



Chasing Boys

Karen Tayleur

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An insightful coming-of-age novel for girls with no interest in being "Pretty in Pink".

El Marini just isn't fitting into the new life she's been forced to create without her dad. Her mom and sister have accepted his absence and moved on, but El is convinced things will get back to normal if she just keeps her feelings of loss to herself and waits it out.

Life at her new public school would have been unbearable if weren't for Eric Callahan. As her crush grows to epic proportions, she'll do anything to be more like the popular girls he notices, even buying the first pink top she's ever owned. But then she meets Dylan, a quiet artistic-type who is both unnerving and annoying as he shines a light on El's misguided attempts to attract Eric. El's need for acceptance will hit home with teens as she finally sees that chasing boys has distracted her from making peace with the past and finding herself.

Chasing Boys Details

Date : Published January 6th 2009 by Walker & Company (first published December 23rd 2008)

ISBN : 9780802798305

Author : Karen Tayleur

Format : Hardcover 244 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Romance, Contemporary, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit

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From Reader Review Chasing Boys for online ebook

Yan says

Summary: "El Marini just isn't fitting into the new life she's been forced to create without her dad. Her mom and sister have accepted his absence and moved on, but El is convinced things will get back to normal if she just keeps her feelings of loss to herself and waits it out.

Life at her new public school would have been unbearable if weren't for Eric Callahan. As her crush grows to epic proportions, she'll do anything to be more like the popular girls he notices, even buying the first pink top she's ever owned. But then she meets Dylan, a quiet artistic-type who is both unnerving and annoying as he shines a light on El's misguided attempts to attract Eric. El's need for acceptance will hit home with teens as she finally sees that chasing boys has distracted her from making peace with the past and finding herself."

Review: As you surely tell from my grade, this book really, really, disappointed me. It should only take the reader a couple of hours to finish this book from beginning to end. Why? Because despite that it is 64 chapters and 256 pages long, the font is like size 20. Huge! I really wanted to like this book; I had such high hopes for it! I mean, look at the title! I was craving for a sweet and cliché book so I picked this up. And I have no words...okay maybe some.

So onward to the plot, which I seem to have trouble finding. I understood that it was about El (Ariel) chasing after Eric Callahan and trying to win his heart. But after three-quarters of the entire way through I still could not believe that the plot did not developed! I'm going to try on summarizing the entire story to leave it to the readers if the story sounds good.

So I feel in love with Eric when I first transferred to Blair. I've been pining for him for ages, but he's going out with Angelique, who's only the most popular girl in school. Oh wait [!] there seems to some animosity between them. It's my turn to shine. But, I kind of like his girlfriend, I should not be doing this...Hold up! You, my best friend that knows that I love Eric, like him too! And holy crap! Did Dylan just kiss me!? Where the heck did that come from!? Turns out Eric is just some crappy boy whose ego is too large for his head. Oh, Dylan, do ever come back! It turns out I really like you! Margot [my best friend:], I forgot, it's my dad's birthday and I'm sorry that I yelled at you. Friends?

So I am just going to it there. As you can see, I ended it with a question. It corresponds to the true ending of the story. It leaves the reader frustrated because it was not even an ending! Where did the part about her father being dead come from!? I knew somewhere that her father left; I had assumed that he abandoned the family, so imagine my surprise that the ending was at the cemetery. Besides that I had questions about Dylan, his scar which the author leaves you hanging when she brings it just pages before the book ended? Angelique? Eric? Angelique with Eric? Desiree, El's other best friend]? I craved for more information. Actually, I demand more!

Speaking of characters, El, was monotone. She was one tracked album. A weeping flower in a arid desert. Need I say more? Dylan was...nonexistence. He appears every once in a while and his amazing kiss scene (one paragraph long!) and nothingness. I felt that none of the characters really developed or stood out.

Overall: I feel like a) pulling my hair out, b) crying from frustration or c) tossing this book into a fire.

