



## **The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me**

*Olivia Hinebaugh*

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## **The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me** Olivia Hinebaugh

Seventeen-year-old Lacey Burke is the last person on the planet who should be doling out sex advice. For starters, she's never even kissed anyone, and she hates breaking the rules. Up until now, she's been a straight-A music geek that no one even notices. All she cares about is jamming out with her best friends, Theo and Evita.

But then everything changes.

When Lacey sees first-hand how much damage the abstinence-only sex-ed curriculum of her school can do, she decides to take a stand and starts doling out wisdom and contraception to anyone who seeks her out in the girls' restroom. But things with Theo become complicated quickly, and Lacey is soon not just keeping everyone else's secrets, but hers as well.

## **The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me Details**

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Author : Olivia Hinebaugh

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## From Reader Review The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me for online ebook

### Candyce Kirk says

This book surprised me in such a positive way. I don't think I've ever read such a sex positive book. The Birds, The Bees and You and Me is very diverse and tells us it's okay to love who you love and be who you are.

Lacey grew up with her single mother who's always been very open and honest with anything that has to do with sex. She's made Lacey realize it's okay to want what you want, but that consent is very important and to only do what she's comfortable with. I think Lacey knows more ways to protect herself than most adults! Her relationship with her mother was one of my favorite things about this book!

At school, they start sex-ed, but when it's abstinence only, Lacey has a hard time with this. Why shouldn't students learn how to protect themselves? Not only from diseases, but teenage pregnancy. Let's just say the school isn't happy when Lacey speaks her mind. I was proud of Lacey and her friends sticking up for what they believe in.

Students start to learn about Lacey's knowledge and she starts giving advice (even if she hasn't even had her first kiss). Besides her fight to help get her classmates educated, this book is filled with many other things: friendship, learning what you really want and first loves.

Lacey, Theo and Evita are a really close group and have a band together. It's fun reading about their friendship and that they'd do anything for each other. Everybody needs friends like that. Things get harder for her when she realizes her dreams may be different than what her best friends want and that Theo is starting to feel like more than a friend.

I love how Lacey grows in this book. She starts off really shy, even about giving advice about sex, but starts becoming really confident. Lacey fights for what she wants and gives herself a chance to explore her feelings. I loved how much Lacey and Theo talked about their relationship and didn't just assume things. It's important to teach teenagers about mutual respect.

The Birds, The Bees and You and Me does get a bit descriptive when it comes to sex in this story, but this is done in a very respectful way. Besides the important messages it brings, the story of young love and an amazing friendship make this book complete!

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### rachel says

? Trigger warnings for internalised acemisia and aromisia, medical procedures, and hospitals.

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## **Laurie Flynn says**

Be still, my heart! The sex-positive YA I've been waiting for. I was lucky enough to read this debut early, and I can't think of enough words to describe how much I adored it. Olivia Hinebaugh writes with authority and grace, and delves into so many different aspects of sex and sexual health. **THE BIRDS, THE BEES, AND YOU AND ME** manages to be informative without ever entering preachy territory or feeling like a lecture. It's a book I think every teen (and adult!) should have on their shelves to read and discuss.

With vibrant writing and a fully-fleshed cast of lovable characters, **THE BIRDS, THE BEES, AND YOU AND ME** is a book I'll be recommending to everyone when it hits shelves in 2019. Bold, energetic, fun, and brave- that's this fantastic read in a nutshell.

(Also, note to Olivia: please write more books, thanks!)

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## **Christy says**

### **4 stars!**

*The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me* is an important book for teens. It's something I wish would have been out when I was that age. I could relate to Lacey Burke in a lot of ways.

Lacey is a high school student who notices something is wrong with her senior health class and goes to do something about it. Lacey is probably the last person who is qualified to answer questions about sex, being a virgin and all, but she has a very open mom who is a nurse and knows all there is to know about the birds and the bees. I loved Lacey and her mom. Their relationship was fantastic. My mom was a teen mom so growing up we were super close and had a similar relationship as Lacey and her mom. ??

Lacey has two best friends, Theo and Evita. Things get a little complicated there, as well. Lacey has a lot going on with her feelings for Theo, the way it will effect Theo, and choosing what she wants to do with her life. Music is everything to her, but nursing is something she's passionate about as well. Lacey and her friends, the music, the locker of sex information, it's all great.

