

Discussion Time: How Do Reviews Influence Our Own Opinions and is it a Good Thing?



MARCH 2, 2018 ~ BETH (READING EVERY NIGHT)

One of the amazing things about reviews is that they can lead you to books you may never have picked up otherwise. The Bone Season series, the Percy Jackson books, Bone Gap. What those books all have in common is that they are stories I love, but ones I doubt I would have picked up had it not been for the reviews I saw on WordPress.

It also works the other way around. There have been books I've added to my to-read list that have quickly been taken off again when I saw one too many negative reviews. However, and I've said this before a few times, we all have different tastes in books so why do we trust others people's opinions on books so much without trying giving it a chance ourselves.



How Do Reviews Influence Our Own Opinions and is it a Good Thing?

There's always something that draws us to a book in the first place, normally the cover because it's the first thing we see. Even in the case of the three books/series I mentioned at the beginning of this post there was something that led to me clicking on the review in an attempt to discover more about them. After the cover grabs our attention we read the blurb, and once we've done that we have a pretty good idea of whether the book in question sounds like something we'd enjoy or not. So why does the star rating, someone else's review and more importantly someone else's opinion, sway us.

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In the case of good reviews it could be the hype, everyone loves the book so naturally you get a little swept away by it as well. But in the case of bad reviews, when maybe the reason the reviewer knocked off stars because they couldn't connect with the main character or they didn't feel the development was well done or the world building was weak, why do we feel the same.

I'm very swayed by negative reviews, to the point where I have removed books from my to-read list because the Goodreads rating was too low or because a blogger whose opinion I trust gave it a negative review. It's got to the point where I tend to avoid negative reviews because I found they ended up influencing my opinion a little too much. Our reading tastes are our own, and no two people are ever going to enjoy exactly the same books in exactly the same way. While there have been books I haven't enjoyed that the majority haven't enjoyed as well – Stealing Snow for example – and there have been books I've loved that the majority have loved as well – A Darker Shade of Magic – that doesn't mean there aren't people who loved Stealing Snow and people who hated A Darker Shade of Magic.



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There is probably never going to be a book out there with a perfect five star rating on Goodreads, a book you will never find a negative review for because everyone in the world has read it and loves it. I am aware there are probably some books out there I would really love that I haven't picked up, and probably won't pick up, because of the bad reviews they have, but I'm still very much influenced by what the negative reviews have to say.

What's the opposite of hype? Controversy, and I don't mean the kind of controversy you could say Angie Thomas had for writing a book that brought light to the Black Lives Matter movement with *The Hate U Give*. I mean the kind of controversy both *Carve the Mark* and *The Black Witch* have. Now I haven't read these books, all I can say about them is what I've heard from other people's reviews, but as well as the bad reviews I've seen a handful of good reviews from people who read one of these books and really enjoyed them.



I said before we all have our own opinion on books and that includes this as well, what one person may see as controversial another may not pick up on. A Court of Wings and Ruin was another book that had a little controversy surrounding it. There were some comments made about how parts of the story were acephobic. I've read some good reviews that explain why, and go into more detail about it than I will in this post, however when I was reading I didn't notice that. Again I'm not saying that parts of ACOWAR weren't acephobic, or that people shouldn't take them that way, just that this is my opinion on a book I've read.

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I'm not saying we should all run out a buy a copy of these books, but maybe if the blurb interests you then trust your gut and give it go, despite what the reviews say. When it comes to reading I know what I like, better than anyone else, because I've lived with my reading taste all my life, so maybe I should start trusting myself more.

Now Onto the Discussion Part of This Post:

Do you find yourself easily swayed by bad reviews? Have you ever removed a book from your to-read list because of all the negative reviews you saw?

Are there any books out there that the majority seemed to hate but you really enjoyed, or alternatively are there any books out there the majority love that you hated?


Why do you think reviews, either negative or positive ones, have so much sway over our own opinions?

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When it comes to books do you think it's better to trust your gut and the blurb or trust the reviews?

Let me know in the comments below.

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POSTED IN DISCUSSION TIME

ANGIE THOMAS DANIELLE PAIGE DISCUSSION TIME HOW DO REVIEWS INFLUENCE OUR OWN
OPINIONS AND IS IT A GOOD THING LAURA RUBY LAURIE FOREST RICK RIORDAN SAMANTHA
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5. [May @ Forever and Everly](#)

SAYS:

MARCH 14, 2018 AT 6:26 PM

God, I love this discussion, Beth! I know that reviews are always a huge influence on what I think about books — trusted reviewers not liking books I liked can make me doubt what I thought, or I can be influenced on whether or not to pick up a book based on other reviews. I think that another huge thing with reviews for me is that I rarely buy books, so when I do, I read lots of reviews to make sure that I will end up loving (or at least liking) the book!

I think that I put too much trust in reviews, though. While they can open my eyes to issues I never saw, I feel like I'm easily swayed into thinking one way (which is a sign of a good review, I guess!).

Great post, Beth! ❤️

Reply

1. [Beth \(Reading Every Night\)](#)

SAYS:

MARCH 14, 2018 AT 8:42 PM

Oh thanks so much May! 😊 Yeah I think we all have bloggers we trust whose opinions make us question certain books, and don't get me wrong sometimes that can be a good thing because there are only so many books we can add to our TBR list right? Also I completely get that, books are so expensive we need to make sure we're buying ones we're going to enjoy.

