



Feeling Sorry for Celia

Jaclyn Moriarty

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A funny, touching, revealing story written entirely in the form of letters, messages, postcards - and bizarre missives. hilariously candid, shows that the roller coaster ride of being a teenager is every bit as fun as we remember--and every bit as harrowing.

Life is pretty complicated for Elizabeth Clarry. Her best friend Celia keeps disappearing, her absent father suddenly reappears, and her communication with her mother consists entirely of wacky notes left on the fridge. On top of everything else, because her English teacher wants to rekindle the "Joy of the Envelope," a Complete and Utter Stranger knows more about Elizabeth than anyone else.

But Elizabeth is on the verge of some major changes. She may lose her best friend, find a wonderful new friend, kiss the sexiest guy alive, and run in a marathon. So much can happen in the time it takes to write a letter...

A #1 bestseller in Australia, this fabulous debut is a funny, touching, revealing story written entirely in the form of letters, messages, postcards - and bizarre missives from imaginary organizations like The Cold Hard Truth Association.

Feeling Sorry for Celia captures, with rare acuity, female friendship and the bonding and parting that occurs as we grow. Jaclyn Moriarty's hilariously candid novel shows that the roller coaster ride of being a teenager is every bit as fun as we remember -- and every bit as harrowing.

Feeling Sorry for Celia Details

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From Reader Review Feeling Sorry for Celia for online ebook

Alyssa Udall says

Dear Reader:

You are probably wondering whether or not you should read *Feeling Sorry for Celia*. I know this about you because you're reading this review of the book, which is supposed to tell you whether or not you should read it. If you think about it, this makes book reviewers pretty arrogant people.

Like I should know you well enough to know if this book is any good for you. Who am I? A complete stranger. Yes, a slightly clever stranger who reads lots of books, but still a stranger.

In my opinion, you shouldn't care so much about the opinions of strangers. I know that you care about the opinions of strangers because you're reading the opinion of a stranger right this second.

See? You're still here. You care.

But in this case, maybe you should care about what people say about this book. Maybe they'll tell you that this is the best book they've ever read. If they do tell you that, you should buy a copy of the book as soon as possible. Or request it at your local library. If you're bored while waiting for the library to get the book for you, you can think about things that are purple. What are some really purple things?

Or maybe they'll say that this book is not worth the time, because they thought it was about the circus when they picked it up. I understand why someone might think that because there is a girl on a tightrope on the cover of the book. But it turns out the book is really just about some people named Elizabeth, Celia, Christina (NOT TINA), the mysterious J_____, and Saxton.

Which is actually kind of boring compared to the circus.

Then there will be some opinions that gently say that the book is readable and slightly entertaining and those are really no help at all, because why else would the book be published if it wasn't at least slightly entertaining, hmm?

I think that with any of these options, you're pretty much screwed, because you can never know what you'll think of the book until you actually read it. But you're not reading the book, are you? You're still reading the strangely written review of the book from a complete stranger, which I've already told you, is pretty much useless.

So go read the book already.

Sincerely,

The Society of Why Book Reviews Are Silly, But Sometimes Helpful, But Sometimes Completely Off-Base, and Why Don't You Just Read The Book Yourself Already?!... Oh Yeah, Because You're Still Reading This Review

Nadja says

Difficult... the first third was a drag.. I was bored most of the time and also very confused about these strange Society and Association letters.. (obviously there here to get us readers more information about Elizabeth's day but it's strange and lazy nonetheless). Luckily it got better with time, enjoyable and also a bit exciting. All in all an okay read but nothing more. I won't continue with the Ashbury/Brookfield pen pal series that's for sure.

Molly says

Raring 4.5

Now I must get my hands on book two ...*sigh* **Aussie** authors are more difficult to find ... and by default the prices are always higher (for what I paid for four **Marchetta**'s books and the two of Ms **Moriarty**, I could have bought twelve books by US or British authors)... *sigh*... but so worth it. Damn it!