Adele says

This is the first YA novel from Karen Tayleur but before I start talking about the book I want to make a note of the dedication "For Toph. A boy who chased me until I caught him", altogether now awww.

To be honest I really don't have a clear grip on what I think about this book. The ebb and flow of is inconsistant but I think that's deliberate, due to the protagonist's perspective. El is still numb from the fallout that was her life eighteen months prior. The only reason to live, she thinks, is Eric. Now Eric is one of those typically blond, floppy haired boys that is two-dimentional for a reason, he doesn't possess a third. His cousin, Gaston, is a broody artistic type with a penchant for truth telling, in the vein of Sarah Dessen's Wes (The Truth About Forever), that made me instantly like him. Gaston seems to situation himself into El's life but always on the periphery, making comments but not really commiting. Although I think he had my heart when he held a napkin to her nose and told her to blow!

El's best friends, Margot and Desi are pretty hilarious. The monotone, queen of negativity and the bubbly, space cadet are both types that I have in my own friend arsenal. I had to laugh when El's internal dialogue notes that Desi would flirt with King Kong if she had the chance, such is her affinity for the male species. What I liked about this friendship group is that they invented a game of which I wish I played. They call it the 'best-case film scenarios' where they apply a scene from a movie into a situation in their real life. They referenced The Breakfast Club and Tayleur had me!

Depression is a theme that runs throughout but there is plenty of humour mixed up in the narrative as well. During a kissing scene (I won't reveal who), El has an enourmous amount of thought traffic, one of which was hilariously -

"I think he just drank some coke".

Despite the crushes and the humour, there are some hometruths about El's life that slowly get revealed. Her family's structure and financial status have altered radically and it's affected her in ways she might not have fully processed. I like the pace in which El starts finding herself again, the Radio SRN scenes were great as I could relate as a podcaster. I really liked Karen's take on teenager life, some characters could have been fleshed out more but I liked El's voice and that she didn't try and mimic teen speak like so many author's try (and fail) to do.

I have three questions though: 1) How did Gaston's scar come to be? 2) Why did no one ever remark on the fact that Gaston is a weird name? and 3) Does Karen Tayleur secretly love Beauty and the Beauty (there's Bella and Gaston characters)?

Joy (joyous reads) says

CHASING BOYS is one of those books where you either instantly embrace the character or completely hate

her. I for one, had a hard time connecting with El. She's an acquired taste who required the right amount of understanding in order for the reader to enjoy the story.

Struggling from her father's disappearance in their lives, Ariel was living life on automatic. But deep inside, she refused to accept the status quo. Confused and angry, she bottled up her feelings in the hopes that sooner or later, she'll stop feeling so much. In the meantime, she turns her focus on the unattainable hottie, Eric Callahan. She holds on to the little signs that he knew she existed because then she can ignore all the things that's been plaguing her since her father left. But Angelique Mendez entered into the picture and snapped up the only thing that's been constant in her life. She's resolved to chase the boy but for some reason, quiet, tortured, artistic Dylan keeps getting in her way. All of a sudden he seems to be paying more attention than usual, most of all, thwarting her attempts of getting Eric to notice her. She'll end up making a choice - not just between the boys but with some important decisions about her life. Will she remain bitter and angry? Or will she accept their lives now that her father is gone?

This book was a fast read but it wasn't a pleasant one for me. I really had a hard time with El. She was just so angry and blasé at the same time (if that's even possible). This is basically my main problem with this book - the lack of depth and more often, Ariel's detachment from everything else. She's very focused on herself, her crush on Eric, and her anger that she lacked any other layers to her character. I just had a hard time liking her. I find myself thinking that it's how the author want to portray her and unfortunately, I just found her distasteful.

The writing was intentionally juvenile, reflecting the voice of El. But there are also insightful writings in which Aussie authors are known for. Props to the author for the twist and the lack of clues leading up to it.