This story focused on friendship, was informative, and gave the teens an open dialogue with each other and the adults in the book. I really enjoyed this one.

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## **Prerna Pickett says**

A sex positive book that tells it like it is with a dash of unrequited love? Yes, please. This book has a little bit of everything, but what I loved the most was how Olivia Hinebaugh covered so much ground in so little time without being preachy! I loved the dynamic friendship between Lacey, Evita, and Theo. I adored that there were moms who supported their children and that frank and honest conversations took place. This is a wonderful debut with a fresh take on sex, love, friendship and everything in between. It's a much needed

book because it's scary how little teens today know about any of the topics discussed in TBTBAYAM. You need to read it!

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### **Katy Upperman says**

Guys, this is the sex-positive, music-infused, friendship-focused, gloriously feminist debut you've been waiting for. It's so wonderfully frank in its discussion of sexual health and consent, yet it never feels heavy handed. Main character Lacey and her group of friends (and her mom!) are all layered, supportive, engaging, and awesome. Another bonus -- the central romance in this book surprised me in the best way. It's clandestine and swoony, full of chemistry and sweetness. Big, big recommend!

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### **Katherine Locke says**

I read an early draft of this book as a beta reader, and I fell head over heels for this book. It's a smart, sex-positive, health-conscious book about trying to do the right thing, getting in over our heads, and finding our way out. I am absolutely thrilled this will be a book on the shelves, and I think it's an absolute must-have for library collections. Really excited to hold a finished version!

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### **Shirley Cuypers says**

*This book was provided by the publisher through Xpresso Book Tours in exchange for an honest review. Thank you Swoon Reads and Xpresso Book Tours!*

*The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me* is an important Young Adult and Contemporary book for young adults. I wish I had a book like this when I was younger because you get to know so much about friendship, love and everything you need to know about safe sex.

*The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me* was such a good book because it gives such a positive message, you should not be ashamed about wanting to experiment with your body or with the one you love. This book also shows how important friendship is and that's something I really liked about this book.

I was planning on giving this book 4 stars because the characters got a bit on my nerves sometimes but I decided to give *The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me* 5 stars because of its message. I love that this book is sex positive and also informative.

I highly recommend this book to every young adult (or just everyone in general) because you can learn from this book, and the story in general is amazing!

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### **kory. says**

For a little bit in the beginning, I thought I wasn't going to like this. I couldn't tell you what it was that made me feel like that, but I'm glad that wasn't the case. There's a lot of important information in this book about

sex and related things, a really endearing friend group, a sweet as fuck love interest who is my absolute favorite emotional soft boy, a supportive romance that I actually really adore, a kickass mother who is kind of a feminist Lorelai Gilmore, sex scenes where the characters are laughing and having fun and constantly checking in with each other which shouldn't be a rarity, an accurate explanation of asexuality, a surprisingly interesting side plot about the main character training to be a doula/midwife, a normalization of sleepovers between girls and guys, a call out of the bullshit idea that there's a relationship (platonic, romantic, sexual) hierarchy, and a satisfying ending.

#### **Content/trigger warnings for ableist language, sex, cisnormative language, birth,**

Rep: The main character's best friend, Evita, is biromantic asexual. Their friend Alice is also bi.

I was nervous about how asexuality was going to be explained, because I've read (or read about) too many books, especially popular/hyped YA, explaining asexuality as not having a desire for sex and/or having the ace character start the book adamantly not wanting/enjoying sex and ending it having sex solely because it's what their partner wants. Thankfully, sexual attraction is actually mentioned. The difference between asexuality and aromanticism is also mentioned. The asexual character is in love with an allosexual guy who she couldn't make things work with because she was uncomfortable sex and he wanted to have sex and they could never get on the same page, so they ended things and remain friends. Which I think is a refreshing. It's okay to end things when you can't figure out to make each person fulfilled in the relationship. Compromising and forcing things that aren't natural or comfortable or wanted for the sake of maintaining a relationship (especially where sex is concerned) is not a healthy narrative that should be expressed to teens.

My one big issue with this book is pretty much the same as my big issues with similar books (Moxie and The Nowhere Girls), it's not inclusive enough. I don't mean in the identities of the characters, I mean in the feminism presented in the book. In the two books I mentioned, it's a case of not addressing how different forms of bigotry intersect when someone is marginalized in more than one way. With this book, it's a case of the sex/health education presented not offering information specific to different groups of people. We pretty much get "abstinence-only sex ed is detrimental, especially to girls" and that's it.

