



Here's the Thing

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It's only for a year. That's what sixteen-year-old Zel keeps telling herself after moving to Sydney for her dad's work. She'll just wait it out until she gets back to New York and Prim, her epic crush/best friend, and the unfinished subway project. Even if Prim hasn't spoken to her since that day on Coney Island.

But Zel soon finds life in Sydney won't let her hide. There's her art teacher, who keeps forcing her to dig deeper. There's the band of sweet, strange misfits her cousin has forced her to join for a Drama project. And then there's the curiosity that is the always-late Stella.

As she waits for Prim to explain her radio silence and she begins to forge new friendships, Zel feels strung between two worlds. Finally, she must figure out how to move on while leaving no one behind.

Here's the Thing Details

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From Reader Review Here's the Thing for online ebook

Hristina says

Copy received through NetGalley in exchange for a fair review

Here's the Thing is a wonderful coming of age story with a realistically written LGBT heroine. The best thing about this book is everything. From the beautiful plot, to the perfectly developed characters, and one of the best writing styles that I have stumbled onto recently. I'm just now learning of Mrs. O'Beirne's talent for telling stories, and her ability to give soul to every dialogue. I enjoyed this story, especially the voice that the main character Zel was given. It made me feel like I'm involved in the story, as if I'm not reading a book, I'm being told the story over a cuppa. And this warmth is why I'm looking forward to reading everything Mrs. O'Beirne has ever written. I recommend this book.

Lynda Dickson says

Sixteen-year-old Zel moves back to Sydney, Australia, after spending eight months in New York. She misses Prim, her best friend and crush. Zel and Prim were working on their subway project, following the idea in Prim's favorite book to ride to the end of every subway line in New York. But before they finish, something drives a wedge between the girls. The compelling and touching opening scene makes us wonder what happened between them. Meanwhile, Zel finds a new group of friends in Sydney: her cousin Antony and his Drama class buddies - Michael, Ashani, and Stella.

The Sydney story is told in the present tense, interspersed with past tense flashback of Zel's New York subway trips with Prim, as Zel reminisces while examining the photos she took at the time. The narrative is carefully timed to reveal what happened in New York just as Prim finally contacts Zel in Sydney. The author draws some nice parallels throughout. Stella's story in Sydney mirrors Prim's story in New York. In addition, as the Drama group works on a project centered on the theme of "home", we see how Zel was uprooted just when New York started feeling like home, and how she is now struggling to make a new home in Sydney. In the end, she discovers that "home" is more about the people than the place.

It's great to read a book set in Australia and featuring places I know. Zel, as the narrator, is extremely engaging, speaking directly to the reader, and making you feel like you're in the room with her, as she tells you her story. The writing is beautiful, heart-felt, and full of humor and astute observations. This is the first book I've read featuring gay girls, and the story highlights their difficulty distinguishing between friendship and romance.

This is a wonderful coming-of-age story especially suited to young women struggling with their sexual identity.

I received this book in return for an honest review.

Full blog post: <https://booksdirectonline.blogspot.co...>

Tiff says

Consistency must be Emily O'Beirne's middle name. She consistently writes amazing characters that steal your heart and dazzle your imagination. Her latest novel, *Here's the Thing*, is a wonderfully sweet story and honest reflection from the main character, Zel.

Zel, is sixteen and is probably smarter and more aware than most thirty-year-olds. This character is open, honest and level headed. You don't often hear that with teenagers, levelheaded, but Zel just is. She gets people for who they are, she sees past the veneers, bad attitudes, and silence. Which is how she meets Prim, and an unlikely friendship develops on the subway system on NYC.

Zel has been in New York for a few months, not really developing any strong relationships or exploring her new city. Until she meets and connects with a young model, in her mother's modeling agency. Primulka is an enigma of a girl. One who rarely smiles and spends most of her time acting nonchalant and blank. She inwardly hates everyone, thinking most of her peers are silly and mundane. To say this girl is challenging is an understatement! You know as the reader someone has hurt this young woman terribly, making her build a fortress around herself to self-preservation. Zel figures this out too and proceeds with caution slowly pulling Prim into a friendship. These two take off on an epic weekly adventure with the end goal of riding all of the subway lines. Sounds awesome right, I can only imagine the people you would meet. It is epic to them as well, and while Zel harbors a crush on Prim, she knows that this friendship is something. Then the monkey-wrench thwarts the plans of finishing the lines, Zel is moving back to Australia. Her time in NYC is up.