I think that's a sign of a good review, and it's great they're opening your eyes to issues as well (they do the same for me) but at the same time there's something to be said for our own instincts as well as other people's opinions.

Thanks so much! 😊 ❤️

Reply

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6. **RiannaPriest**

SAYS:

MARCH 7, 2018 AT 12:13 AM

You brought up a lot of very valid points here, all of which I agree with. In the past I had found myself avoiding reading books because all of the reviews I had seen were bad. However, I've made an effort in the recent months to take it all with a grain of salt. I'll read multiple reviews about a book as well as their blurbs before I decide whether or not it's something I'm interested in reading.

I think that it's a mix of both when deciding whether or not a book is something to add to my TBR list. Reading the blurbs and following my gut instinct has found me a lot of my favorite books, but it has also led me to some not so favorable titles. The same goes for reviews. I've read reviews that make some books seem absolutely amazing and then when I go to read the book myself I'm not impressed.

As to why people are so easily swayed by reviews — people as a whole, I've noticed, want to be able to relate to one another. So we'll eagerly pick up a book someone else has read if they say they loved it because a) we also want to love it and b) we want to be able to share in that feeling with the person.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 8, 2018 AT 6:30 PM

Thanks so much, and that's good to hear as well. 😊 Yeah I've done that a time or two as well. In fact I used to strike books off my TBR list if I saw a review that mentioned there was a love triangle in them. That's a good way to get a decent idea of what a books really like, and probably to avoid disappointment if all the reviews are more negative than not.

I think I need to trust my gut instinct more, when I think back to my favourite books the most recent ones I discovered thanks to reviews more than whim purchases.

I've never thought about it from that angle before, but I love being able to connect with people

over books and share their feelings of a certain title. I guess loving and not loving the same books as them is a good way to make that initial connection especially when we're all blogging and seeing so many positive and negative reviews too. 😊

Reply

7. **Sydney @ Fire and Rain Books**

SAYS:

MARCH 5, 2018 AT 2:21 AM

Great discussion! I find myself very swayed by reviews. Especially hype way, but also when I read reviews after I've read the book. If someone says why they dislike a particular character, and then give a really well argued explanation, I end up disliking them, even if I may have loved them originally. If I thought the writing was amazing, but then read a review where they TRASHED it, I would reread it and find it bad. It's almost as if I end up looking for it in the book. Which isn't the reviewers fault, but it still happens.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 5, 2018 AT 6:04 PM

Thanks so much Sydney. 😊 Yeah even before I started blogging myself I was overly swayed by reviews and other people's opinions, and I have to say since starting blogging that hasn't really changed either. Hype is kind of my own worst enemy, and when it comes to negative reviews I will find I sometimes pick up on the negative aspects more once someone's mentioned them.

No I get what you mean, and all in all reviews are still really important and I'd never want to see them not being written, it's just about trusting your own opinion of books more than others peoples I think. 😊

Reply

1. **Sydney @ Fire and Rain Books**

SAYS:

MARCH 5, 2018 AT 7:47 PM

I have to wait so long after a hyped book before reading because I get scared.

2. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 5, 2018 AT 8:18 PM

I can never wait, I'm wondering if maybe I should try with hyped books because then there's less chance of me being let down right?

3. **Sydney @ Fire and Rain Books**

SAYS:

MARCH 6, 2018 AT 9:29 PM

Yeah and sometimes with hyped books I'm unsure of if I want to read it because of the plot or because it's so hyped. And so waiting helps me decide if it's worth it or not.

4. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 8, 2018 AT 5:51 PM

Based on some of the books I've removed from my TBR list lately I should really start doing the same thing because there are books I think I'm really interested in that I end up being 'meh' about.

8. **Bridget**

SAYS:

MARCH 5, 2018 AT 2:18 AM

You hit the nail on the head with this one. I am also very swayed when it comes to negative reviews.

I actually just read a review that had a 2-3 star rating and it immediately dampened my excitement for a book I had literally just bought. 🙄

But I also don't want people to stop writing negative reviews or for me to stop reading them because I think they're important. I put more stock in negative reviews written by those I trust. It's important that we are able to share our opinions openly and honestly, but – as you said – to understand that they are opinions. Someone can hate a book and I can love it and that is 100% OK!

Aaaaand i don't know where I am going with this comment, but I AGREE! lol 😂

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 5, 2018 AT 6:01 PM

Thanks so much, and yeah it can be hard not to be swayed when when it comes down to it we want to make sure we're only going to pick up books we'll end up loving right? 😊

Oh that's a shame, what book was it? That's happened to me a few times, but maybe if you still read it you'll end up feeling differently.

Yes people definitely shouldn't stop writing negative reviews, or any kind of reviews. I think it's just a matter of realising that just because a few reviewers have the same opinion doesn't mean you will, and going more with gut instinct for certain books. If you think you'll like it chances are you will. After all who knows you better than yourself. 😊

Reply

9. **theorangutanlibrarian**

SAYS:

MARCH 5, 2018 AT 12:07 AM

Such a great discussion! I'm definitely swayed by a lot of negative reviews as well- to be honest, it usually takes me several reviews before I put a book on my tbr for sure, so if I see a few negative reviews, I'll just avoid the book altogether. and I think that goes for a lot of controversial books for me as well (I wasn't into Roth's last series, so I just never put Carve the Mark on my tbr, especially

after all the controversy, I just couldn't be bothered). I think your conclusion to ultimately trust your opinion more is a really good point to leave on- and I think you're entitled to feel however you like about a book.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 5, 2018 AT 5:53 PM

