



# Girl in the Window

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## Girl in the Window Penny Joelson

See the world from another unique perspective in the thrilling new novel from the author of *I Have No Secrets* (a World Book Day title for 2018).

Nothing ever happens on Kasia's street. And Kasia would know, because her illness makes her spend days stuck at home, watching the world from her bedroom window. So when she sees what looks like a kidnapping, she's not sure whether she can believe her own eyes . . . There was a girl in the window opposite - did she see something too? But when Kasia goes to find her she is told the most shocking thing of all. There is no girl. An eye-opening and compulsive page-turner for readers aged 12 and up.

## Girl in the Window Details

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Author : Penny Joelson

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# From Reader Review Girl in the Window for online ebook

## Laura says

This is a remarkable book by an accomplished story-teller, populated by a diverse and engaging cast of secondary characters, and weaving multiple plotlines together to create something truly riveting. It's rare to read a book that so skilfully articulates the reality of chronic illness, whilst losing nothing from the pace of the narrative.

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## Heather Howarth says

I really enjoyed this book - I am the parent of a child with a long term chronic condition and so could sympathise with Kasia's struggle with ME. This leaves her with plenty of opportunity to see what goes on in her neighbourhood. It draws her into meeting and supporting her elderly next door neighbour and to questioning what is going on in the house opposite. She demonstrates that you can have a positive impact whatever your situation.

Kasha seemed very real to me - a typical teenager in so many ways but very adult in others.

The book introduced us to the issue of human trafficking in a low key but effective manner.

A good read which I will be purchasing for my school library.

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## Alice-Elizabeth (marriedtobooks) says

After reading the author's other book I Have No Secrets earlier this year, Girl In The Window caught my eye immediately on NetGalley. After one of my local libraries ordered a copy, I was first in line to borrow it! The main character is fourteen year old Kasia, a Polish girl living in the UK and was a student in secondary school. Sadly, a severe case of tonsillitis changes everything for her and her family. Now living with CFS and ME, Kasia struggles to go outside for long periods of time and stops taking GCSE classes. One day, she notices in a window of a house opposite hers a young girl. Other observations she notes is that this girl is never outside but others who live in that house go out everyday. Kasia decides to solve the mystery and try to hang out with school friends and a guy she has a crush on. The pacing was fast, exciting and interesting. I like Kasia as a character. There are some difficult topics in this read including Child Trafficking. Overall, a good read that left me keen to read Penny's next book!

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## Mary says

I am glad i picked this book up. Its a different book than i usually read but i am grateful that the author has written a hapoy ending instead of leaving it with a cliff hanger or just maybe this will happen at the end like

some books I've read. This is a great story to read, teaches you that no matter what NEVER give up and keep trying. Even doing a little each day will help you in the long end and you'll feel better and happier too. 'You make me realise that many things- even tiny things - can make our lives worthwhile' - Page 277.

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## **16SimpsonL says**

Really good book. I found it exciting from the start to the finish. The characters are relatable in some ways which make the storyline seem more realistic. This is the first book I have read by Penny Joelson, and I want to read more of her books! I highly recommend this book.

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## **Woff says**

Dull characters, dull writing, dull plot.

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## **Emma says**

I love Joelson's thrillers. I actually preferred this to I Have No Secrets - I think that's because there were 2 messages in the book (can't repeat without spoilers) and also the lead character Kasia was really engaging and the whole world around her was built so genuinely. I think this may have been because the protagonist's story was based on Joelson's own life, so it really could be written with such confidence and clarity. If I had one small criticism it was that after the revelation near the end, the end itself dragged on a bit, but aside from that it was a truly amazing book.

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## **Lily says**

A great story, raising awareness of how hard life can be when you have ME and live a mostly housebound (often bedbound) life and also how quiet streets can hold the darkest of secrets, but also the best of friends, The Girl in the Window has so much packed into it for just one short book. Although I found it didn't have as big an impact on me as I Have No Secrets did, I found it a really interesting and well written story of living with ME.