Dear Ms Moriarty,

We are pleased to inform you, we loved your book, great work!

Yours truly,

The Association of Happy Readers

P.S

We would be also thrilled to here news regarding a publication date of the third book in the The Colors of Madeline series.

!!!! ELIZABETH!!!! DOWN HERE!!! IN THE REVIEW SPACE!!! ELIZABETH, I WAS DELIGHTED BY YOUR STORY, WITH ALL THE LETTERS AND FAX MESSAGES, IMAGINARY NOTICES BY YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS AND ESPECIALLY YOUR MOM'S POST-IT NOTES. YOUR MOM ROCKS!!!

I'VE ENJOYED EVERY MOMENT OF YOUR STORY!!

YOURS,

READER

P.S.

we really appreciated how you stick it up to that uppity Association Of Teenagers. You Go, Girl!!

This was probably one of those few **YA-contemporary** books that I will remember in the years to come and wonder why I gave only a four star rating.

Books that fit this genre, usually make me scratch my head half-a-year later, trying to remember the story-line no matter how delightful I thought them after reading the last line.

Once in a while I get to read a YA-contemporary that endures the time-test, like books by **Melina Marchetta**, **Vikki Wakefield**, **Courtney Summers**, **Kirsty Eagar** and now **Jaclyn Moriarty**, who won me over with her **Colours of Madeleine** books.

Seriously, who could have thought that a story written entirely like an exchange of correspondence could be such fun? Nothing but mailed letters, postcards, notes slipped in backpacks (anonymously, of course), letters via fax, post-it notes and crazy and bizarre missives from imaginary organizations like *The Association of Teenagers*, *The Best Friends Club*, *The Society of Amateur Detectives*, *The Young Romance Society*, *The Cold Hard Truth Association*, etc.

Feeling Sorry for Celia was joy to read.

....and no love-triangle!!

Amy says

I did not expect to love this novel as much as I did. Jaclyn Moriarty is officially one of my favorite authors. I couldn't put *Feeling Sorry for Celia* down. I loved the characters and the epistolary style. I loved the slightly dramatic yet honest plot that kept me guessing. I loved how it was funny yet ever so serious.

I really loved Elizabeth and her relationship with Christina. Lets face it, I love any wacky, long distance(ish) friendship done right. Its basically the story of my life.

The story follows Elizabeth, but not in the usual way. It follows her through notes between Elizabeth and her mother, letters with her pen-pal, post cards from her best friend, and letters from her subconscious? brain? self-esteem? Whatever you call them, they were the most brilliant part of the novel. They showed Elizabeth at her most vulnerable and expressed the character change without bogging the reader down in endless self-analysis. A very clever style.

The book handles some serious problems. Divorced parents, changing friendships, and boy issues being only a few. Yet all these issues are handled with a funny, wry style that kept the story bitter-sweet instead of just plain depressing. I love all the quirky characters - hippie moms and anonymous admirers, awkward fathers and boy-obsessed cousins.

Overall, a PG13 storyline (one of the characters has sex with her boyfriend*) and probably not the story for everyone, but it was one I enjoyed.

*Normally, teenage sex would be an automatic negative one star while I drag out my soap box and rant about the standards for novels these days. However, in this case, while it wasn't necessarily handled perfectly, it was okay. The character's panic and frustration actually brought some balance. I didn't feel it was glorified here. Or even maybe the "expected norm." But it would be interesting to know what others think.

Michelle says

As the title suggests, Elizabeth Clarry is truly worried about her best friend Celia. The pair have been inseparable ever since they were tiny but lately Celia has been acting strange - even for the unpredictable Celia. She's run away (again) and Elizabeth doesn't know who to confess her fears to: not her mom, who stays busy with work and only communicates with Elizabeth through post-its on the fridge (albeit hilarious post-its); not her father who has suddenly reappeared in her life and who would like nothing more than to take her to fancy restaurants and talk about fancy wine (ugh); and not Celia's mom, who can only think of Celia's habit of escaping as a beautiful form of youthful expression.