Thanks so much! 😊 Yeah I think when it comes down to it we want to make sure we're only picking up the books we're going to enjoy (it's why we're reading I guess) so negative reviews are always going to stay in our mind and influence us in that way. Oh see I'm the opposite, if I see one glowing review I will automatically and immediately add a book to my TBR list. 😊 I was curious about Carve the Mark I'll admit, because I enjoyed for the most part Roth's first series, but too much time had passed and now I'm not really that interested. Yeah I think instinct and my own opinion is something I need to trust more myself, but it's a work in progress. 😊

Reply

1. **theorangutanlibrarian**

SAYS:

MARCH 5, 2018 AT 11:06 PM

You're welcome! And yeah that's so true! hehe well, there are exceptions, but for the most part I manage to resist 😊 (I've been burned too many times before lol 😊) That's fair enough- I kinda liked it and then went off it (it's not bad, it just wasn't totally my cup of tea, especially by the end) so I just wasn't interested enough in any of her new releases. After everything that's been said about it, I'm really not keen now though. Yeah for sure- I get that! I'm the same!

2. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 6, 2018 AT 6:24 AM

I've been burned before too. It always made me a little more wary because why would I pick up a book I know I'm not gonna love when there are so many books on my TBR list I know I will love. 😊

I have to admit the controversy put me off picking up Carve the Mark straight away, and then I just kind of forgot about it and eventually lost interest, you know how it goes. 😊

3. **theorangutanlibrarian**

SAYS:

MARCH 6, 2018 AT 2:39 PM

Ah I definitely relate.

Yeah that makes sense!

10. **Marie**

SAYS:

MARCH 4, 2018 AT 7:09 PM

Oh this is such a brilliant discussion, Beth, I love it so, so much. I found out that I am so much more influenced by what people thought of a book now, than before I used to blog. I mean, now surrounded by book bloggers, it's hard to close our eyes and ears to all of the recommendations, people shouting about books, loving them, hating them and so on haha. I know I tend to be influenced by bad ratings and by what other people think a lot, especially when they are bloggers I trust a lot, just like you, for instance. I'm also feeling really influenced by hype and when some people just keep on talkin about a book EVERYWHERE, I feel so curious about it, I can't help it. I'm trying to get better though and to not buy into the hype too much, but to think about it and read reviews from trusted bloggers before, in order not to be disappointed 😊

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 4, 2018 AT 8:07 PM

Oh thanks so much Marie! 😊❤️ Yeah I feel the same actually, I mean on one hand it's great because all the positive reviews out there have introduced me to so many amazing books I probably wouldn't have picked up otherwise, but at the same time there are books I have struck off my TBR list which I could have loved because they had too many negative reviews. Oh hype is probably my worst enemy, I get so swept away by it that there are times when I feel like I'm already in love with a book before I've even read it. Yeah there are a few bloggers out there whose opinions I trust, like you, and if they say a book is good I know it will be something I enjoy (the same goes for if they say a book is bad, I learnt that the hard way!)

Reply

11. **Camilla @ Reader in the Attic**

SAYS:

MARCH 4, 2018 AT 4:41 PM

For me it depends. There are reviews that really makes me move away from a bok and other that alight something the reader didn't like, but I, while reading said review, don't feel the same. Or I think that some point aren't fair and that maybe I see the situation in another way.

Plus, I noticed that when one of my trusted reviews didn't like a book... well, it happens that I love it. But not always.

Usually I trust review that point out problematic aspect in depths, so if I already own the book or I chose to read, that can really help to read and review the book under a new prespective.

ACOWAR makes me think. I liked generally the story of the first two books, even if for me they both have big problematics. As an ace I still have to figure out how the acephobic parts, but because I still have to read it. Surerly I will read more critically than ever.

Honestly, I think that it would irritate me a bit to do not find a mention of this aspect in the reivews I read around. Or at least indicate some problems, describe theme and step down a bit if the arguments don't regard the reviews. So this would lead anyway to a postive (or negative if the book is a no) review that still do not downplay some aspects. And I don't think that this could be considered as something like a bad review but more like a dialogue. I don't know if I managed to express what I wanted to say.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 4, 2018 AT 8:01 PM

I get what you mean, and someone else mentioned something like that. That in a review something another reader thought of as a negative aspect may not be a negative aspect for you because it's a trope you'd enjoy reading. Normally if I see plenty of reviews that point out the same negative aspects I steer clear, because I think if that many people have picked it up then I likely would as well.

Yeah sometimes when someone points out the problematic aspects I see a story in a new light and it kind of makes sense all the negative reviews I may have seen a book getting, like a learning experience so I'm aware the next time I come across it in fiction.

When I was reading ACOWAR I didn't pick up on any acephobic parts, but I after finishing it I saw a few reviews and conversations between bloggers that had picked up on it. It seemed to be a controversy around when the book was released but I haven't heard much about it since and I don't seem to see mentions of it in reviews either. I dunno I guess if you're aware of it maybe you'll pick up on it.