VERDICT: Let me be honest here and say that the reason I bought Chasing Boys was because I'd seen a snippet of this book on one of the blogs I follow. I thought that little bit was so romantic that I didn't think twice about getting a copy right away. Unfortunately, that scene didn't seem as romantic when I consider the entire book as a whole. This book just felt incomplete and at times, inconsistent.

Nic says

Rating: 3.5 stars

Favourite Quote: *"I feel like I can't feel anymore. Like I'm walking and talking and sometimes even laughing, but inside I'm still and watching to see if I'm fooling anyone."*

Chasing Boys is the tale of Ariel Marini who's life was turned upside down 18 months ago. Her Dad left, while her mum, sister and her are struggling to get by, they have had to downsize and Ariel has had to change schools where she meets and begins to crush hard on Eric, the guy at school every girl want. Her Mum makes her see a therapist once a week that she refuses to talk to and then there is Gatson, a guy she doesn't like at all but she can't stop thinking about.

Chasing Boys is a warm and funny story where the pages just seem to fly by. Karen Tayleur writing style is easy to read and seamless. This book deals with family and moving on from the past more than romance despite the title. It had some sad moments but overall it felt like a light read. Definitely realistic but sometimes lacked a little depth and I would have enjoyed it more if things have been more fleshed out.

Ariel aka El is a character you can empathise with. She is like the average teenage trying to cope with all the changes going on in her life. El has plenty of teenage angst moments and sometimes comes across a little selfish but overall she is witty and endearing character that shows a lot of growth.

A favourite part of the story was the friendships El had with Margot and Desi. It provided many humourous moments and certainly gave me flashbacks of my teens. They had fights over things like boys and more but in the end they were there when El needed them.

And then there is Gatson, an artistic trouble maker type but we all know underneath those types is hiding a nice guy. The romance in this book starts from a place of dislike (on El's part). So it is a lot of fun to watch it develop to something sweet.

Overall, a good story about letting go and moving forward. Karen Tayleur is definitely an author I excited to read more from.

Keturah says

More reviews on my blog!

Plot: Ariel Marini. Her dad has not been around for about a year now and she is just getting used to not going to private school. She has two best friends and together they are the three amigos. They are so different, but so alike, except El Marini wants only one thing: Eric Callahan. Beautiful, angel boyfriend to Angelique Mendez. In detention, she meets Dylan and her first impression of him is bored, macho and thick. When she and Dylan get paired in a project, she finds that he is annoying....and she likes it. While she finds Dylan annoying, she also befriends Angelique and finds out that Eric was never who she thought.

Characters: Ariel had me hooked, literally, from the first page and 2:00 in the morning. It was chapter 40 before I went to bed. In the summary it says that El starts to be one of the girls that wears black all the time and I can tell. From the beginning of the book, she has this thin monotone voice that is just right for a calm night read. I found my feelings back and forth on El because she was so hypocritical and most of the time I felt sorry for her being so confused.

For a book that has a title that hints to a lot of boys, strangely there are little boy introductions. Eric is the boy El thinks that she wants and anytime she talks to her, he is very charming, but fake. Other times he acted like a horrible jerk. I could already tell that he was not a candidate for happily ever after.

Dylan is Eric's cousin and Blair High School's newest student. In detention, he doesn't make the best impression on El and he is instantly put on the back burner. When El starts to get to know him, she finds out more. He is incredibly sweet, a good counter, and an incredible artist. In a few short meetings, he becomes my favorite and El's too.

Overview: Chasing Boys is extremely misleading and should be called, "What Shouldn't Happen When You Chase Boys?" I didn't have the romance I was expecting, which is why I disliked the ending, but it is an inspiring story for me and my friends when we start to date

Alea says

I have mixed feelings about this book, there were some things that worked and others that just didn't. In the end the book let me scratching my head a bit but there are still some good things going on here.