It's not until Mr. Botherit, Elizabeth's brilliant English teacher, sponsors a letter writing project called "The Joy of the Envelope" between his students and the local public school that Elizabeth finds herself detailing her worries to a complete and utter stranger, Christina. Beginning somewhat hesitantly, Elizabeth and Christina slowly forge an unusual friendship solely based on the written word yet one that expands to help each other through a multitude of joys and heartaches.

Frequently, their letters are interrupted by missives to Elizabeth from The Association of Teenagers, The Best Friends Club, THE COLD HARD TRUTH ASSOCIATION, and The Society of High School Runners Who Aren't Very Good at Long-Distance Running but Would Be if They Just Trained. With the subtlety of a sledgehammer, these witty letters add humor and levity to the constant niggle teenage self-doubt ever present in the girls' letters.

I'll say it again: Jaclyn Moriarty's books are made of win. I love that they written completely as letters. I love that even while they manage to be laugh-out-loud funny, they still capture all the heartbreak and all the turmoil inherent in their ever-changing teenage friendships. Elizabeth's voice comes across so fluidly in *Feeling Sorry for Celia*. I felt myself responding to every poignant or exultant letter in kind. Love, love these books.

Jenna says

Dear Reader,

This review also appears on Reading with Jenna.

Despite what the title suggests, this book is not about Celia. This novel follows the life of Elizabeth Clarry, a 15 year old high school student from Sydney. Her mother is a bit flighty and neglectful, her father who left her mother before Elizabeth was born has now moved back to Sydney from Toronto, and her best and only friend, Celia, has gone missing. Her high school starts a pen pal system with a nearby school and Elizabeth develops a new friendship with her pen pal, Christina.

Feeling Sorry for Celia is very much a slice-of-life kind of novel, written entirely in epistolary form. It not only includes letters between Elizabeth and Christina, but also little notes between Liz and her mother and terrifyingly mean letters from random associations like the Society of People who are Definitely Going to Fail High School, COLD HARD TRUTH ASSOCIATION, Housewives of the World United, The Society of High School Runners Who Aren't Very Good at Long Distance Running but Would be if they Just Trained, The Association of Teenagers, etc. These letters from the random societies are most likely just random

thoughts in Elizabeth's head but they were incredibly insightful and funny to read. I really enjoyed that this book was written in epistolary form because it allowed us to get to know Elizabeth's personality and to enjoy her humour. It felt intimate and I was completely drawn into her life and all the chaos around her, despite the book being more of a slice-of-life, everyday kind of story.

I thought the characters in this book were quirky and interesting, but they never came across as too quirky. While some of the characters behaved in drastic and unusual ways, the format of the book made everything seem lighthearted and just right. The book had a great balance of humour, solemnity, heartbreak and optimism, which made it just a pleasure to read. I never felt the chaos or the burden of all of Elizabeth's problems and it was just a joy to be able to see into Elizabeth's life and follow her as she discovers different aspects of herself. I thought it was a wonderful coming-of-age story that most young adults will be able to relate to or connect with. It's a story about friendship and what it means to be a friend, but it's also a story about how to be your best self even when faced with problems that you don't want anything to do with. It has the beautiful writing that I've come to associate with Jaclyn Moriarty, after having read *A Corner of White* and *The Cracks in the Kingdom* a couple weeks ago.

If you're looking for a funny book with a cast of very funny characters, I'd highly recommend this one. It was a very quick read because of the epistolary format and it's impossible not to love Elizabeth, her mother and Elizabeth's secret admirer who is sorrybutnotsorry about remaining anonymous.

Kind regards,

The Society of This Review is Really Short and Unstructured but it's Currently Really Hot in Sydney and I Have Lost the Ability to Think and Write but You Should Read This Book or Any Book by Jaclyn Moriarty.

