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# Fireworks



## Synopsis

From the New York Times best-selling author of *99 Days* and *How to Love* comes a stunning new contemporary novel all about boy bands, girl bands, best friends, and first love - perfect for fans of Sarah Dessen and Morgan Matson. It was always meant to be Olivia. She's the talented one, the one who's been training to be a star her whole life. Her best friend, Dana, is the levelheaded one, always on the sidelines, cheering Olivia on. But everything changes when Dana tags along with Olivia to Orlando for the weekend, where superproducer Guy Monroe is holding auditions for a new singing group, and Dana is discovered, too. Dana, who's never sung more than Olivia's backup. Dana, who wasn't even looking for fame. Next thing she knows, she and Olivia are training to be pop stars, and Dana is falling for Alex, the earnest, endlessly talented boy who's destined to be the next big thing. It should be a dream come true, but as the days of grueling practice and constant competition take their toll, things between Olivia and Dana start to shift...and there's only room at the top for one girl. For Olivia, it's her chance at her dream. For Dana, it's a chance to escape a future that seems to be closing in on her. And for these lifelong best friends, it's the adventure of a lifetime - if they can make it through. Set in evocative 1990s Orlando, *Fireworks* brings to life the complexity of friendship, the excitement of first love, and the feeling of being on the verge of greatness.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Every once in a while you read a book that just checks all the boxes. Characters who you fall in love

with, even though they're not perfect. Check. A love story that doesn't consume the entirety of the story - plus the perfect book boyfriend. Check Check. (Holy crap do I love Alex) A setting that you can insert yourself in. Check. Don't let the 90s setting throw off the fact that this is very much a YA (but today's popstars are made on YouTube, not auditioned like back in my day). The 90s don't bog down the story; it's still fun to live in that era for a bit, though. This book was a ball of sweetness and is guaranteed to get you out of any slump. If you don't end up smiling, you're surely a monster. It's out now so I want to hear all your thoughts about it. That's all I'm going to say because I want to take us down memory lane for a bit.

I've loved all of Katie Cotugno's books, but this one was definitely the most fun. 90's girl groups and boy bands? Yes, please!!

well, first off, Katie Cotugno has done it again-she managed to simultaneously leave me annoyed & frustrated while still wanting more. i just finished reading this book earlier today, and i'm still reeling from the way it ended. it's not the fact that the ending was left open ended, as this is Katie's usual fashion & something that i've grown to expect (& not totally hate) when it comes to her books, but more so about the conclusion that was actually reached in regards to something major happening in the story. even though i saw it coming from a mile away, it still managed to not only sucker punch me right in the face, but left me shaking because i was so angry at one of the characters. (i actually kind of threw the book off my bed with a bit of force if that tells you anything) but even with all that being said, i didn't actually hate the overall ending (as far as it being left open) because as much as the event that preceded the overall ending frustrated me, the story was very well crafted to make for an enjoyable read. Katie Cotugno is a great YA contemporary story-teller, and one of the things that i always admire when it comes to her books is that, despite how frustrating her characters are, (and believe me, they are frustrating) they are also very multi-dimensional and definitely not without flaw, which makes them feel very real. I even appreciate her open-ended endings, as they too, help to make the story that much more real and authentic. rarely in life are things tied up neatly with a bow, and i feel that a story doesn't always have to be either, even if it's merely a work of fiction. fireworks, although irksome at times, was a great coming of age novel about first love, the hardships of chasing dreams, and the ups and downs of friendship. set in the 90s, this story revolves around Dana (who is the narrator of the story) and Olivia, two life-long best friends, who, despite being from the same place,

