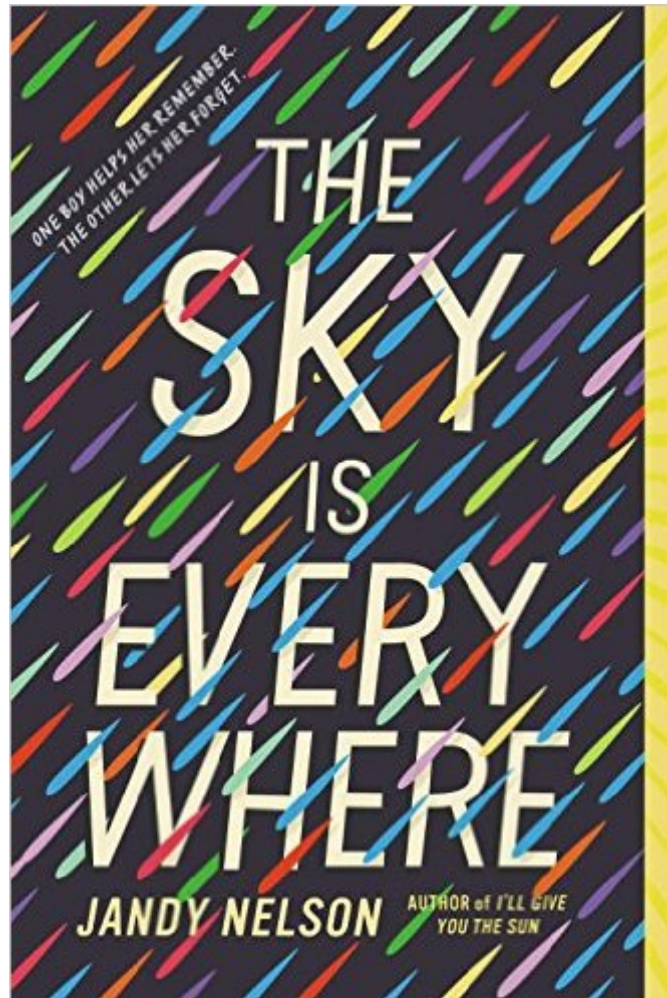


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# The Sky Is Everywhere



## Synopsis

Adrift after her sister Bailey's sudden death, Lennie finds herself torn between quiet, seductive Toby "Bailey's boyfriend who shares her grief" and Joe, the new boy in town who bursts with life and musical genius. Each offers Lennie something she desperately needs... though she knows if the two of them collide her whole world will explode. Join Lennie on this heartbreaking and hilarious journey of profound sorrow and mad love, as she makes colossal mistakes and colossal discoveries, as she traipses through band rooms and forest bedrooms and ultimately right into your heart. As much a celebration of love as a poignant portrait of loss, Lennie's struggle to sort her own melody out of the noise around her is always honest, often uproarious, and absolutely unforgettable.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gold Star Award Winner! Lennie and Bailey are sisters, best friends, everything to each other. Their mother took off when they were just babies, which Gram has always attributed to the "restless gene" that runs in the family. When Bailey, vivacious and fiery Bailey, dies of a heart arrhythmia while rehearsing for Romeo & Juliet, Lennie is utterly lost. Without Bailey's guidance, smothering affection, and her untameable spirit, Lennie doesn't know what to do. She has always stood at the sidelines, content to catch just a few rays of Bailey's endless radiance. Though Lennie can't help but wallow in her grief, the rest of the world carries on, and ultimately, so must she. On her first day back to school she meets the most enchanting boy on earth - fabulously multi-talented musician, Joey Fontaine. Complicating the situation is Bailey's boyfriend, Toby, who turns to Lennie for

comfort. In sharing their despair, seeds of attraction manifest and Lennie must struggle to sort through a tumult of emotions roaring inside her. Forced to come out of her shell, Lennie starts to see how absolutely beautiful yet wondrously confusing life can be. In her contemplation of life and death, Lennie must completely reconsider what it means to truly live. For the first time in her life, Lennie is all alone - center stage. Whether she is ready or not, it is time for her solo. Jandy Nelson's debut novel is a heart-wrenching tale of love and forgiveness that will make you laugh and cry all in the same sentence. *THE SKY IS EVERYWHERE* ties themes of wanderlust, betrayal, and forgiveness in a love story more complex than most young adult authors dare to concoct. Reviewed by: Amber Gibson

I'm pretty sure I originally became aware of Jandy Nelson's debut novel *THE SKY IS EVERYWHERE* when my trusty fellow Team Gale-er Adele of Persnickety Snark reviewed it last month. As she frequently does, Adele made me want to read the book right away by stating, "The Sky is Everywhere is an all encompassing study of grief, the strength of a sisterly bond, the power of attraction and love and ultimately the importance of being true to one's self." I got a good vibe and immediately noted down the release date and put it on my TBR list. Then I was fortunate enough to win an ARC from the publisher in one of those awesome blink-and-you'll-miss-it Twitter giveaways. Thanks so much, Penguin tweeps! I blew through it in two short sessions and have been thinking about it on and off ever since. Lennie Walker's life is a little unorthodox. Raised, along with her big sister Bailey, by her highly eccentric grandmother and uncle after her mother hit the road and didn't look back, Lennie's life has been pretty good all things considered. If a bit outside the box. Her grandmother tends a garden like unto the one in Eden, paints willowy green ladies on every available surface of their house, and believes one of her house plants is mystically linked to Lennie. When it sickens, Lennie sickens. When it thrives, she thrives. Her Uncle Big is the town lothario. Five failed marriages down and counting, he has a voice like God's, a marijuana habit, and a strange obsession with raising the dead. The insect dead, to be exact. But when Baily suddenly dies, Lennie's life is thrown off the tracks and she finds herself unable to cope without her larger-than-life sister's lead to follow. Bailey's boyfriend Toby is in a similar situation and the two of them find themselves drawn to each other for that new and unhappy bond they share. Even though they didn't really have much use for each other before. Bailey was the one thing they had in common and now they cling to each other as a means of not losing her completely. When she returns to school and band practice and her best friend Sarah, Lennie still fails to deal with life as it is now. And then Joe Fontaine comes into her life. Gorgeous, dorky, perpetually smiling Joe with his