Shelley says

4.5 stars, really. I have no idea where I got the rec for this book, but I have such mad love for it. It's written in the snarky smart tone I associate with fanfic and love so much. It's completely epistolary - Elizabeth is mainly writing notes to her mother via the fridge and letters to a penpal at a neighborhood school, and receiving letters from the same and also from such (mental) organizations as "The Association of Teenagers" (who firmly believe she has no right to call herself a teen and must hide away until school is done), "The Secret and Mysterious Association of all that is Secret and Mysterious" (when she starts getting anonymous notes), etc. Her mother is my favorite of the note writers and I just adore her. The story of her brother and father is kind of overdone and one of the reasons why it's getting less than a 5. Celia is just slightly ridiculous, as well, but still very interesting. Anyway, I still loved it.

Flannery says

HERE IS A REVIEW!!!! RIGHT HERE ON YOUR COMPUTER SCREEN!!!

Like the other Jaclyn Moriarty book I read recently (*Finding Cassie Crazy*), this is written in epistolary format and includes letters, the backs of postcards, and random notes. The notes from Elizabeth's mother were probably my favorite bits as they all started in a similar way to how I started this review (HERE IS A NOTE!!! RIGHT NEXT TO THE REFRIGERATOR!!!) and her mother would give her topics to think on

and/or discuss—what she thinks of purple nail polish, what a catchy slogan could be for a product, or thoughts on socks. (I have a lot of thoughts on socks and have, on numerous occasions, been accused (rightly) of stealing socks from my roommates. I practice the old “sibling rule” that if you leave it in my room, it becomes mine.) Liz’s mother cracked me up--“I hope you feel better today. Please ring me at work if you are dead.”

Because I read one other Ashbury High book before this one, I can’t help but compare and I enjoyed *Finding Cassie Crazy* more. The humor was more consistent and I found myself more invested in each of the relationships. The tone here felt more serious and, while I did find much of it humorous, those moments were further apart. (how many times can I say the word ‘more’?) Rather than focusing on a group of friends and their pen pals, *Feeling Sorry for Celia* catalogs the formation of one friendship (Liz and her pen pal Christina) while Liz is simultaneously having trouble in her relationship with her best friend Celia. I had a hard time with Celia’s character because she was flighty and (overly) adventurous. I see how Celia’s home situation contributed to her wanderlust but it doesn’t mean that I think she’s a good friend to Liz. The developing friendship between Liz and Christina was lovely, as they both supported each other from the get-go and actually cared what was going on in the other’s life. Celia seemed like one of those friends you dread calling because they will just ramble on about their life and never ask you about how you’re doing.

My friend and I were talking the other day about authors we adore enough to read everything they ever write. I think Jaclyn Moriarty is a kindred spirit. (Anne with an ‘e’ would definitely think so) She is funny, her characters are endearing, and she is successful at wring epistolary YA. Keep doing it, JM, and I will keep buying and reading everything you write. In fact, I have the two remaining Ashbury/Brookfield books already lined up.

Stuti (Turmeric isn't your friend. It will fly your ship says

!!!!IMPORTANT!!!!LOOK AT THIS REVIEW!!!!OVER HERE!!!!ON YOUR SCREEN!!!!

READERS,

I HOPE YOU LIKE AND 'LIKE' THIS REVIEW, AS IN THE LITTLE BUTTON DOWN THERE, AS IN BELOW THIS REVIEW, NOT 'DOWN THERE'.

ELIZABETH CLARRY, YOUR DEAR MC, IS PRACTICING TO BE THE FUTURE QUEEN OF THE IAFF. BUT SHE DIDN'T WANT YOU TO MISS OUT ON HOW AWESOME A JOURNEY IT WAS TO BE FEELING SORRY FOR CELIA. HOW BITTERSWEET AND LOLWUT! HOW VERY AUSTRALIAN AND COMPLICATED!