grew up under very different circumstances. Dana grew up in poverty, with an unsupportive mother who cared more about vodka than her own daughter, and because of these bleak circumstances, Dana had very little hope of ever leaving her hometown and making something of herself. Olivia, meanwhile, always dreamed of being a pop star and had a bright future ahead of her no matter if she managed to make her dreams of stardom a reality or not, as she had a more stable home life than her friend, both financially and in the way of supportive parents. Both girls have the chance to make their dreams come true when they audition to join an all-girls singing group (Eden's Crush, anyone?) and are chosen, alongside two other girls. For Olivia, it's a chance to finally make her lifelong dream of becoming a pop star come true, while it's a lucky break for Dana, (who accidentally auditioned) to change her circumstances and escape from the nothing town from which she came, and the bleak future that's in store for her there. Although it starts off as an exciting new adventure for the two friends, the stress of the competition, along with jealousy and secrets, starts to take its toll on the girls. Throw a boy (a cute boy who also happens to be a member of a boy-band) into the mix of it all, and you have a disaster just waiting to happen. It's not long into the competition that the girls start to go from being the best of friends to near bitter rivals. I found the ups and downs of their friendship to be portrayed in a very realistic manner, especially considering the grueling and competitive circumstances they were put under. This story also gave an interesting insight into the world of fame, both the glamorous and ugly side of it. Despite the fact that both girls were flawed in their own way, and each played a role in the unraveling of their friendship, I felt that Olivia was more at fault than Dana, and at times it was really hard to find anything very likable about her and honestly I found myself siding with Dana for the most part. Although this story is very much about friendship, romance also plays a pretty central role. Dana ends up dating a boy named Alex who not only lives in the same apartment complex that she is staying in, but also happens to be a member of a boy-band. (O-Town, anyone?) Not only was their relationship really cute, but also a perfect depiction of what it's like to fall in love for the first time. Before ending this review, I would like to issue an ed-trigger warning, as one of the characters (Olivia) has eating issues, and it's heavily implied that she does in fact suffer from an eating disorder. This is also one of the things that kept me from giving this book a full five stars. Although Olivia's eating disorder wasn't exactly portrayed badly, I do feel that it was glossed over a bit too much and I wish that the author had taken the time to go more in depth about it. As someone who is working through recovery from an eating disorder and has struggled with food related issues for years, I am very critical about how an author handles it in a book, especially a book that is targeted

towards teens. also: i personally did not find it to be extremely triggering, but as each and every one of us is different in what we find to be triggering, i gently urge anybody who is currently suffering from an eating disorder to take caution when reading this book. overall, this was a solid contemporary that i really enjoyed (i finished it in less than a day if that tells you anything), and i think that anybody who has an interest in ya contemporaries that focus on the power of friendship (with some romance and a lot of drama thrown in) will definitely take a liking to this book, along with the other books that Katie Cotugno has written. I bought this book on release day and i'll definitely be doing the same whenever Katie's next book is released!

Fireworks is a standalone Young Adult contemporary romance. The narrator is Dana Cartwright. The book is told in 1st person POV. The book starts off in 1997 in Jessell, Georgia. Dana and her best friend Olivia are 18 and have just graduated high school. Dana lives with her mom and they are very poor. Her mom is a drunk who is never there for her. Olivia is in an opposite situation. She comes from a loving family and they don't struggle with money the same way Dana and her mom do. Olivia has been performing her whole life. She brings Dana with her to Orlando to an audition. Everything changes after that audition. The book was a cute YA story. I enjoyed it very much. The characters are 18 years old. There is some drinking and sex in the story. But it just read like YA to me. But it's probably not appropriate for anyone too young. I liked Dana. I liked boy-bander Alex. There was a lot of stuff about pop stars in this story. And I really enjoyed that part of the book very much. It was fun to read about and I did not want to put the book down. For the most part I enjoyed Dana and Olivia's friendship. It seemed genuine and I loved how close the author made these two girls. But there were definitely things that I didn't love, especially the ending. It really did not work for me. There were a few things that were resolved. But there were other things that I wish had been addressed. Also, the book blurb makes it very clear that the story takes place in the 1990s. But unfortunately I did not read the book blurb right before reading this book. There is only one mention in the book of it being the 1990s. I saw that but then it was never mentioned again. That really didn't work for me at all since I completely forgot about it. In retrospect there were obviously some current things like cell phones that were not in the story. But Dana was so poor that it didn't click for me. I wish that the time period had been mentioned a few times. Overall, this was a cute YA story. And I did enjoy it for the most part. I just didn't love where the story went at the end and I needed more of a conclusion than I got. Thanks to edelweiss and Balzer + Bray for allowing me to read this book.

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