Reply

12. **Thriced**

SAYS:

MARCH 4, 2018 AT 4:10 PM

I try my best not to read too deeply into reviews before going into. New book. Sometimes I check goodreads/amazon ratings and it's totally a bad habit I wanna curb. I feel like I am less likely to read something that has less than a 3 star rating and that could be dangerous. Also, I tend to read really hyped up books super late, so that I can let the hype wind down a little and form my own opinion.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 4, 2018 AT 7:35 PM

I get that, there have been a few books I've been put off of because of bad reviews and I have to wonder whether I've missed out on something I could have really enjoyed. I've started avoiding reviews for some books, but I don't want to avoid all reviews because I've discovered some great books that way. Maybe I should just steer clear of negative reviews. 😊

Reply

13. Pingback: #45... 5 Stars! Twitter! Spoiler-Free! Rape! Backlist Blast! + Is the book community TOO influential? – Perspective of a Writer

14. **Lashaan (Bookidote)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 11:50 PM

Fantastic post as always, Beth. I've always found it amazing how reviews out here can easily influence readers in the books they purchase and read. I know that with experience (blogging and reading experience), I've learned to form my own opinion based on the reviews of books from

certain trusted reviewers. The way they express their thoughts on it gives me a pretty good idea of how I might potentially react to those books, but I know I've given some negative-reviewed books a shot because the story, and everything else (cover, author, etc) might have piqued my interest though. There are also some books that I simply will get no matter what people say about it too. Guess everyone's experience is going to play a lot on what they do huh hahah Again, great post, Beth! 😊

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 4, 2018 AT 7:06 PM

Thanks so much Lashaan. 😊 Yeah I'm definitely easily influenced by some reviews out there, especially if they come from reviewers whose opinions I trust. It's why most times I tend to avoid more negative reviews until after I read a book for myself and for my own opinions. I think it's great you do that with books, trusting my own opinion and using the reviews for form my own opinion is something I need to get a little better at myself.

Thanks again Lashaan. 😊

Reply

15. **CJR The Brit**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:48 PM

Great post! I try not to read reviews before I read a book as I want to form my own opinion but I must admit sometimes if I do get a sneaky peek of a negative review, sometimes it spurs me on to read!!!!

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 8:20 PM

Thanks so much! 😊 Yeah that's what I've started doing as well, especially if it's a book I've been really excited about the release of. I want to make sure I'm forming my own opinion and if necessary I can go back and read the reviews, negative and all, after I've read the book! 😊

Reply

1. **CJR The Brit**

SAYS:

MARCH 4, 2018 AT 2:23 PM

Yes to all this ♥

16. **confessionsofayareader**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 5:38 PM

This is a great post. I found myself listening to reviewers on certain books a bit too much earlier, so I try my best to avoid that now. I still skim reviews (both good and bad), but I am usually willing to give the book a try if it sounds interesting to me. I like books that reviewers I adore

don't always like. I agree that everyone is different, so I do my best to make up my mind on my own.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 8:19 PM

Thanks so much! 😊 Yeah in the past negative reviews have helped me avoid disappointment when it comes to certain books but likewise there are some books I will avoid all mention of because I don't want to form an opinion that's more of someone else's than my own.

That's a very good way of looking at things, and I guess you're less likely to miss out on something amazing just because another reviews didn't enjoy it that way as well. 😊

Reply

17. **Sarah**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 5:04 PM

I mostly pay attention to reviews by people I know I have similar tastes with, but I do like to scan goodreads reviews as well. I take most negative reviews with a grain of salt, but they are helpful for helping me avoid books that include specific things that I'd want to avoid. I've had people whose opinions I trust post negative reviews of books that I end up reading anyway, but just with lowered expectations. I don't like reviews that are needlessly tearing a book apart, but I think slightly negative reviews can be warranted to help others know things about the book that may not be evident from the summary.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 8:18 PM

There are a few bloggers out there whose reviews I trust and I know if they enjoyed a book I will as well (same goes for negative reviews too). Yeah overall I do think reviews, be they positive or negative, are more helpful than not. I don't like books that needlessly attack books/ authors/ readers but I haven't seen many of those and nine times out of ten a negative review I've kept in mind has helped me avoid disappointment, which I'm assuming for most reviewers is the whole point of having written them. 😊

Reply

18. **Norrie**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 4:49 PM

just today i removed a book from my tbr because a review said it has romance starting from page 50, and that it remains the main focus

from the synopsis i was not aware of romance, but now that i know, I won't read it because I don't like romance in general, let alone insta love

this is why i find reviews helpful...

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 8:15 PM

Yeah that's definitely a good thing about reviews. There have been books I've put off (I can't remember whether I removed them from my TBR list all together) because they had a love triangle in them and that's a major no-no for me. 😊

Reply

19. **TheBookHamster**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:23 AM

In the past I relied on the cover and description on the back, but my bf was like; you should check the ratings and number of ratings and I've been stuck ever since. I mean, this way it's hard for unknown authors. I could be easily missing out a great book because of this! Then again, I am reading lately more books that bookstagramers or other bloggers started because I feel like I could easier get into discussion with them and hear other people's opinions. Also I tend to be more critical lately so my reviews aren't dashing always, usually a point lower than the rest. But anything above 3, and 3 stars is okay

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 8:11 PM

I used to rely on covers and blurbs, and sometimes I still do but I think blogging has got me in the habit of checking reviews as well. I remember I was at Waterstones and I saw a book with a gorgeous cover and a really interesting blurb as well, but the average rating was low so I put it back, and now I'm wondering whether I've possibly missed out on something amazing by doing that. I guess there's always that risk but there's so much on my TBR list I don't want to waste time on something I won't enjoy when there are so many books out there I know I will love.