For the most part I liked the characters in this book, particularly artistic type Dylan. I would swoon for that boy in a second. I loved all the scenes he and El were together. For the most part I liked the main character El but it got to the point where she was a bit too obsessed with Eric, who she's had a crush on forever and it starts to get rather annoying. I liked the basic set-up, girl trying to get through high school but it just never fully played out in my opinion.

The book could be pretty funny yet sad at times, I especially enjoyed El's sessions with her therapist Leonard, where she wouldn't say anything the whole time for the most part. Also, this book is written in short chapters so it makes it very easy to get through, I really liked that.

I think what really bothered me about the book was the ending, it was very loosely wrapped up and then had this strange twist at the end, which basically contradicted something the author had previously stated, basically she pulled a fast one. While it did make sense, it was just sort of out of nowhere.

All in all an ok enough book but it didn't really have enough resolution for me.

Merphy Napier says

The main character's voice reminded me of the voice of Audrey from "Finding Audrey" by Sophie Kinsella. Which is a big plus for me.

I loved her voice and even though the plot was full of old tropes that have been done and done again, it was full of the tropes that I love! So I reeeeally enjoyed reading this. It was lite, it was quick, it was fun.

Girl likes popular boy.

Popular boy starts to like girl.

Other, less popular but sweet boy likes girl too.

Popular boy turns out to be a jerk.

Girl chooses the sweet one who draws her pictures.

If you are in the mood for something fun and lite to get you through a slump or to be a buffer between thicker books and if you like those tropes you should pick this one up. I really liked it. It was the perfect lite book for me :)

Alicia says

This is a horrible title for this book. Because this is a fairly good book, but the title makes it sound like it's about a boy-crazy girl. Which she is not. I mean, she does *like* a boy, but she's not crazy running around. She has lots of other things going on in her life, and they make the story interesting. There were some silly

parts, but if my 12 yr old niece wanted to read this book, I would give her a green light with HIGH recommendations.

Aaliyah says

Chasing boys is a teen-fiction book written by Karen Tayleur. what I liked about the book was the fact that it was about people my own age and that I can probably relate too in this book. I didn't like how El as open to new possibilities and ideas of having a new and better life. I also dislike how you tend to get drifted and confused on the two boys she had certain feelings for.

Christie says

Chasing Boys is the story of Ariel, El for short, who has moved from her swanky school and big house to a new school and an apartment with her older sister, Bella, and her mom. Dad – whereabouts unknown, but clearly he's left a void in Ariel's life which she is in desperate need of filling. So, there's this boy. His name is Eric and he's a star basketball player and practically the most perfect boy at school. Everyone has a crush on him, but he has a girlfriend. And not just any girlfriend, but the popular and pretty (and, as it turns out, decent and nice) Angelique.

So, is Karen Tayleur's first YA novel anything more than your standard girl chases boy teen romance? Well, no and yes. For starters, El is a likeable character and the first person narration is swiftly paced and often quite funny. El is smart and attractive, but doesn't really feel like she fits in anywhere other than with her two best friends, Desi and Margot. She's also trying to work through abandonment issues and for that she meets with a therapist, Leonard, once a week. The thing is, she can't actually talk to Leonard. "If I was talking to Leonard," she muses, "which I am not, I would ask him a question."

Eric isn't the only boy orbiting El's life. There's also Dylan.

Dylan slumps in the seat and glances at me. I realize he's the newest guy at school and I give him my catatonic stare – the one I use when I want the other person to look away. It's usually pretty effective. He has a thin white scar, almost invisible, that travels from his bottom lip and disappears under his chin, and just for a moment I wonder how it got there. His lips curl into a sneer and I look straight ahead.

El tries to balance school and home and her crush on Eric and Dylan's passive-aggressive interference in her life with varying degrees of success. For the teen reader who is looking for a book that is entertaining and not particularly challenging, *Chasing Boys* will likely fit the bill.

Shirley Marr says

Karen Tayleur's first YA and my favourite. I always come back to read sections of this one whenever I need a "chicken soup" moment. The prose is so pretty in its simplicity. I love the cliques, the girls, the humour and the romance. To me this book represents the perfect adolescent world inside my head.

