would send up a red flag. Especially because she asks Laney to go over to Austin's that night to watch a TV show with him because Kennedy can't make it and Laney acts even stranger.

I feel like her stupidity increases when she arrives in the parallel universe. I get that she probably doesn't know everything there is to know about parallel universes, but her brother is obsessed with them and talks about it all the time that she should at least be familiar with the concept. But no, she naively thinks that everything is the exact same. When she arrives home after falling on the steps of the Windsor Academy, she is surprised to see her mom home. In her other life, her father just made a huge sale with his photographs so she thinks he's down in the basement working. For two days. She hasn't seen him once for two days and she doesn't question this. She doesn't stop to think that maybe her parents couldn't afford to send her to an expensive, prestigious school and that her dad had to get a different job. She doesn't even think that maybe her parents are divorced in this life and that's why he's not around. I mean seriously, how could she think everything would be the exact same?

I also didn't like how Sequoia acted about Kennedy's behavior after her fall. She's supposed to be her best friend but she doesn't seem worried at all that Kennedy doesn't know things she should. She just gives her strange looks and brushes it off as not enough caffeine. If I were her, I would think that Kennedy really did hurt herself when she fell and maybe suggest she see a doctor. It's just common sense that when someone seems to have memory loss from a fall that there's something wrong.

My last problem with this book is the huge presence of social media. Almost every other chapter they mention Kennedy checking her SnipPic. I don't like social media and I didn't like that this was such a huge part of the book.

I feel like I have a lot of complaints about this book and that it doesn't really deserve a two star rating, but it wasn't completely horrible. I liked her brother, Frankie, and the mystery of the cheating scandal at the Windsor Academy was interesting. I also think that part of the reason I gave this book two stars is because I

won this in a giveaway and it was exciting to read an ARC, which is something I haven't done before. This wasn't a terrible book, but I'm a little wary of reading other books by this author.

alice (arctic books) says

I'm marking this as a DNF at this time, which makes me incredibly disappointed.

This multiverse/parallel universe story started off pretty strong, introducing a fun family with an overachieving girl, Kennedy Rhodes. Though I found it silly that Kennedy would drop the school over a BOY (but to each their own, I guess), I was intrigued to see how Kennedy would play out in a different world based on one different decision.

However, I'm deciding to not finish this novel due to some internalized misogyny present –as Parallel Universe Kennedy finds herself shocked that she is a "girly girl" and claims that makeup is "fake and misleading." I understand that the author was trying to really show the distinctive traits between Normal Kennedy and Parallel Universe Kennedy, but I think it could have been handled better. Especially for an audience that is largely comprised of impressionable young teens, this book spreads some sexism that I'm not too happy about.

Gray Cox says

This book is the equivalent of a pop song.

Enjoyable, fluffy, and totally a guilty pleasure.

Did I get anything out of this?

No.

Was it cliché?

Yes.

Did I secretly enjoy it?

Also yes.

Samantha (WLABB) says

Rating: 3.5 Stars

I mostly enjoyed this parallel life tale. There was one thing that I wish the author would not have pursued, but still liked the majority of the story.

•Pro: I am a fan of parallel universe stories, and this one had a little touch of It's a Wonderful Life in how Kennedy's alternate choice affected all those in her world.

•Con: I would have been fine with the cheating part of the book, if it had just served as the impetus for Kennedy rethinking her choice, but I just was not a fan of where Brody went with it. I appreciated how she tried to build a case for her decision and direction, but I could not get on board with it. That said, it did not ruin the whole story for me.

•Pro: Kennedy grew so much through this experience. She re-evaluated many things she thought were important and also recognized the things that were really important.

•Pro: The whole idea of how one decision can have a butterfly effect is quite powerful.

•Con: I thought the book could have been shorter. A few things felt unnecessary and at 464 pages for a contemporary, we could have done without them.

•Pro: Frankie was so fabulous. He was this little science nerd, and man, I was enthralled when he was talking nerdy to me. I also love strong sibling relationships, and was surprised by this one, because of the age difference, but I adored their interactions.

•Pro: I was a total Dylan fan. I liked the verbal sparring between him and Kennedy, and I liked how he challenged her. I greatly enjoyed watching their relationship bloom, and wish we had gotten more of it later on.

•Pro: I like most of the ending. If one thing had been omitted, I would have loved the ending. (I know, it's shocking to hear me say such things.)

•Pro: This was a fun read, and I love fun reads. I enjoyed a majority of the story, and liked almost all the characters. The family focus was a plus too, because it's always great when we meet solid YA families.

•Pro: There are a lot of great subtle messages in the story: being true to yourself, doing what you love, forgiveness, looking ahead and not behind. Lots of good take aways.

Overall: A fun and breezy tale, which asked if you should consider "what-ifs" or appreciate the "what-ares".

Maé (readwithmae) says

DNF at 31%

I kinda liked the concept of this book, but the characters was just infuriating and very sexist, being horrified at the fact that she became a "girly girl" in her other life, like it was a bad thing (along with the fact that she is obviously too good for make up, because it's "fake and misleading"). Anyway, I could keep reading this book but I don't want to spend my time reading some sexist lines.

Stacie (Shy Book Nerd) says

It was an okay read. I didn't love it or hate it, it just wasn't that memorable. Also, the main character Kennedy was pretty annoying. She felt really immature, naive, and so self-centered so it was kind of hard to like her. She redeemed herself in the end so that was good. I just wish the story was as beautiful as the cover haha.

Fafa's Book Corner says

DNF

Mini review:

I was really looking forward to reading this. I loved the synopsis and couldn't wait to start it. Unfortunately it wasn't for me.

My problem was the main character. I found her to be utterly annoying and crazily over dramatic. I have no idea if she improved, I didn't have it in me to see for myself.

I have a feeling people will still enjoy this. Recommend.