I've been more critical in my reviews as well, nothing bad about that. 😊

Reply

20. **Kristen @ Metaphors and Moonlight**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 6:49 AM

Well, I generally know what I like and what I don't. And I'm kinda picky. So sometimes I can read a blurb and instantly know I want a book. But most of the time, I rely on reviews. I try to read lots in order to get a general feel because if 9 out of 10 reviews say the same thing, it's prob safe to say that thing is true, or as true as something in a review can be since it is still opinion. Then again, I find I'm often not a fan of hyped books. I feel like wading through reviews and learning to interpret them to figure out if a book will be right for you or not is an art and takes practice lol. I try not to think of reviews in terms of negative and positive though. For example, a lot of people

hate love triangles, but I love them. So if 10 people rated a book poorly simply because they hate love triangles, I don't really care what the ratings are. So I *am* swayed by reviews, but in the sense that I use them to figure out if a book has the types of things that I like or not 😊

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 8:08 PM

I would like to say I know what I like and what I don't, and while for the most part I do, but there are books out there I've picked up on a whim or because of a recommendation that I didn't think I'd enjoy and they ended up becoming favourites of mine.

That's actually a good point, and someone else commented something like that a little earlier as well. I'm not a massive fan of love triangles so I tend to avoid them in books but I do rant about them sometimes in my reviews so something I didn't enjoy as much may end up being something you love because of that reason.

I guess when it comes down to it I need to look at reviews and see if I can pick out the things I like about books in them, be they positive reviews or negative because the person reviewing doesn't like the same tropes I do.

Reply

21. **April**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 1:25 AM

I don't think I am easily swayed by reviews unless it is from a blogger / reviewer whom I trust and I know shares a similar taste as I do. There are only a couple that I have found so far that may actually cause me to remove a book from my TBR if they thought a book was less desirable.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 8:01 PM

In that case I'm a little jealous of you because I tend to be a little too easily influenced by reviews. Don't get me wrong there are bloggers out there I trust whose opinions hold extra weight for me, but I tend to take the majority as gospel and it's why for some books I will avoid all reviews until I've read it for myself. 😊

Reply

22. **ofmariaantonia**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 1:03 AM

When I go to Goodreads, I skip ALL the 5 Star reviews. I find them basically pointless. Too much gushing.

Instead, I check out the 4 and 3 star reviews. If those people liked the book, then I'm more willing to trust that.

Sometimes I do check the 1 or 2 star reviews which often say something like “This book sucked. DNF after two words.” Those I ignore. If a 1 or 2 star review is well-written and explains WHY the book isn’t worth my time. That might get me to think twice about the book.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 8:00 PM

Hmm, that’s actually something I may try and do myself (I’m thinking about some of my own five-star reviews and yeah there’s a fair amount of gushing in them!)

Maybe looking at the middle ground reviews gives a better idea of a book than the extreme reviews (five star and one star reviews).

Oh yeah, no matter what star rating a reviewer has given there needs to be something more than just “this book is amazing” or “this book sucked” to get me to add or remove something from my TBR list. 😊

Reply

23. **PerfectlyTolerable**

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 11:19 PM

Great post!!!

You said “There is probably never going to be a book out there with a perfect five star rating on Goodreads” and it reminded me of a review I read that the guy said it was his favorite YA book ever and that he loved it but he only gave it 3 stars because he was bothered by the facts that the YA book had a higher rating than most classics. (Random Example: Geekerella has a 4.07 and Frankenstein has a 3.76) It really bugged me that he would do that, but that is an argument for a different time.

I am super impressionable and don’t read reviews before I read the book. I can’t even read reviews until after I have written my own because they will sway my opinion. I have had books that I thought I loved but then I read other reviews and realized that there was actually a lot wrong that I probably should have picked up on. This goes back to what you said “what one person may see as controversial another may not pick up on” My best example is “Paper Princess” I loved this book and ate up the series (or what was released) but then reading other reviews I realized there was borderline rape, and abuse, and a whole host of other problems that were portrayed as sexy and ok. Now I can’t read the rest of the series because it is ruined for me.

I have mixed feelings about this whole topic haha. Its good to read reviews because you don’t want to read books you won’t like, but I am too impressionable and don’t want to know what the book will be about and I don’t want to go in with preconceived ideas.

Anyway 😊 Great post! It really made me think!

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:58 PM

Thanks so much.

Yeah reading is very much subjective, and something I've said loads is that we're never going to love the same books. That is kind of weird, interesting fact about Geekerella and Frankenstein as well. I guess the reason could be something simple as the audience for each book, the people who pick up YA books like Geekerella could be more likely to write a review and rate a book than the people who pick up books like Frankenstein. I dunno, but yeah argument for a different time. 😊

Ah, you must be like me then in that way because I'm super impressionable as well and now I've learnt not to read reviews before picking up the book myself, especially if it's a book I'm really excited for. Oh that's definitely a shame about having a series ruined for you, I'm sure the reviewers never wanted that because I know I wouldn't want someone's favourite series ruined because of something I wrote in my review. I suppose on the other hand though it's kind of a way of opening people's eyes to the controversy, we need to be aware of the bad things in books so we know they're bad things and not really something we want to see in the world.