What I really loved about this book was how kind and caring Kasia was. I've been housebound myself for a while with Agoraphobia, so though I don't know how it feels like to have ME, I do know what it's like to be trapped at home and the boredom and the pain of living within four walls that Kasia feels is so very accurate. But despite how small her world has gotten she still reaches out to her neighbour and offers so much kindness to the lonely old woman who lives next door, completely changing the woman's life with a pureness of heart that is so wonderful to see. And of course that's not the only person Kasia reaches out to, there's the mysterious girl in the window....

The mystery of the girl across the street isn't so dramatic as I Have No Secrets. There's no real danger towards Kasia until near the end of the book. Most of the core mystery is just looking out of the window wondering about the girl she catches glimpses of, but this doesn't make it too slow like it would with another

book. I think partly because Kasia's life is slow, really slow. The nature of her illness makes it so that it has to be. And so you fall quickly into Kasia's routine. It adds to the feel of the novel rather than detracts from it.

With this second fantastic book, Penny Joelson is fast becoming a favourite author of mine.

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### **Sarah says**

Loved the diverse cast of characters and the awareness this book will raise about ME. Couldn't put it down until I knew what had happened.

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### **Ghostly Writer says**

This was actually such an interesting novel! I don't usually read mystery books, so this was a change for me. I couldn't stop reading.. I wanted to know the ending!

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### **Karen Barber says**

Thank you NetGalley and publishers for letting me read this early.

Like Joelsen's 'I Have No Secrets' our main character is not someone who is able to fully participate in life. In this instance, our main character has ME and is, for the most part, confined to her bedroom. She watches people from her window and is determined to get well enough to go back to school but this seems a long way off when we see her at the start of the book.

One day she sees a young girl dragged into a car. She calls the police but nobody is reported missing. The girl across the road (who also saw it) doesn't seem to exist. To begin with you weren't quite sure what was going on or what to believe.

Through two voices we watch our main character Kasia living with ME. We see the day-to-day experience, the lack of understanding and the frustration for all around her as one good day can result in a setback. We also get the second voice of the girl opposite, and slowly learn just why she is rarely seen outside.

Girl in the Window raises some timely questions about community, friendships and support for vulnerable people, and does it in a way that is informative and entertaining. The target audience perhaps results in a fairly sanitised look at a truly awful topic, but it certainly introduces the idea to those who may not otherwise have thought about it.

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### **Sophie Walker says**

As someone who has ME, I was initially excited that a character in a book had the same condition as me, this was quickly followed by apprehension. Would this terribly misunderstood condition be done justice? In my opinion, yes. Yes it was. The way I experience the condition is different from how Kasia experiences it but that's ok, ME is a very variable condition both to the person experiencing it and from sufferer to sufferer. But I felt like it was portrayed really well from the delay in symptoms, to the isolation and how some people, even if they mean well, don't understand. Last Christmas I had a friend invite me to the cinema, I replied that I probably wouldn't be well enough, to which my friend replied that it was only sitting and watching a film.

But it isn't just sitting and watching a film, it's the exertion of having to get up, get ready, leave the house, travel to the cinema etc. I find that I'm pretty much wiped out before I even leave the house and usually end up cancelling before I get out of the door. So the whole ordeal of Kasia trying to go to the cinema was incredibly relatable. So was Kasia not being able to go to school and finding it difficult to watch her friends continue their lives while she feels left behind. I'm older than Kasia (I'm 23) but I had to suspend my studies from university (I was doing an MA in Creative Writing but most days I don't have the energy to read or write, \*sobs quietly into a pillow\*) but most of my friends have left uni now and are getting jobs, getting engaged etc, and I'm stuck at home, while my mum helps to look after me. It sucks. But it's also the hand I've been dealt, and much like Kasia at the end of the book, I know that just being positive won't help but if I take care of myself and I start to feel a little better it makes me so much more positive which in turn helps. I also loved the fact that by the end of the book she admits that she knows she might not get fully better and that she may have more relapses in the future and that this is just part of the condition because this is a journey I myself have been on very recently. I told a family member once that I may never get better, they told me I shouldn't be so negative, but I was being realistic. I may never get better. That's a fact I have had to come to terms with, but it doesn't stop me from trying to get better and trying to be positive. So this book gets five stars from me :)

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### **Ramona Parkin says**

Excellent writing for teenagers. I loved this book and recommend it for teenagers. The story is good, and gets you interested immediately with our main protagonist, Kasia.