I'LL TRY TO HELP YOU ALONG, BUT I CAN ONLY HERD YOU TO THE EDGE. YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE THE JUMP. WELL, I CAN ALWAYS PUSH YOU- BUT THOSE THINGS ARE NOT IN MY REPERTOIRE AND ANOTHER ORGANIZATION ALREADY HAS MONOPOLY OVER THAT. THIS BOOK IS ABOUT FRIENDSHIPS, GROWING APART AND FORGING NEW ONES, GROWING UP, EVIL DADS, FLIGHTY FRIENDS, ANONYMOUS IN AN EPISTOLARY FORMAT. READ IT.

IN ANY CASE, HAVE A RAINY DAY. I ALREADY AM.

**LOVE FROM YOUR THOUGHTFUL
AND FAVORITE REVIEWER**

'Stuti's room amidst rain- her mother's nightmare!' Photograph taken and incinerated(hence, no photograph) by Mushu. Postcard produced by Books behind Dam{n}s.

Hi!!!! Wish you'd read this book! Even if it wasn't perfect. And it really wasn't. Sometimes, the humor was stretched too far(but I snorted all the same) and it wasn't consistent. The book is very depressing in a lot of parts and the humorous sections have been coagulated. Some of the characters , particularly Celia and Saxon's, didn't really come across as either likable or realistic; I didn't feel them. But did I stress enough on the reading part? Damn, Christina's gonna kill me.

Love,
Me

Dear reader,

It has come to our attention that you are extremely bad at following the above advice and are still reading this review.

Look, we're not going to threaten you, not really, but observe yourself. Really observe. That hollowness in your laugh? That emptiness in your jokes? The disconcerting feeling of being left alone in the land of laughs(which is another book, btw)? That point in your day when nothing is good enough? When you feel, *screw these characters, I'm going to sleep?*

Do you think it's all going to vanish by continuing on with your day? Or maybe, perhaps, mayhap, that it all will be nuked out of your universe if you just gave in to this very australiano, but still readily and cheaply available, book. Did you even think of that? Did you? No, you didn't.

Therefore, could you just go out and borrow/beg/steal/buy this book now? Not to be rude or inconsiderate, but if you don't, could you please climb into the refrigerator and wait very quietly until your good sense comes back to you.

After all, I can always push you, but I can't make you swim.

Yours sincerely,
The Association of We-don't-really-threat

P.S. we can always push you, but it's better if you jump.

Maggie says

Dear US readers,

Do not be alarmed by how accessible this book is to people living in the States. This does not diminish the awesomeness that we've come to expect from Australian authors. Nor do you have to jump through hoops or swim through the rings of Fishpond hell to get it!

This book is a series of letters to and from Elizabeth Clarry. Her new English teacher decides to revive the Lost Art of Letter Writing and has his students write letters to the rival high school. Elizabeth's penpal ends up being Christina Kratovac. Through the letters between Elizabeth and Christina, Elizabeth and her mum (THE HILARIOUS ALL CAPS OVER-EXCLAMATION POINTER!!!!), and various unsolicited letters, we get a look into the lives of our characters. The Celia in the title refers to Elizabeth's lifelong best friend and potential missing person -- potential because she often chooses to go missing.

This book was first published in 2000 so there are some dated references, like Walkmans. Remember those? But in this age of Twitter, Goodreads, and blogs, where we (or at least I) spend a good portion of my day chatting, tweeting, and emailing people I've never met but formed solid relationships with, this book is actually rather timely. I totally related to how Elizabeth and Christina's friendship began and grew, how you can feel like you know someone without being able to recognize them on the street. Sometimes I find it's easier to share things with someone you don't have to see everyday. You can also find people who share your very specific interests (Melina Marchetta + San Antonio Spurs + Friday Night Lights + Graffiti Moon + GIFs of waving bears + Tom Hardy's ass), which is an instant basis for friendship.

