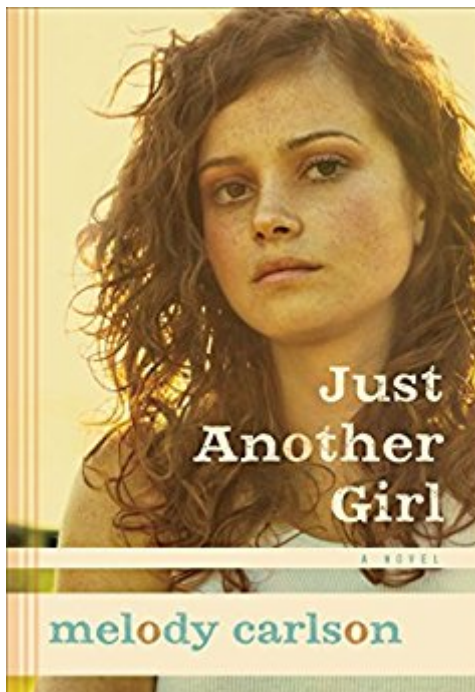


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# Just Another Girl: A Novel



## Synopsis

Aster Flynn is stuck. She has to spend all of her "free" time with her younger sister, Lily, who, though fifteen, is mentally handicapped. At age seventeen, Aster should be hanging out with friends, dating boys, and working at a fun job. But her dad's MIA, her mom is always at work, and her older sister Rose is too self-centered to give her any help. It's not that Aster doesn't love Lily--it's just that for once she'd like to be able to be a normal teenager. So when a cute popular guy seems to take an interest in her, Aster hatches a plan. Somehow she has to get her workaholic mom and deadbeat dad to be the parents Lily needs so that Aster can have a life of her own. But can she ever get her parents to start acting like adults? Is this new guy worth the trouble? And, most importantly, will Lily get hurt in the process? With its real-life characters and struggles, *Just Another Girl* will immediately draw teen girls in. Author Melody Carlson knows how to write to girls just where they are.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I absolutely loved this story! It's going down in history as my favorite Melody Carlson book ever. I'll

tell you why. Because it is so realistic and believable. I have worked for the past eight years with people who have developmental disabilities and I have clients of various ages and levels of disability. I have never read a book before that so accurately demonstrated the challenges faced by family members who are dealing with a teenager who is mentally much younger than her actual age. The author blew me away with the accuracy because the details that are so true-to-life. She described a number of female clients that I work with. I was very impressed with how the author didn't try to be politically correct, but showed exactly how real people feel at times when dealing with such challenging behavior and the often overwhelming responsibility for another person. The author also showed the family's dysfunction well. The spiritual thread in the story was tight and fit the setting, but did not overwhelm the plot. I can't say enough good things about this story. Wait, I think I already said this. Well, it's so true I'm saying it again. I have read books before that slip in characters with disabilities but they are often so stereotyped that it annoys me. That is not the case with this novel. I'd recommend this book to not only teens but also adults and family members who simply need encouragement. There are no easy solutions here, but there are themes that will edify readers and help them to see that they aren't alone in their struggles. I also loved how the author showed that there is often help for families that they may not be aware of. These services will help people better take care of their family member. Maybe one of the reasons I also adored this story was because like Aster, I was that teenager, only I was responsible for taking care of my mother who had MS and was bedridden. Like Aster, I felt like I had no life for a number of years. It's tough being responsible for so much at such a young age. It matures you quickly when you aren't able to be a typical teen. Anyway, this book is making my favorites of 2009 list. I'm so glad I had a chance to review it!

This book is great! My friend heard the author speak and recommended it...she was right!

Aster Flynn's life is not her own. She is responsible for caring for her fifteen-year-old handicapped sister, Lily. From morning till night, Lily and Aster are together, and Aster is getting burned out. When a cute boy asks Aster out, she does all she can to make the date happen. But without Aster to take care of Lily, Aster's mom freaks. Will Aster ever get a life of her own? This book really took an honest look at how kids can get stuck with more responsibility than they should have. Teenage Aster shouldn't have to take care of her sister in such a way, but because her parents are divorced, and because her mother sees an easy way out, Aster gets taken advantage of. Aster is creative and smart about how she fights for independence and to get her parents to do their share. She loves her

sister Lily so much, but I thought it was really neat how Aster realized she was even enabling Lily to remain dependent on her help. Melody Carson has a knack for creating real life between the pages of a book. Just Another Girl is a gripping story of a young woman's search for a way to be herself. I highly recommend it.

Ever feel like your life is not your own? Like, your parents are in charge or your siblings get all the attention? Well, that's exactly what Aster Flynn goes through in Melody Carlson's "Just Another Girl." Our story starts with 16-year-old Aster, who cares for her 15 year old handicapped sister, Lily. From morning until night, Aster cares for and supports Lily in a way that no one else in the family can. Her older sister Rose doesn't want to spend time with these two, her mom hides away by being a workaholic, and her dad checked out years ago. It's not until Owen (read: cute guy from school) notices her, that Aster is ready to take a stand for her own independence. She wants to be like everyone else her age and go on dates or hang out at the mall. With Lily in tow, that's not really happening. When the date is wonderful, but the consequences at home are not, Aster is more determined than ever to assert her need for independence. She needs a break from Lily because the idea of the four Flynn women living together into their old age does NOT appeal to Aster. Carlson takes an honest look at how siblings can get stuck with more responsibility than is fair. Aster is creative and smart about how she asserts herself, and she eventually talks to each parent and even forgives them for leaving her to take care of her sister. When we start "Just Another Girl," Aster is stuck in the middle, like being dealt a bad hand with which you can't do anything. Carlson weaves a tale that every teen should read, especially when trying to seek more independence. Aster is a strong and believable role model, and in the end, she is in the middle with a strong belief that doesn't waver.

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