Kasia has been poorly and off school for some time, she is not happy about this and is desperately wanting to get back to her friends and studies. She knows she is missing out, however, what she does have is time. Time to sit at her window and look out. She sees a lot and what she sees is upsetting her. Kasia wants to get to the bottom of something she has witnessed, but how can she when she can barely leave her room? A good mystery, written carefully by the author makes us one with Kasia in pursuit of her health and solving this mystery.

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### **Sasha says**

Very young-young adult. In essence not a bad thing, but not what I was expecting. Had some problems connecting to the story due to this, even though it was realistically written.

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### **Emer says**

This is very much on the junior end of the YA scale both story and plot-wise; plus the main character, Kasia, is only 14. **But** it packs an emotional punch because Kasia has a chronic illness. She suffers from chronic fatigue syndrome or M.E. and this book is brilliant for its informative representation of a young teenager with a chronic illness.

As someone who developed a longterm chronic illness as a young teenager myself this book truly struck an emotional chord with me. I loved the simplicity of the language used to describe what it's like to be a teenager isolated at home while the rest of her world and friends seemingly pass her by.

If you want to know more about the day to day practicalities of living with a chronic illness then this book will certainly help you empathise with teenagers in that position.

You should also go read this short blog post called The Spoon Theory written by Christine Miserandino as it explains what being fatigued and having limited energy really means for day to day living. I live my life according to The Spoon Theory, prioritising certain small tasks over others and resting up as much as I can before I get to leave the house for any number of excursions that to the majority of people are simple tasks that they don't even give a second thought to.

What I love about 'Girl in the Window' is that it is so clearly written by someone who has experience of a chronic illness; M.E. in this instance. Own voices novels like this are so important in letting the world know that people with invisible illnesses exist. That we are only unknown because our bodies frequently silence us. And the more the greater public know about invisible illness the more that those who are more energetically bodied can fight for us, can fight to help highlight the need for more scientific research in the areas of invisible illnesses.

Invisible illnesses aren't glamorous in the traditional Hollywood glamorising of illnesses. Those of us with them aren't here to inspire people with full health to breathe in the moment, live as if each day is your last while we quietly but in a most dignified manner (probably wrapped up on a beach at sunset) conveniently die around 2/3 of the way through the film or the book to make way for the happy ending for the main characters whom we've shown the real meaning of life to.... Screw that! I deserve my own happy ending thanks. Just cos I'm sick doesn't mean my life is only here as a teaching tool for someone else. I like to think I have lots to offer the world in many other ways.

Invisible illnesses suck.

Being chronically ill sucks.

I have a disease that there isn't a cure for, it greatly limits how I can live my life, prevents me from working....

But it's not really gonna cause me to shuffle off this mortal coil anytime soon so I'm just gonna live for the next bunch of years in a crap-tonne of pain and suffering like I have for the last 2+ decades. And the world at large doesn't really care.

So that's why I like books like 'Girl in the Window'. Anything that shines a light on those of us who live in the shadows goes some way to make me feel less alone. To know that my experience of life isn't the only one out there. Like okay, the side mystery plot was a little predictable but god damn it this book deserves more readers and more praise because of the illness rep.

Read this book.

Support an own voices author.

And make people with life experiences like mine feel that our stories are worth telling and our lives are worth just as much as anyone else's.

*"No one sees me. I am a ghost. I am invisible. Life for me stopped still, one day - when I was not expecting it. Out there, I know that life goes on, that time moves forward, but it does so without me."*

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