There are bloggers I trust, whose reviews I will always read, I guess for me it depends on the book in question. Also when it comes down to it I've discovered more books though reviews than I have knocked books off my TBR list for the same reason. 😊

Thanks so much. 😊

Reply

24. **Literary Elephant**

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 11:13 PM

You say, "What one person may see as controversial, another may not pick up on." That's an interesting way to look at it. I don't think that readers should avoid books because they are controversial, and I don't think that the hope in reading a controversial book is to enjoy it by not noticing the controversy. Books that have wrong messages, like Carve the Mark equating darkness with violence and evil, should arguably not be recommended to readers who don't see what's wrong there. But for a reader who can understand that they're reading an example of what NOT to do/write/think/etc, I think there's something to learn from it, in the same way that we can learn something from reading about the terrible things that were done during the Holocaust. It's how we identify problems and correct ourselves, and prevent the future from looking the same as the past.

I think in the end it comes down to the reviews. Vague and unsupported votes of "This is great" or "This is terrible" shouldn't sway a reader, but intelligent reviews that explain WHY and HOW a book does something wrong or right can correctly guide a reader toward what they're looking to read and talk about. There's also a difference between reading a book for personal enjoyment and reading a book to learn something about the world, in which case a "bad" book can be just as informative as a good one. As you said, it depends on the reader's preferences, and we all have different ones.

But isn't the reason we look at reviews of books we haven't read yet that we want to be swayed one way or the other?

I think books are meant to get people talking and thinking, and any book that does that is successful at least in one way (no matter its ratings and reviews), as are discussion posts like this one that keep the conversation going. Thanks for sharing. 😊

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:52 PM

I wouldn't say I've ever voided a book because it's controversial, but I have put books off because of the controversy surrounding them and then enough time has passed that I'm no longer interested in picking them up and I've removed them from my TBR list for that reason more than because of the controversy. Books with wrong messages are kind of hard to define. I know there are a few people out there who have enjoyed Carve the Mark, and in some ways it's possibly a good story as well, but at the same time it's important to be aware of the problems with what certain characters are saying / doing so you're not taking away the wrong message from the story. That's actually a really good important, if we never learn from the bad things in the world there's always that possibility we'll end up repeating them (and there are some things that should never be repeated).

No I agree with you there, I'm rarely swayed by a review that's simply stating how good or bad a book is without offering any evidence, but (and I've said this before) reading is very subjective, and something that annoyed one reviewer that they highlighted as negative may be a positive aspect for another reader.

Nine times out of ten I read for enjoyment, but that's not to say there isn't something I learn from the books I read, The Hate U Give is a good example of that. It also certainly got people talking which was great to see as well.

That's all right, I'm glad you enjoyed this post.

Reply

25. **Briana | Pages Unbound**

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 9:51 PM

I would say that influencing people's opinions is basically the point of a review. Not in the sense that people literally sit down and think "I am going to write a five star review so people buy this" or "I'm going to write a negative review to make sure no one else gives this crummy author a cent of their money," but the natural outcome of saying "I think x about this book for reasons y and z" is that people are going to either decide they agree with you or not. And people read review to have their opinion influenced. I read reviews on Amazon to decide if I want to buy a product, not because I just have some mild curiosity about whether John Smith liked his new shampoo. 😊

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:45 PM

Yeah I get that. When I think about why I write reviews for books I love it's so I can introduce people to a book I loved and hopefully convince them to read it as well so they can love it too, and with negative reviews it's about the opposite in a way. I just find with negative reviews if I tend read the book anyways I pick out things the reviewer mentioned I'm not sure I would have picked out otherwise, and then I start wondering whether I'm really forming my own opinion or being influenced overly by someone else's.

It's possible I'm overthinking this.

It can be hard when there are so many reviews to know which ones to trust, I guess the main thing is to use them as a guide rather than gospel you know? To be open to someone else's opinion but not let it become yours simply because it's someone else's (I really hope that makes some amount of sense). 😊

Reply

26.

Sophie Li

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 9:38 PM

Hello Beth! ❤️

This is such an interesting discussion topic! Reviews definitely sway me. Every time I read a positive review about a book, I want to read it more. And every time I read a negative review, even if the book is already on my TBR, I feel more hesitant about actually picking it up. Sometimes reading just one positive review of a book that really resonates with me, I pick it up and read it right away (that's the mood reader in me haha!)

I think reviews are valuable. The truth is, there are SO many books out there, and well, not all of them are good. Because of the limited amount of time we have, it makes sense to prioritize the books that we think we will like. Although other people's opinions will never be 100% the same as our own, it is a good starting point, isn't it? Before book blogging, I used to pick books by their covers or title (which was not successful haha). Now that I am more in tune with the reading community, I actually end up liking most of the books that I read. And it's all because of Goodreads and book reviews! 😊

So yes! Long story short I love book reviews 😊 Great post!! ❤️

Reply

1.

Beth (Reading Every Night)

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:41 PM

Hi Sophie! 😊 ❤️ Thanks so much and I'm glad you enjoyed this post. I mean don't get me wrong reviews are great when it comes to positive ones because there are so many books I discovered from them, but I put off books with negative reviews and I just wonder whether I'm maybe missing out on something amazing.

Reviews are definitely valuable, there are so many books out there like you said and I have so many on my TBR list I need to make sure I'm reading the ones I'm going to enjoy rather than the ones I'm not, but no two people have exactly the same opinion so something most people have hated may still be one I love you know?

Before book blogging I did the same, and actually even now there are a few books I pick up based on the blurb and cover alone, but there are more books I discovered through the power of reviews and I guess I know which ones (books not reviews) to avoid as well thanks to

negative reviews.