This is a story that shifts back and forth between real-time, Zel in Sydney and memories of her time with Prim in Australia. The story builds upon the friendships that Zel makes. Her friendship with Prim is on a pause because of a misunderstanding and hurt feelings, and this causes Zel much anguish. On the other side she is plowing ahead with her life in Sydney and befriends a group of enigmatic young people in her drama class. Through her new school and this group of friends, Zel really begins to branch out. Her photography passion is ignited again and she becomes part of something more. She also meets a Stella and that is a really great part of this book, as sweet and tender as only that first love can be.

I don't think I did a very good job of summing this book up for you. So I'll say this, read it. This one is fantastically written by one of the very best authors in the genre. The characters have depth and the story is captivating. Overall a great story, that I was sad to see it end. Another winner from Emily O'Beirne.

Bree Paige says

I finally finished this One.

Why I cried.. I didn't expect to cry..

I been trying to finish this book since January.. But it took me a couple of months to get the mood of finishing this b4 I move on to the other books..

AND I never expect that this book made me cry. Probably bcoz how well this book written. I felt all the feelings of Zel and Prim in this book...

AND I love Zel's Dad he is an amazing Dad..
AND then of course Stella..
I think Emily O'Beirne is one of the Queen of YA book.
Some of my favorite part

"when you start to like someone, they suddenly turn from being just someone you know into the most attractive thing in the world? You could have seen them every day for the last year and not noticed, and then suddenly, bam! They turn into something you can't take your eyes off."

"Just because your feelings weren't reciprocated doesn't mean they didn't exist or weren't valid,"

Meh says

*** I was given a copy from Ylva Publishing for an honest review. ***

This is another good story by Emily O'Beirne. She's just excellent at that - telling meaningful stories of ordinary queer youngsters in quite an extraordinary way.

She picks up moments that usually has been (or probably will be) part of any queer girl growing up - in this case the falling in love with your best friend scenario - and builds up a compelling story around it. Unlike most other authors of this genre though, she carefully steer us away from the 'fairytale' outcome. There usually is more of a sweet/bittersweet feeling to her novels as she honestly tries to tackle some of the real issues of being a queer teen in a more realistic way. And I, for one, appreciate that approach.

However, the general feeling I had of this book was that it was a lukewarm reading.

Now, as I've become used to, O'Beirne protagonists tend to be quite strong, complex and interesting characters. Even if they end up being in opposite sides of the personality spectrum. They can be gentle and yet somewhat insecure like Liza from Points of Departure and end up being profoundly endearing, or they can be a bit of an asshole but with a good heart like Claire from A Story of Now and still be very captivating, because their qualities as well as their shortcomings it's what makes them reliable and interesting as characters.

Unfortunately I didn't felt quite this way about Zel.

Zel was nice. But the bland kind of nice. Good daughter, good friend and probably just absolutely average at anything she does, yet for me she seems to have this almost way too subdued attitude towards life. She acts like a 30 years-old in a 16 years-old body. And I know all about these 'old soul' teenagers out there, I was actually one of them. But the fact remains that they don't exactly make for a very interesting protagonist of a novel in my opinion.

Also, the self-consciousness of the narrative didn't quite do it for me. I might be wrong, as it's been awhile since I read her previous books, but I think this was her first book written in first person and where the main character is constantly breaking the fourth wall to address the readers. And it can be indeed a fantastic writing device, but to work properly it must be executed flawlessly and by a character with a really strong personality and inner voice. Once again, Zel is not one of those characters, in my opinion.

And then there is Prim. Well, if Zel was bland to me, Prim was just absolutely obnoxious. Not even Zel seemed able to defend her attitude properly to the readers, and she was actually the one who was in love with her. Now I get it, most of us have been there, the inappropriate crush on the unapproachable, standoffish, yet profoundly alluring acquaintance or friend. I get that, like I said, that's one of O'Beirne's greatest qualities as a writer in my opinion, writing fiction that could pass as a memoir of any queer girl growing up, but then there is also the other side of this equation, the one where just because you can write about something, it doesn't mean you should.

And I am aware that this is mostly a preference thing ("*Reviews are opinions, opinions are subjective*" and all that...) but for my taste, I found myself a bit disconnected from actually caring for anyone in this story and not only because of the characters, but also because I felt that with the constant flashbacks, the story ended up a bit everywhere, or more precisely not here nor there, since a huge part of this story is actually just Zel recollecting her relationship with Prim in NY. And to be quite honest there was nothing too remarkable about that time to justify the time spent doing so. It's not exactly bad, really. It's just that it wasn't really that intriguing for me, and I also ended up missing that certain sense of urgency that usually comes with stories like this.