Basically, I really enjoyed this book. And you can too! Really available, not Fishpond available, at IndieBound, B&N, and Amazon.

Yours sincerely,
A dues-paying member of the We ♥ Aussie YA Association

This review appears on Young Adult Anonymous. You can also find the book on sale for \$3.99 at BookCloseouts.

Emily says

The cover's horrible. Don't look at it. If ever there were a case of "don't judge a book by its cover" this is it.

I love this author. This is the second book of hers I've tried, and I'm sure I'll be polishing off the rest of this series before the end of the year.

I guess I started them out of order, but I don't think it matters. This one focuses on Elizabeth Clarry (also a character in The Murder of Bindy MacKenzie) and is told through notes and letters, including imaginary letters from various "associations" (such as The Association of Teenagers) that represent Elizabeth's many anxieties.

This book reminded me of the pen pals I made growing up. It makes me feel old to think that I used to exchange addresses with people as readily as cell numbers, emails or Facebook friendships are exchanged now. The letters between Elizabeth and Christina are often laugh-out-loud funny, but they also represent so much of what is beautiful in a budding friendship.

Jaclyn Moriarty writes creatively and humorously about the pain and joy of growing up. I'm glad there are more of her books out there for me to read!

Estelle says

This is a new favorite.

Jo says

I ramble more about this book and *The Year of Secret Assignments* here but this is the basic gist of it...

Jo's Official Rating.

If this book was a person, I would send them a letter with an orange Smartie taped to the bottom of them. Because they taste the bestest.

Shirley Marr says

I was initially wary of this book in much the same way I was wary of *Guitar Highway Rose*. Even though I LOVED GHR, it still wasn't the sort of book I normally read and I thought maybe its beauty was just a fluke. I was convinced that a novel made completely up of exchanged letters, messages hastily stuck in fridge doors and notes passed around was going to be too lightweight... but this novel changed my mind when halfway through, it took my heart and cracked it in half.

Feeling Sorry for Celia is about Elizabeth and her revelations of friendship with the aforementioned Celia to her new penpal Christina when her English class is forced to write letters in order to save this dying art form. I have to say, this is the most quirky "triangle" I have seen in YA and it makes me think that Jaclyn Moriarty has an agenda herself - to save the dying art form of the "original novel".

Simply said, I love this book. I thought it was going to be a girly-girly book and in a way it is, but in the best way possible. It's a very young hearted and playful and as opposed to being twee, is counter-balanced by Jaclyn Moriarty's amazing sense of humour, full of sharp and dark wit. When you look below the surface, there's also a lot of dark things happening, least of them being these really snarky and neurotic letters sent by imaginary societies inside the protagonists head and addressed to her Self Esteem.

The clincher for me is how Moriarty balances all these components together until it is just right. Not too deep and dark, just the right amount of sweet optimism and heart-tugging. "Bittersweet" as the book's blurb describes itself is right on the money.

It feels like reading and seeing little snippets of people's lives as they flash on by... and the author has somehow managed to hinge the whole thing onto a traditional novel format, with a plot, character development, climax and resolution. If this was an installation in a museum, I would marvel at the intricacies.

I love the little things, like how we don't get to find out why her mum writes these crazy questions to

Elizabeth until we find out later what her mother does for a living. Little glimpse that provide revelations like that sure does tickle Shirley's fancy.

Occasionally, the novel pushes the humour a little too far (even for my liking) until it becomes more farcical than humorous. Oh and the ending is a little bit too "Sandy's Makeover at the end of Grease" for me, but apart from that, a lovely fresh novel.

Not as powerful a juggernaut as say *The Book Thief* or *Jasper Jones* or *On The Jellicoe Road*, but this deserves a rightful place on the "Contemporary Aussie YA Classics" shelf. I would champion it for sure.

I'll definitely try out her other novels now, especially if I've heard correctly and they have overlapping characters. I love a crossover!