Thanks so much, and yes I love book reviews as well. Thanks to them my TBR has probably tripled since I started blogging! 😊❤️

Reply

1. **Sophie Li**

SAYS:

MARCH 5, 2018 AT 4:27 AM

Haha yes! My TBR has grown so much since blogging (in a good way! Before I always don't know what I should read next, now that is never ever a problem!)

I do agree that people have different opinion on book. Sometimes we don't like the books that have a lot of hype, and sometimes we end up liking books that other bloggers dislike. I guess that's the thing with reviews, right? It's not guaranteed that we will feel the same way about a book as other people do.

I think I don't mind reading negative reviews. Even if I really look forward to reading a book that everyone seems to love, sometimes I read a negative review just to neutralize expectations a bit haha 😊

2. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 5, 2018 AT 6:06 PM

It's definitely grown in a good way for me as well, although I doubt I'll ever see the end of it but that's another problem all together.

Yeah reading is very subjective, we all get different things out of books and sometimes that may mean we end up hating a hyped book or loving a 'bad' one. It's not a guarantee but sometimes it can feel like it. Like if I see a negative review I almost think to myself 'well this person didn't enjoy that book so obviously I won't either' when that may not be the case at all. 😊

3. **Sophie Li**

SAYS:

MARCH 6, 2018 AT 2:43 AM

I think it's not a bad thing to have a never-ending TBR. It just means that we always have something that we want to read (which is great in my opinion 😊)

That's true. We shouldn't be discouraged by one negative review!

4. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 6, 2018 AT 6:30 AM

Yeah and I'd rather a never-ending TBR list than the opposite problem, always struggling to find something to read. 😊

27. **Kat Impossible**

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 9:35 PM

I definitely think I can be influenced by reviews of all kinds, but more so if it was written by a person I trust and share interests with. I often see a bunch of mediocre reviews (meaning the book was mediocre not the style of review-writing hahaha) on Goodreads and I was pretty much able to ignore those, but if there is a lot of controversy OR hype, I tend to stay away from books at least until it has all died down a little. I just feel like the pressure/expectations are too high for those.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:37 PM

I get what you mean, there are a few reviewers out there whose opinions I trust and if they say a book is good it's an automatic add to my to-read list. Yeah mediocre reviews (same description as the one you gave, the book being mediocre not the review) are one thing but the more one-star and two-star reviews I see the more unlikely I am to pick up the book in question.

I tend to be unaware of some of the controversy going around, but when I am aware of it (when it's too huge for me to be unaware of it) I avoid those books as well. I would like to say until the hype dies down but I don't think I've picked up a controversial book so maybe I just plain avoid them. 😊

Reply

1. **Kat Impossible**

SAYS:

MARCH 4, 2018 AT 12:03 PM

I totally get it! And one or two-star-reviews really make me reconsider my decisions as well. Also, I don't think I ever read SUPER controversial books. Mostly, I just really don't even want to deal with that.

2. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 4, 2018 AT 7:16 PM

If there are enough one or two stars you have to think it's just not going to be the book for you (at least that's what I think anyways).

Yeah I get that! 😊

28. **Kristin @ Kristin Kraves Books**

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 9:27 PM

What a great discussion!

I am definitely way more swayed by negative review than I am by positive ones. If I see a lot of negative reviews, or even just a lot of mediocre reviews I will most likely remove it from my TBR! I just do not want to waste my time reading a book when there is a good chance I will not like it. You never know though, maybe those books could have ended up being books I loved!

I have been getting much better about trusting my gut and following my mood so that seems to be helping me choose books that I enjoy!

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:33 PM

Thanks so much Kristin. 😊

Yeah I'm not sure what it is about negative reviews but they tend to hold more sway with me. If I see ten negative reviews for a book and ten positive ones I'm more likely to take note of the negatives ones you know? Same here, there are so many books on my TBR already I want to make sure I'm picking up the ones I love rather than wasting my time on one I won't enjoy. Instinct is something I need to rely on more, I know what books I like so I don't know why I doubt my gut when it comes to my TBR list! 😊

Reply

29. **Jasmine's Reading Blog**

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 9:16 PM

I am swayed by reviews if many of them highlight similar aspects, both positive and negative. I've been reviewing professionally for a book review magazine and I'm always trying to keep in mind that every book is for someone—even if it's one that I really did not find any pleasure in or has some serious messages that I cannot agree with. I also think there's an important difference between having a legitimate reason for disliking a book and hating on a book just because it didn't turn out the way you'd hoped. Both are valid and worthy opinions that might be shared, so I think it's important that the reviewer elaborate to be understood. I think the main problem I have with reviews is shaming or forcing readers into reading a book. There's "if you like this try this" and then there's "if you don't read this idk what you're doing with your life." And for me, if I think there are enough negative reviews to put me off a book, I'll probably skip it because there are just too many books waiting for me to discover them anyway! 😊

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:29 PM

Yeah I guess if you have plenty of reviews saying the same thing you have to keep that in mind that you're going to come across the same issues when you're reading, be they positive or negative ones. I think that's a good thing to keep in mind, there have been books I've read that I've hated but I know other people have loved them so I guess they were more stories for other people than they were for me.

I completely get that. When I'm writing my reviews I try and keep my negative points valid rather than just bitching about a book because it wasn't what I'd hoped. I hate it when reviewers do that, it kind of feels like they're attacking the author or the fans and that's never on. Book shaming is horrible, there's no reason to attack someone because they didn't have the same opinion as you; how boring would life be if we all enjoyed and hated exactly the same

things?