Stella on the other hand, was the most interesting character in the story for me. But although she has a very key part to play in this book, her possible growth as a character ends up limited by Zel and Prim's story. Which actually makes sense, even if I ended up watching the unfold of why that makes sense feeling quite unenthusiastically about the whole deal.

To her credit, Emily O'Beirne is an extremely capable writer and you can easily notice that there is a perfectly reasonable justification behind all her choices for the direction of her stories, so as a reader, even if you disagree with her choices as a storyteller, you can't say they don't make sense. They do. Even if you don't exactly find the final result of said choices very exciting.

So I actually felt a bit conflicted in rating this book. It is a good book, don't get me wrong, it's just that, I suppose I ended up spoiled by the quality of her previous 3 books and this one ended up a bit on the lower end of my expectations.

3.7 stars in my opinionated, yet honest assessment.

Isobel says

I'm torn about this one. I usually enjoy young adult and I generally enjoy first person. I don't mind flashbacks, even though, goodness me, there were a lot of flashbacks. The characters were really well written, and I thought the way the Zel was thinking about her family, her school work, and the way her friendships grew felt right. All of that was lovely. Her drama friendship group was great, and I loved the way we saw the drama group and the separate, but important, friendship with James in her art class. It was really nice that the main friendship group were from different ethnic backgrounds and didn't feel stereotyped.

My biggest issue with this was that the emotions didn't really engage me. It all seemed at arm's length. That was a real shame, because I really wanted to love this and I didn't. It wasn't that I didn't like it, but I didn't love it, either.

Not a lot happens, but that's ok. I'm used to school stories where the biggest drama is the school play and the

minutiae of friendships and betrayal. What I want, though, is for the drama, and the heightened teenage emotions, to make it off the page, and unfortunately, it mostly just felt bleak.

ARC received from the publisher for an honest review.

Paula Phillips says

There were two things that attracted me to this book , the first of course was the cover of the Subway lines in New York and the second was the author as I had just a couple of weeks ago finished reading her book *Points of Departure* and quite enjoyed it. In *Here's the Thing* we meet Zelda aka Zel whose parents have moved back to Australia from New York for their jobs. While in New York, Zel's mother worked for a modelling agency and that is where she met Prim. The two of them one day based on a book they both read, decided that they would begin a project to ride the Subway lines together . This went on till she moved and also the last time they talked before she left to come to Australia. While in Australia , Zel is beginning a new school with a new set of friends courtesy of her cousin Anthony welcoming her into his group. In this group of friends , Zel meets Stel aka Stella. Stella comes from a hectic household where she has an autistic brother Ollie. I could relate to this in a way as I have two siblings and my mother who all fell on the Autism spectrum. *Here's the Thing* features Zel's life before Australia with Prim and the Subway Project and After New York with her new friends and their Home Project which they are doing for a drama assessment. What I liked about this book besides being set in Australia which was nice for a change and being a GLBT story was that though the book was a GLBT story, that wasn't oversexualised and over-played on. I found this book to be more of a YA friendship story and a tale of discovering who you are and what your family, friends , home means to you.

Starsandsun18 says

I like this type of narration. It's like I'm just talking with my friend, Zel. She's just telling me stories over a cup of tea or coffee.

I'm in love with this book.

I can totally understand how Zel

felt about the constant comparison of the places. Somehow I also experienced that and it's really hard.

But if you're to ask me, I think Zel only like New York because of Prim and her heart will always be at home in Australia.

This is a story of friendship, first heart break, starting over. If you're looking for a coming out book, this is not for you.

Everything is very realistic.

Stella and Zel! I want more!

And I think Zel would be a great psychologist.

The author is really an amazing story teller, first you get curious then before you know it you're hooked.

Wow! And I think she has a thing with red heads?

Karina says

Well, I think Emily O'beirne is officially one of my favorite author. I've read all her books and I love them all. YA is definitely my least favorite genre but Emily somehow always makes me fall in love with her books.

I love all the characters in this book. I love Zel as a narrator, she's really likeable, funny and can stand up for herself. I love the interaction between the characters. Between Zel and her friends, Zel and her parents. I love Prim with all her quirkiness. I love the friendship between Zel and Prim. It feels really natural between them. I can feel their chemistry.

I also like that the romance is not an 'instalove'. It really is feel normal between them to develop feelings. I also love that the novel is not all about love but more about Zel's life as a teenager with her problems, sadness, and happiness. Basically, I just love this book.

5 stars.