Pam Wright says

I thought it was a pretty cute and reasonably accurate portrayal of those confusing and dramatic teenage years. I enjoyed it!

Thebookbutterfly says

I've got to stop handing out five stars like I'm tossing candy off a parade float! (You books can't be THAT good! I'm being such a softie! This doesn't reflect well on my reviewing skills! Or at least, this is what I've been telling myself. It hasn't really worked yet.)

But, personally, I think that Chasing Boys deserves every star that comes its way. Karen Tayleur ought to have won awards for this book. Or maybe it's because I'm fourteen and a (bit) naive, but still~ everything in this book resonated with me.

I adore El and while I connect with her completely (El and I are likethis) El is her own person and unlike her, I never thought that Eric Callahan was the answer to all her problems (but I don't think that El truly thought this either, maybe on the surface she did, but deep down I think she was smarter than this) and El has a way cooler thought process than me.

When there's a bit of a crisis going on, El's calm, practical, utterly sweet voice is talking about:

The bathrooms are probably my second-favorite place to be at Blair. Now, school bathrooms are usually disgusting, but the principal has this thing about cleanliness. I know this because there's always a notice for Radio SRN about keeping the school clean and tidy. The fact that he offers a cash prize at the end of each term is enough incentive for students to give it their best. I've seen kids grab garbage out of the trash cans and take it out the yard monitor, just so they can get points for the end-of-term garbage tally.

The tiles in the girl's bathrooms are yellow. Not an abusive yellow, but a nice mellow yellow of morning sunshine. Some are cracked, but the grout between them is white. The school janitor cleans the toilets twice a day. They smell like lavender--in a bathroom kind of way. The best time to be there is when everyone else is in class. Sometimes I get a pass to go to the bathroom, shut the door, and just enjoy the quiet dripping of the taps.

I adore El. I don't mind her babblings about bathrooms a bit.

So from the synopsis of this book, which reads:

An insightful coming-of-age novel for girls with no interest in being "Pretty in Pink".

El Marini just isn't fitting into the new life she's been forced to create without her dad. Her mom and sister have accepted his absence and moved on, but El is convinced things will get back to normal if she just keeps her feelings of loss to herself and waits it out.

Life at her new public school would have been unbearable if weren't for Eric Callahan. As her crush grows

to epic proportions, she'll do anything to be more like the popular girls he notices, even buying the first pink top she's ever owned. But then she meets Dylan, a quiet artistic-type who is both unnerving and annoying as he shines a light on El's misguided attempts to attract Eric. El's need for acceptance will hit home with teens as she finally sees that chasing boys has distracted her from making peace with the past and finding herself.

One can conclude that there is some romance in this book. (And I hope that I am not spoiling anything by saying that Dylan is the gem. We all know this~ there have been synopsis's that read exactly like this one. Artistic, broody type vs. Jock? Which will win? Should we care?)

Eric actually manages to add a lot to the book and a lot to El's self-discovery~ I think that I may genuinely appreciate him for this. Dylan, however, makes me swoon. He's smart and funny and just brilliant. I can't properly describe him, so I recommend that you just read the book :)

One part takes me by surprise with its simplicity and honesty:

In my mind I take out my secret jewel--my walk home with Eric. It's starting to look dull, but I take it out anyway and give it a polish and look at it from different angles.

This is something that I seem to do all the time when I've had a bad day~ I love how Karen Tayleur put the feeling into words.

And then there are parts that make me cry and laugh, which are the short, sparse chapters where El talks about Leonard, her therapist, and what she might say to him if she ever said anything during sessions (which she doesn't):

Leonard, Leonard, Leonard, Leonard.

I'm so tired, Leonard. Some nights I just can't sleep. If you were around then, Leonard, we'd definitely have a nice little talk. But Wednesdays come and it's daytime and I don't need to talk to you then.