Ha, yeah I have so many books on my TBR list I need to make sure I'm picking up the ones I'll love rather than the ones I won't enjoy as much! 😊

Reply

30.

wonderfilledreads

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 8:42 PM

Great post! I totally agree with you. I'm more of the type of person to pick up a book if the synopsis intrigues me, whether or not I've read negative reviews of it. The only way I let negative reviews sway how I view a book that I'm interested in, is by how quickly I make myself pick it up. When Truthwitch first came out, I was super intrigued by the book but it was getting soooo many mixed reviews so I put off reading it for over a year. But when I finally picked it up, I was in love with the story! I just always know that reviews are only a person's opinions which are subjective. There's a few people that I'm more likely to let sway me one or the other, but that's only because I know we have very similar tastes.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:25 PM

Thanks so much. 😊 I think that's a good way to go because then you're always going to form your own opinion rather than risk missing out on something amazing because of some of the negative reviews a book may have. I was pretty much the opposite way around with Truthwitch, I heard all the mixed reviews so put it off and eventually found I lost interest in it and had to remove it from my TBR list. I'm glad you ended up enjoying it though, just goes to show that a book may have plenty of negative reviews but the overall opinion isn't always our opinion is it?

Yeah there are a few people whose reviews sway me, after a while you tend to find bloggers out there whose opinions are so similar to our own that it's almost like their reviews are our reviews! 😊

Reply

31.

LFBooks

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 8:25 PM

Great post was an interesting read.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:21 PM

Thanks, I'm glad you enjoyed this post! 😊

Reply

32. **Kate @ everywhere and nowhere**

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 8:24 PM

I don't think I have ever removed a book due to it suddenly getting negative reviews, I do tend to look to reviews and won't add a book if the rating isn't great and depending on how it has been reviewed by bloggers that I know have similar tastes. I have fallen through the hole of reading a book that loads of people have said they've loved and then just feeling completely underwhelmed, not hating it but just not seeing the fuss about it. So now I tend to go for a mix of gut feeling and blurb and consider the rating from others 😊

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:21 PM

Yeah there have been books I thought looked interesting because of the cover, sounded interesting because of the blurb, but because of the overall low rating never got added to my TBR list. There are a few bloggers out there whose opinions I wholly trust and if they say a book is good it's an automatic add to my to-read list no matter what the other reviews have said (I've also learnt the hard way when one of them says a book isn't as good to take their word for it rather than giving it a go anyways).

I think gut feel is a good thing to go by as well. When it comes down to it we know what books we like and what ones we don't, so there's something to be said for going by our instincts. 😊

Reply

33. **Dorine**

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 8:22 PM

This was really interesting to read! I don't get swayed by bad reviews as I always read a couple of reviews before I decide to get rid of a book on my tbr. My tip, always read Goodreads reviews of 5 stars and after that one of 3 stars and one of 1/2 stars. From those opinions, I form my own opinion. What points do I think of as important? It really helps 😊

For example, not long ago I've read a 2-star rating of a book I wanted to read, mostly because they found it boring and too character driven. I LOVE character driven books, so for me that was a positive review.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:18 PM

I'm glad you enjoyed this post, and that's actually a really good tip I am definitely going to keep in mind in the future. When it comes to reading reviews I tend to look at them in the order they appear on Goodreads, so I don't do more than glance at the star rating and am probably reading negative review after negative review which is making me form a negative

opinion overall.

Yeah that would definitely be a positive review. I'm a fan of character driven books too, as long as they're written well that is! 😊

Reply

34. **Melissa Gibbs**

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 8:13 PM

This is a really interesting topic to bring up! With social media, buzz or lack there of really sways how well an author's book does. For instance, I want to buy Sasha Alsborg and Lindsey Cummings books Zenith despite it not being my typical genre because I want to support them – but the reviews are leaving me soo conflicted! Some say its horrible and cheesy, others claim its explosive. I'm still debating, even as a reviewer myself, whether they're tooo influencing! :p

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:16 PM

I'm glad you enjoyed this post then. Yes I get what you mean, I've heard so much about Zenith, it seems like that's been one of the most hyped up books of the year for so many people, but I read it and wasn't blown away. I mean it was a decent book, I didn't hate it as much as some other bloggers have, but I don't think it was deserving of the hype it got. Maybe wait a bit for the hype to die down and then see what you think. I've done that with a few books. 😊

Reply

35. **Lilyn G**

SAYS:

MARCH 2, 2018 AT 8:12 PM

I *frequently* find that I have a negative (or at least 'meh') opinion of books that people seemingly love. To the point I honestly question whether we've read the same book or not.

Reviews do sway me, but only if they give a good reason to the plus or negative. A "I hated it. It sucked. Don't read this" isn't going to make me change my mind. But "I didn't like this because it was full of cliches, stereotypes, etc" just might.

Reply

1. **Beth (Reading Every Night)**

SAYS:

MARCH 3, 2018 AT 7:14 PM

Oh I've done that a couple of times, when so many people have one opinion and you have the opposite you do have to wonder if there's something you've missed in the story, or the other way around.

I tend to find with reviews that say something along the lines with the latter I'm swayed

because when I read the book I find myself picking up those negative aspects more easily than I maybe would have before. But you're right a review that just says the book sucked is unlikely to sway me too.

Reply

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