ARC for Netgalley

Ty says

At this point I don't know what to say anymore about Emily O'Beirne's writing. It's so good. I wish I had a new book of hers to read every week because the way I feel while reading her books is exactly the pick up I need from the world right now. It's like I can feel joy warming up my little soul from somewhere deep inside me. She does it with her characters, all of whom seem like the type of people I want to be friends with. She does it with her prose, which is light when it needs to be and heavy when it needs to be and so liquid in the way it flows that you might as well be on a raft floating gently along a river while you read.

I loved this. I loved how so very real it felt. It feels so grounded. Never stop writing, Emily O'Beirne, and also, can we be best friends?

Catherine says

I am officially calling it, Emily O'Beirne is by far my favourite author!

The characters and stories she creates just feel so real. I am pulled into every story where I struggle to move on after it finishes. Here's the Thing was the same in that we were brought into the world of these interesting characters with the best dynamic that I fell in love with.

This is a young adult book and as an adult I enjoyed the read as Zel was such a well-rounded character you just enjoyed being a part of her growth and discovery of love and friendships. What a wonderful book for young adults helping them through their own discovery in the big world of teens.

Also as usual I loved the Aussie setting! So pretty obvious I am highly recommending this book and if you haven't read any of her other books you need to do that as well.

I was given this book by NetGally for an honest review.

Willow says

Zel, an Australian teenager moves to the EEUU, makes a friend (Prim) and then moves back to Australia. She finds then herself with the doubts of her past actions, with the unknown of what is going on the head of Prim and with the uncertainty of her current life.

That would be my sum up fot this book. Not to much spoilers. But it best this way.

This book is good, so good. Like always Emily O'Beirne has been able to capture the essence of her characters. There is not much development but there is not a need for that. I love it how Zel slowly realizes everything about Prim. And i definitely love Prim, her character and her fears, just the way he behavies. I think is a very relatable character.

So, why only 4 stars instead of 5? Well, in reality if 4.5 stars for me. The only but i can put in this book is that it didn't catch me from the start. I was well in the middle when i though "I can't stop reading, i want to know the end".

I recomend this book. And everything that come from this author. I have still have to read a book write by her that i don't like.

Note: I was given a copy from Ylva Publishing for an honest review.

Bruna Accioly says

Emily O'Beirne is the queen of amazing

Eva says

Book received by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Emily O'Beirne is a good writer and, despite some interpolations from the MC to the reader that I found out of context and a bit annoying, it shows in her book.

My main concern about this book is that the author seems to touch the most important subjects from the surface only, such as the main love story, Prim's reasons for her behavior, or Ashani's relationship or lack of thereof with the 2 guys. There is also a lack of depth and emotion that seems unfitting for a YA story.

lov2laf says

I found this to be a pretty subdued read. I didn't read the blurb or other reviews with hints of the plot so I went into the book blind. I was over half way through when I was still wondering what the book was ultimately about because it's split between Zel's present day in Australia and flashbacks of her previous year in New York with her friend Prim. In a certain way, I wasn't sure if I should be ramping up my investment in Prim or if I should stick to the life Zel was making in Australia...

Which, to be fair, ended up echoing Zel's experience. She herself is split between the two places with a precarious investment in both. I don't know if that was the author's intention or not but it was my experience.

Whatever feelings I had through the book, it all ties up in the end and we get a clear resolution. However, *because* that resolution came so late in the story and because so much time was spent on Zel and Prim's storyline, I felt okay there but the Australia arc didn't feel fulfilled enough. I think I would've liked more of it before the end of the story.

I was also curious if the refugee storyline seen in the drama class was a hint of Prim's past? I don't know.

Emily O'Beirne has a knack for making her characters well-defined and that continued here. I also liked that Zel was a "good kid" with good parents...it means the drama has to come from elsewhere. :) ...or that it taps into a teenage experience I don't often see in books.

Like O'Beirne's other books I've read so far, the plot has bittersweet moments and goes in a completely unexpected turn from my prediction so that's always refreshing. There is romance but I wouldn't exactly call this romance, either. And, though Zel is lesbian, this is not a coming out story so if you're looking for that type of book this is a good fit.

In the end, I felt the book was more about friendships and putting or keeping people in your life that you want to be present even if things don't always work out the way you wanted them to and, of course, themes around "home".

"Here's the Thing" is definitely YA but, overall, the drama is minimal. There are some profound ideas that the author conveys so it's not without impact but my impression of the book was similar to my experience exploring a creek in my childhood...an interesting yet serene experience that was punctuated with some excitement upon going down a small, unexpected rapid or spotting a reclusive animal...but mostly, I just had a chilled and relaxed feel.

I didn't walk away with a "this is amazing" impression but I did like the read and would recommend.