This review also appears on my blog Books On Marrs

Tatiana says

"Feeling Sorry for Celia" is Moriarty's debut novel and the second book I've read by this author. Looking back, I probably should have read this book first, before "The Year of Secret Assignments," because they both are set in the same "world," have common characters, and reading "Feeling Sorry for Celia" first would have probably helped me to understand events in the second novel better. However, these two books are not a part of a series, they are completely independent novels, so reading them out of order wasn't that much of a problem in the end I suppose.

My opinion about this book is pretty much the same as about "The Year of Secret Assignment," probably because they are very similar. Not only they both are written entirely in letters, notes, and diaries, but the themes are the same too - friendships found through forced correspondence between two rivaling schools, family troubles, psychological volatility of some characters, teen romance. I still don't get the lighter, funnier parts of the book. They seems just too weird for me, I don't know why. But the parts dealing with "serious" issues are very well done.

I don't think I would whole-heartedly recommend Moriarty's books to any of my reading friends, but personally I am very drawn to them. It probably has something to do with the epistolary format...

Phrynne says

This is such a lovely read! I know the other sister (Liane) is the one whose books are being made into movies but I think Jaclyn's books are fantastic too.

Feeling Sorry for Celia is quirky and clever. It is written for young adults but it never talks down to them and is perfectly readable for any age group. As the reader we do feel sorry for Celia but the main character is Elizabeth and she is remarkable. The relationship between her and her mother is unusual but it works and is always entertaining.

The book is written in letter form - letters from Elizabeth to her friends, postcards from her friends, notes

from her mother on the fridge, imaginary letters from imaginary critics, all sorts of different correspondence. It is a great way to read and very hard to stop! I kept saying "just one more" and eventually completed the whole book in record time!
Highly recommended:)

Brenda says

Written in letter form, *Feeling Sorry for Celia* by Aussie author Jaclyn Moriarty is so completely different it's delightful. With Elizabeth's English teacher getting the students to write to a Complete and Utter Stranger, Elizabeth becomes friendly with Christine. Their letters back and forth are funny, light-hearted and filled with teenage angst.

With Celia, Elizabeth's best friend missing, eventually turning up at a circus, the postcards to Elizabeth (who she calls Lizzy) get progressively more worrying. And Elizabeth's father has returned to Sydney from Canada where he plans to live for a year. He's completely wacky and hasn't got a clue how to talk to his only daughter.

Elizabeth's mother puts huge notes on the fridge for Elizabeth, never seeming to be there for her...

Feeling Sorry for Celia is my first read of Jaclyn Moriarty's and it's also her debut. Recommended for young adult fans everywhere.

Jasprit says

Feeling Sorry For Celia was one of those books which took me a while to get into as its not written in your typical format, but in the form of letters, notes and postcards between characters. However once I got a feel for the style of writing, I found myself zipping through the pages. Feeling sorry for Celia tells the story of Elizabeth, whose dealing with the ups and downs of being a teenager; her spontaneous friend Celia has gone missing, Celia's mum thinks that this is perfectly normal, her dad has unexpectedly announced that he's moving back to Sydney, she's receiving anonymous notes from a stranger who catches her bus and on top of all that she has training to do for an upcoming marathon!

What I enjoyed most about this book was reading the letters from Elizabeth's mum and the anonymous stranger, as they were extremely funny;

I have now created a web for myself which I see no
Way to untangle. I am only sorry to have got you tangled
Too. I'm going to have to pack up and move interstate.
Tonight, I will call the CIA and ask if they have any
Spare identities for me to assume.
It is now a matter of national security that you forget
My existence.

Forgive me.

A stranger

ELIZABETH!!! OVER HERE! ON THE TABLE! BY THE
HYDRANGEA? IT'S A NOTE FROM YOUR MOTHER!!!

I also enjoyed the witty, quirky characters, the unexpected surprises and the friendship Elizabeth was able to form with Christina through the letters they sent to each other.