That's not to say the main character and the queer character don't address how the sex ed class is allo-cis-heteronormative, or that when the main character's mother is talking about women giving birth she doesn't stop and acknowledge that not everyone who gives birth identifies as a woman. But aside from those few call outs and acknowledgements, the narrative itself is not inclusive of non-binary and trans people (they're never even outright mentioned) when, for example, discussing things that affect those with a uterus; it's a woman thing, then it's a "hey not everyone who gives birth identifies as a woman" footnote, then it's back to a woman thing. There was a perfect set up when the love interest makes a joke about how he was brought up around so many women that his cycle syncs up with their's. The main character's mother is all "don't joke about menstruation, because men have used it for centuries to discredit women and their emotions. But no one mentions how men having a cycle isn't the funny "haha omg what a silly idea" joke people think it is, because some men do in fact menstruate.

The only forms of sex that are mentioned are penis-in-vagina and oral sex. Very briefly, one girl asks about protection during oral sex with her girlfriend, but that's about as much airtime non-m/f sex specifically gets. Queer characters don't have any dialogue about how certain sex/health narratives affect them specifically as queer people, or what information should be offered to include them in the conversation. The main character mentions a bunch of times that virginity is a social/patriarchal construct and doesn't equal purity, but that's never explored or discussed beyond those single comments. No one has a dialogue about the affects the specific "virginity is purity" narrative has had on them and their experiences. The main character also has

literally one thought about how the "virginity is purity" narrative affects survivors of sexual abuse, but again, we don't see any conversations about that specifically. All these things are brought up in a "this class isn't inclusive to queer kids, this narrative is harmful, this narrative could really harm this one group" way, but never truly talked about through discussions about (or preferably, from) the people being negatively affected, beyond a repeated "abstinence-only narrative made me ashamed of sex and my body and embarrassed to ask questions and learn about safe sex, and that leads to unplanned pregnancies and STIs" narrative.

Don't get me wrong, there is a lot of important things talked about in this book in regard to sex, protection, health, consent. (This might be the second book I've read that mentions dental dams, and the only one where a character not only talks about peeing after sex to prevent infection, but is actually shown doing so.) But having the characters call out the harmful affects of a non-inclusive, abstinence-only sex/health class, without actually diving completely into those harmful affects for all different kinds of people is ironic. Similar to Moxie and The Nowhere Girls, this is a very introductory, surface-level, not-as-intersectional-as-it-should-be take on feminist sex/health education.

#### Other Notes:

- The main character is a little annoying/hypocritical/judgmental sometimes. She's outraged that pregnant teens would feel so ashamed and embarrassed and unsupported that they drop out of school, but her instinctual response to being asked if she's pregnant is a defensive "no!", it's as if she supports pregnant teens, but doesn't want people to think she's one of them. She gets embarrassed whenever her mother talks feminism around her friends, which is weird considering she does the same thing. She never lets us forget that she's never been kissed. She gets all "how do they not know this?!" about girls who ask her things about sex/health, which I find extremely horrible. She's supposed to be a safe, reliable source of support and information for people who have been shamed into silence and ignorance. Yet, she doesn't seem to grasp that it's not their fault for not knowing, because not everyone has family who talks to them about that stuff, or a school that teaches them about that stuff, and that not everything you read online is factual.
- The main character's mother is sometimes lowkey portrayed as an annoying feminist who can't take a joke or is always "on". When she's watching tv, she'll call out this or that, and she corrects people when they say something unfeminist, and I find that extremely relatable. It's shitty that it's portrayed as something annoying or negative. The things she says and they way she reacts to things is pretty much the same way I do. I'm no stranger to ranting about sexist comments on TV shows or giving mini lectures when someone says something well-meaning, but ignorant.
- A 17 year old having a maybe possible hook up with a 20 year old is never addressed, aside from the 17 year old making a nonplussed comment about how the guy was probably too old for her. That's another aspect to sex ed that should be addressed; age. Generally, no one of college age needs to be getting involved in with someone in high school.
- Along with a lack of discussion about age regarding sex/consent, I feel like explicitly talking about how much/little and when/if people have sex should be addressed as a personal choices that are okay and shouldn't be judged. If someone has a little, lots, or no sex, valid. If someone has sex before or only after marriage, valid. If someone has sex in high school or after high school/college, valid. It's a similar message to the main character saying that people shouldn't be ashamed to talk about their sex lives, but that not wanting to share those details with people is a personal choice that is okay and should be respected.
- The main character's best friend kept telling her that she "*should practice what she preaches*" because she's a virgin giving out sex information. Yes, the main character does in fact want to have sex. But this pushy friend trope, along with the idea that one can't be informed/inform others about sex unless they have it, is just not it.
- The love interest saying building fires and camping are the only manly things he does and it not being corrected to "stereotypically manly" because I guess you can address all kinds of anti-feminist things, but addressing gender roles and toxic masculinity isn't one of them.