questions and his wanting to know. Why she climbs trees at lunchtime, why she plays the clarinet like a virtuoso yet determinedly sits second chair, and most of all why she's so sad. Starting out I wasn't so sure. It's hard to get a grip on Lennie and her past right off the bat. And when things start escalating between her and Toby you do begin to wonder about this girl and whether or not she's going to fall all over herself throughout the novel and whether or not you'll be able to watch the train wreck. But then Jandy Nelson's lovely writing steps in and gracefully does away with your fears. And how could I not sympathize with a fellow clarinet player? I was the cliché band geek myself. And even though I got out before hitting high school (and marching band), I have always had a soft spot for my band geek clarinet girl counterparts in literature. That's part of why I enjoyed Lauren in Bloom so much. But Lennie's up against a whole mess of challenges I never faced. Like suddenly having the hots for my dead sister's boyfriend. And having him reciprocate in a seriously unhealthy way. But Nelson's almost rhythmic writing carries the reader through on a swirl of high notes and low and I sympathized with Lennie on so many levels by the time the song wound to a close. The zany characters and surprising humor sprinkled throughout the story played just the right counterpoint to the dirge of grief and regret that threaten to drown Lennie. With every fragment of memory she scrawled down on scraps of paper and the sides of coffee cups, my heart hurt for her. And with every encounter with the book's great lifesaver--Joe Fontaine--and her extremely likable grandmother and uncle, I wanted her to make it more. A favorite passage (one of many):--I find Gram, who is twirling around the living room with her sage wand like an overgrown fairy. I tell her that I'm sorry, but I don't feel well and need to go upstairs. She stops mid-whirl. I know she senses trouble, but she says, "Okay, sweet pea." I apologize to everyone and say good night as nonchalantly as possible. Joe follows me out of the room, and I decide it might be time to join a convent, just cloister up with the Sisters for awhile. He touches my shoulder and I turn around to face him. "I hope what I said in the woods didn't freak you out or something . . . hope that's not why you're crashing . . .""No, no." His eyes are wide with worry. I add, "It made me pretty happy, actually." Which of course is true except for the slight problem that immediately after hearing his declaration, I made a date with my dead sister's boyfriend to do God knows what! "Good." He brushes his thumb on my cheek, and again his tenderness startles me. "Because I'm going crazy, Lennie." Bat. Bat. Bat. And just like that, I'm going crazy too because I'm thinking Joe Fontaine is about to kiss me. Finally. Forget the convent. Let's get this out of the way: My previously nonexistent floozy-factor is blowing right off the charts. "I didn't know you knew my name," I say. "So much you don't know about me, Lennie." He smiles and takes his index finger and presses it to my lips, leaves it there until my heart lands on Jupiter: three seconds, then removes it, turns around, and heads

back into the living room. Whoa--well, that was either the dorkiest or sexiest moment of my life, and I'm voting for sexy on account of my standing here dumbstruck and giddy, wondering if he did kiss me after all. I am totally out of control. I do not think this is how normal people mourn.--Geez, I love that last line. It's so pregnant with everything that's going on in that girl. A moving and delightful read and recommended for fans of Julia Hoban, Sonya Sones, and Lisa Ann Sandell. A Note: THE SKY IS EVERYWHERE is been compared to Sarah Dessen's novels, but I've noticed several early reviews seem to indicate Dessen fans are not that enthused with the comparison. Whereas those of us who don't seem to connect with Dessen's work find Nelson's book both fresh and compelling. There are, of course, exceptions but I'm interested to see if this trend continues or if it's merely conjecture on my part.

Wow...wow, wow, wow...seriously, I just finished this book and I am sitting here wondering how long I should wait before reading it again. The perfect combination of love and heartbreak to the point that I don't know what prevails more, tears of sadness or the achingly sweet remembrance of first love. Lennie has always been the companion pony to her sister Bailey's race horse. When Bailey dies suddenly while rehearsing the lead in Romeo and Juliet, Lennie is thrust into the spotlight. A normally reserved band geek who reads Wuthering Heights like a manifesto, Lennie is not prepared to deal with her grief. One of the many great things about this book is that in each chapter we get to read a poem of remembrance that Lennie has written about a Baily. A genius way to show us how close they were considering Baily has just died as the story begins. Lennie hides these little gems all over town as she is working through her grief. Through out the story we find out why Lennie and Baily were living with Grams and their uncle Big. The mystery of why their mother left and how that has affected the entire family is just another deep and meaningful part of this story. Lennie's connections to both Toby and Joe are both so heart wrenching realistic that I found myself smiling and laughing through the entire book! Arghhh it's just so good! Sometimes I swear I have a harder time writing about books that I truly loved because I don't even know where to start and what to write down so that you can really understand how great I think it is without giving too much away! A truly beautiful, life-affirming story that will make you laugh, cry and leave you smiling :) I loved it! Best suited for 14 and up due to sexual references and minimal drug and alcohol use.

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