Mom thinks I have nightmares, Leonard, but I don't. It's worse than that. I have nice dreams. I have dreams that everything is back to normal. That my family is all together and back in our real home and life is good. It's when I wake from these dreams, a smile still curling up my mouth, that the truth hurts. And that's when I cry, Leonard.

Margot says I'm a dreamer, but she's wrong.

I'm living in reality. It's just that I don't want to be here.

And then there are the questions:

At home in bed that night, I add another thing to my list for Leonard. It's more of a statement than a question, but I'd like to see where he stands on it.

I believe that if somebody makes a promise to stay around, like a wedding vow or something, then they should keep it or not bother making it in the first place. Because that's just crap if they leave and how can you believe anything they've said before or will say again?

It's so honest in it's simplicity~ it was only this morning when I re-read it again that I recognized all of the layering that went into this book. I love how the seasons change when she's looking out the window in Leonard's office on Wednesday afternoons, I like how sometimes things the characters say have double-meanings but the Karen Tayleur doesn't point this out just leaves it for the reader to discover like hidden gold between the pages, and I love that everything twines together~ nothing is said or done without a purpose.

I am quite in love with this book.

It is my secret jewel: someday when I'm older I'm going to take it out and give it a polish and look at it from different angles, and I'm going to see things that weren't there before and I'm going to remember fondly the things that were, the things that hit so close to my life.

Aussie YA = Brilliant once again :)

Shelly says

Another YA dose of realistic fiction. One that took me back to high school and my own teenage years. This book is full of issues that many teens have to face: changing schools, cliques, jealousy, crushes, acceptance, and more.

El is one of those teenagers. She is used to living the high-life, but with her dad gone, she has to get used to less, a lot less. Her mother has issues that El refuses to acknowledge. All of this changes El, as I assume it would many teens. She doesn't know how to deal with all the changes in her life, so she retreats into herself at times, changes her appearance, and gets new friends.

This book has all the romantic elements, without all the mush that many girls can't stand to read about. I enjoyed it for its honest approach to all things typical, teenage girl. El must make a decision between 2 boys, who wouldn't want that problem. The fact that the boys are two totally different guys doesn't help matters. Does she go for the jock, I have it all type, or the artistic, bad boy type? Oh to have to have those type problems again.

Another thing I enjoyed about this book was the chapter lengths. Some chapters only had one sentence, but it was a big idea one! Tayleur says what needs to be said in each chapter without adding unnecessary information or filler ideas. Way to go!

Chasing Boys receives 4 out of 5 stars from me.

GirlwiththeBraids says

“Remember your manners, listen to your teacher, and don’t chase boys.” A piece of advice Ariel (El, for short) had been told her first day of school. But she doesn’t know if she can keep that promise anymore now that she is going to a crammed-full public high school filled with handsome jocks. El’s family (which consists of herself, her older sister, and mother) has been down-sizing since her father left a year ago and she can’t seem to forgive him. While keeping a mental list of questions to ask her therapist one day when she does finally want to talk to him, Ariel finds out that she might be wrong with the conclusions she was so quick to come up with.

Author Karen Tayleur’s writing style is brilliant. The mixture of all the right moods are placed into this heart-pounding read. Some scenes are adorable, some are romantic, and others are somewhat depressing but captures the essence of the story. Most teens can relate to El’s struggles but only a few understand it the way she does. I love this book and my jaw literally dropped at the end.

The characters were different, likeable, and realistic. If they were actual people, I'd definitely want them as my friends! There is also a wide variety of settings that I thank the author for coming up with. It was outside-the-box! Creative doesn't even begin to describe the storyline.

I enjoyed the book so much, I had to share more than half of it with my mother. And she loved it too! I got tears in my eyes and she was breathless. The emotion from this story will stay with you long after you have finish the final page, I guarantee. As my mom says, Chasing Boys is just plain "great".

Contains: *brief profanity