- "Consent is sexy" no, it's a fucking necessity.
- The term "politically correct"

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### **Samantha (WLABB) says**

This book is a bunch of different things. It's a story of friendship and first love, as well as a tale of taking a stand and coming-of-age, and I pretty much loved it all.

Lacey followed the rules and tried to fly under the radar. She was known to accept the circumstances and go with the flow, but she was willing to fight for the right to a comprehensive sexual health education for her peers.

I am big believer in knowledge as power, and loved that Lacey was so passionate about educating herself and others on a topic, which people often shy away from. She was raised to embrace her body and sexuality and to explore it in healthy ways, and though she had zero experience, she was very knowledgeable in matters of sexual and reproductive health. I liked that there was a lot of good information in the book regarding STIs and protection, but the emotional side of sex and consent were also addressed. So, applause for that.

Aside from this book being very sex-positive, it was also about Lacey navigating her friendship, her feelings, and her future. Her reactions to all the changes happening in her life were very authentic, and though she stumbled a little, Lacey made good choices for herself.

Loved these things:

- BFFs - This friendship was not without its complications, but they were an awesome group, and they literally made beautiful music together.
- Present adults - Both Lacey and Evita had fabulous and supportive moms. It was easy to see why they loved and admired them so much.
- An adorable romance - This was a little messy for me, but I still couldn't help but get onboard with it. They were good together, and you know, I love soft boys.
- Music, lots and lots of music.

Overall: A fun and bold story, which teen me would have welcomed with open arms.

\*ARC provided in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Rachel Solomon says**

Official blurb: "I've been waiting for a long time for a YA like this! Olivia Hinebaugh's debut is bold, bright, and refreshingly sex positive, with an authentic voice that wouldn't let me go. This is the book I needed at

sixteen."

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### **Nasty Lady MJ says**

To see full review click [here](#).

I just realize this is the first book I'm reviewing for 2019. That's not a good omen considering that I hated this book.

To be fair, as a safe sex manual and an introduction to intersectionality it didn't outright suck, but as an actual book.

Oh yeah, it did.

This book is very informative. I mean, it does go into some of the specifics about how to have safe sex, etc. But as an actual book....

I guess, the closest thing I have to compare it to is Meg Cabot's 2004 Ready or Not (the poor sequel to All American Girl). In that sequel, Meg Cabot not so subtly gave her audience a lecture on safe sex.

Hell, I was sixteen at the time I first read it and a total Cabot fan girl and even I found the book eye roll inducing. Hinebaugh's book is ten times worse than Ready or Not.

That's bad folks really bad.

The message is a good one, but it is just so ham fisted I really can't see the target audiences liking this book. It didn't help that none of the characters or side plots.

The main character's essential characteristic is that she knows all about safe sex. There's nothing else going for her except she's a little whiney and privilege asshole who apparently hates classical music even though she's trying to get in music school.

Honey, just letting you know that Mozart and Haydn you're going to be hearing about them a lot even if you do go to school for just composition. I'm pretty sure Musical History and Music Theory touches on them a lot but hey what do I know just that everybody in my freaking family has a music (either education or performance) degree and my sister went to a fucking conservatory (one of those school's you mock).

Oh yeah, there's some character hatred on the MC. But Lacey is a little insufferable twit who knows all about safe sex because her mom's a nurse I guess...and has terrible taste in boys. Because God, the love interest was attached for most of this book and then quickly got with Lacey and then got into her pants even quicker.