Overall I thoroughly enjoyed *Feeling Sorry for Celia*, Jaclyn Moriarty did a brilliant job in creating such a fun and humorous read and illustrating that sometimes friendships can be found in places you least expect them.

Steph Su says

Elizabeth Clarry is not your average private school teenage girl. In fact, she's anything but. Her favorite hobby is long-distance running. She communicates with her mom through notes left on the refrigerator. Her one and only friend is Celia Buckley, who has a bad habit of running away for weeks at a time.

In the midst of Celia's latest escapade, Elizabeth's English teacher sets up a pen-pal project with the public school down the road. The last thing Elizabeth wants to do is to be forced to communicate with a total stranger, but she soon discovers that writing to her pen-pal, Christina, is actually a nice retreat from her increasingly hectic life. Her dad, who ran off with another woman when she was just a baby, has now returned to Australia to work and is interested in bonding with his daughter.

As things with Celia get more and more interesting, Elizabeth is forced to reconsider her friendships. Maybe it's time for her to grow on. Luckily she's got Christina, her mom, and an anonymous admirer to make the way easier for her!

It's impossible to sum up this amazing book in a few sentences. Let's just say that this is one of my all-time favorite books, and I'll never get sick of it. Told entirely in letters and notes, *FEELING SORRY FOR CELIA* will make readers laugh, cry, and wish they could be part of Elizabeth's crazy but wonderfully interesting life.

Keertana says

Feeling Sorry for Celia is hilarious, heartfelt, and an absolute delight. Moriarty's specialty seems to be novels told in an epistolary form and her talent comes alive in this novel. Elizabeth, the protagonist of our tale, begins a written correspondence with Christina, a girl from a neighboring school, that soon blossoms into a tight friendship. The titular Celia is Elizabeth's best friend since childhood, a wild spirit who is constantly running away from home. Like Moriarty's latest, *A Corner of White*, her debut serves as a character-driven piece, centering about Elizabeth and her gradual journey of self-discovery. With a long-lost father come to stay in Sydney, a neglectful mother who communicates through notes, and a missing best friend, Elizabeth's year is about to become far more complicated than she anticipated.

What I love about Moriarty's work is the utter cleverness of it. I kid you not, this woman is a genius. *Feeling Sorry for Celia* is dispersed with short notes to Elizabeth from multiple organizations with names such as "THE COLD HARD TRUTH" or "The Best Friend Society" which serve to reflect Elizabeth's own conflicting feelings and her emotions of self-doubt. Growing up, the teenage years are perhaps the most difficult *because* of these mood-swings and Moriarty conveys these increasingly mixed feelings that Elizabeth has towards others and towards herself in the form of these notes. Additionally, the many tales of Elizabeth's life are told through her letters to Christina, who gradually becomes a confidant and helps Elizabeth to realize that friends, like other things, change as you grow older. And that's okay. I love that this is the theme of this novel - that change, in every way, is inevitable and perfectly alright. We need more books in YA that epitomize this because, truly, no friendship is perfect and long-lasting, as much as we'd all like to believe. When one door closes, another one opens. It really does.

And yet, my favorite part of this story was Elizabeth's own relationship with her mother. Although we see their interactions through colorful and amusing notes stuck on the refrigerator, mostly because Elizabeth's mother is busy so often, it provides a different angle to the classic mother-daughter relationship. I *like* seeing a mother who doesn't let her single parenthood dictate her life. I *like* seeing that Elizabeth's mother pursues her passions, but also loves her daughter very, very much. Elizabeth is fiercely independent, but the love and comfort she gains from her mother is still visible. It is a delicate balance to strike, one that becomes more obvious and meaningful as the novel progresses, but it is present and beautiful all the same. All in all, *Feeling Sorry for Celia* is one of the best contemporaries out there and an unexpectedly honest portrayal of growing up, facing the world, and friendship.

*Bonus: Sex Positive YA, Anonymous Letters, Secret Admirers, Rescue Missions, and Circuses!