And yeah, I guess they were friends BUT....the relationship doesn't really make sense to me. Maybe it's me but have your characters actually date before they talk about what sort of flavor of condom they want to use.

There's their bff who is suppose to be the asexual rep of the novel. I mean...textbook wise the rep was decent enough. It gives a good introduction into what asexuality is, BUT I really felt like it was simply

rushed to give the book diversity points. God, I hate saying that. But that's what it honestly felt like. I also don't know how good the rep was and I really don't feel comfortable with reviewing it one way or the other. I know will be interested in what asexual readers have to say about this aspect of the book.

The other friend is pregnant which I guess her pregnancy is suppose to be one of the turning points of the novel. Again, she felt mostly like an insert.

God, most of the characters in this book were pretty much inserts to get out the message of this book. Which leads me to this, I fucking hate message books. Much like I hated after school specials when I was young and it's because of one simple reason-they talk down to their audience.

Don't get me wrong, the book had a very good message but there's a way to be less ham fisted about it. Also, I don't think a teenager is going to become the random school sex guru like Lacey it just felt bizarre and off putting.

I am donating this book to my local library. I have mixed feelings about it. On one hand, I am glad that this book is getting out there to a very conservative audience. On the other hand, I feel bad for the person reading this bland book. Other than the decent message, there's nothing appealing about this one. I could rant about it more, but I really don't feel like it.

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### **Lorrea - WhatChaReadin'? says**

Lacey Burke is a senior in high school. She plays the viola and is in a band with her best friends Theo and Evita. When her high school takes an abstinence approach to sex education, it's too much for her to handle. She feels her classmates should be educated about options they have when it comes to their sexual health. But Lacey is a virgin and even though she has never had sex herself, her mother has always been open with her about sex. Lacey soon becomes the resident expert on the subject at her high school, but not everyone is so happy about that.

Thank you to NetGalley and Swoon Reads for the opportunity to read and review this book.

When I saw this book I had to read it. As a person who was also taught that abstinence was the only way, I would have liked to have a friend like Lacey Burke in my life. Someone who I could talk to without judgement about what was going on in my sex life. I think that if I did, I might have made different choices in my life.

Lacey really enjoys being in a band with her best friends Theo and Evita who also used to date. When their senior seminar class starts to discuss sex education, she has a different idea of what should be taught and she enlists their help in order to do so. Holding office hours in the girls bathroom during lunch and handing out condoms to classmates, Lacey is determined to make sure everyone in their school can be comfortable talking about sex and not stigmatizing it. When her actions get her in trouble with the administration and may jeopardize her future, her friends and family rally behind her to get things changed in their school.

This is a great YA book that I think most teens will enjoy and get a lot of information from it as well.

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## **Michelle says**

\*\*You can see this full review and more at Book Briefs: <https://bookbriefs.net>\*\*The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me is a young adult contemporary novel by Olivia Hinebaugh. There were a few things I didn't love about this novel, but overall I thought it was still a good read. The good certainly outweighed my few gripes. So let's start with the good. The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me is a novel that is both very educational and was a cute coming of age story. I really enjoyed our main character, Lacey( most of the time). And I loved her friendship with Theo and Evita. Her friend group was my favorite part of the story.

And now for the few things I didn't love. Lacey sometimes came off as a little whiny, which could be aggravating, but then again, one could also say it was pretty age appropriate. She did irk me sometimes, but I appreciated her overall message and journey. Speaking of the message of the novel, I loved that The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me was so informative and had such an educational message worked into the story. However; at times the book came off as a bit too clinical, and not so fictional. But I do love that there were good adult role models in the story, and that The Birds, The Bees, and You and Me encouraged such an open dialogue. That was simply fantastic.

The story itself was funky and fun. I loved how much Olviia Hinebaugh worked music into the story, since it was such a big part of Lacey and her friend's lives. It helped lighten the tone of the story significantly, which really helped to balance out some of the heavier topics explored. Overall, this novel was a good balance of serious and fun. I enjoyed how different it was than so many high school contemporary novels out there.  
This review was originally posted on Book Briefs

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## **Randi says**

I appreciated the message it was going for, but the safe sex information is overbearing and shoved into the book so much and so unnaturally that the book is awkward to read. It reads more like an extended brochure on the topic than as an actual book, and there is so little plot and characterization because of it. It's a well-meaning book, but it doesn't quite pull it off.

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