



A Place in This Life

Julie Rieman Duck

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For Natalie Miller, it's just another family vacation. For someone else, it's the opportunity he's been waiting for.

With only a single peck from a guy named Frank, Natalie's anything but experienced with boys. But when Todd pops out of the water, says hi, and tells Natalie he has leukemia, all of that changes.

She's never had attention like this from a boy, let alone one who's a real charmer with sex on the brain and the experience to match. Drawn to Todd like a magnet, Natalie gives him her friendship, her love, and her body. Even when she's tempted by gorgeous, healthy schoolmate Alex, Natalie's desire to love and care for Todd pushes her to see how far love can go in spite of the potential for death of the relationship — and death of the one she loves.

A Place in This Life Details

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From Reader Review A Place in This Life for online ebook

Patricia Mckelvy says

Natalie doesn't have much experiences with boys, if any. Then she meets Todd on a summer family vacation and grows more than she thought she ever would. In their first meeting she learns that Todd has cancer. Todd is unique from the very start. He is very open and doesn't hold back. In a way Natalie's and Todd's meeting is perfect timing for each one of them, for many different reasons. Their relationship travels through many emotional roller coasters, all of which make this novel amazing.

Beware you will have shed tears. It is hard not cry while reading this novel. Our teens today go through many emotions and Julie Duck includes many of these different emotions beautifully. I wish this novel was around when I was a teen. Natalie is on the verge of becoming a woman, and not just in the physical and sexual way, but emotionally as well.

I did feel that the novel started too quickly. Within the first chapter not only do Natalie and Todd meet but Todd tells her he has cancer. I would have liked to see a bit more character development for Natalie. However, that being said after reading it all I can understand why it started as quickly as it did - Todd's character lived life to the fullest, without wasting time. In the end I came away from this novel emotionally drained and moved, all in the best ways.

Medeia Sharif says

Natalie is torn between two boys. Alex is handsome, sweet, and—as she finds out later—rich. Todd is a bad boy who has leukemia. Natalie, who is rather innocent and has never been in a relationship before, has these two boys vying for her attention. She makes her choice, even though heartache is inevitable. This book fully captures the teenage experience. I was inside Natalie's head as she underwent a tumultuous year of love, and I felt all her highs and lows.

Ro says

"A Place in This Life" is wonderful young adult novel is appropriate for all reading audiences, not just the young adult sect.

Although, it begins as a typical girl-meets-bad-boy story, when young Natalie meets the edgy Todd, it's the beginning of a deep attraction and meaningful friendship. However, it isn't long before she--and the reader--discover that Todd is suffering from leukemia. These two characters are thrust, not only into the complications of teenage romance, but are faced with the tough reality of mortality that they shouldn't have to confront until they are much older.

Ms Duck's telling of a modern star-crossed teenaged romance awakens many of the bittersweet memories that accompany us throughout our lives. A compelling story of first love...and loss. Kudos on this first published novel.

Casey says

awesome book, the last line is the title of the book, i seriously that just amde my day. that previous sentence also makes no grammatical sense but honestly this novel is SO AWESOME. everything flows well together, my favourite character is alex of course ;) and it's hjust so great. thanks ms. duck for sending it to me! =D

Brett says

This is not one for those who are after a light romance. It has to be the most moving book I have ever read. I still feel like someone's ripped me open and torn me to shreds. I didn't put this book down once, sitting glued to my kindle for the entire afternoon. I knew it wasn't going to be a walk in the park based on the synopsis, but I had no idea how much I would come to care for these characters. For the past however many hours it was, they were all that existed. Their pain is still affecting me as I sit here and try and keep the tears back long enough to pull together something that might resemble a review.

Read full review at Demons Read Too

Tee loves Kyle Jacobson says

First I would like to thank Julie and Amanda Paduella for allowing me to be a part of this blog tour. I have no idea where to start with this review. I have so many emotions running through me right now. This story is so gripping from the very start that it tugs at your heart. It is a story about firsts, first love, first loss, and first intimacy.

Natalie is seventeen and innocent. She has just finished her sophomore year and is starting the summer. She is going on a family vacation she does not want to go on but while there she meets a guy her age. Todd is on vacation recovering from Leukemia. He sees Natalie and is instantly intrigued with her. They spend a few days together and decide they want to carry this on after they get back home. Todd has to go back for more Chemo treatment and wants Natalie by his side. Natalie decides she wants to stand by Todd and be there for him because she cares for him.

As Natalie and Todd begin on the road of a relationship things seem to be going good. Natalie is loving and caring towards Todd even when Todd worries about dying. As their relationship progresses things start to happen. The story starts to unfold and things start to happen between Todd and Natalie and their are choices made that are difficult for them but what would love be without boundaries being tested. Can Natalie and Todd survive this relationship? Will Todd beat this cancer?

This story had me laughing and crying. I really enjoyed how Julie incorporated so many things from losing your virginity to first loves to death. Careless choices are made and what happens from there is a spiral effect that you never see coming because you are wrapped up in the story you don't see it coming. New loves are formed and new friendships are made but in the end the question remains will Natalie and Todd find a place in this life.

This is a must read! I have so many favorite quotes but here are a few. I hope you enjoy this book as much as I have.

“Natalie Miller, I love you and would never hurt you,” he said, petting my hair, hugging me even closer. I could feel newfound strength in his every muscle.

I said nothing as I collapsed into him and his life, whatever kind of life it was. Running from Todd was like running from a living-breathing problem. There was no real escape. I wanted to be near him, to breathe him, to protect him from ever hurting again. Never to be sick again, never to feel alone again. It was my soul calling, and I couldn't deny it.

We walked down the path, holding hands, and stopped to take in the expansive view of the ocean. The sun sparkled like stars as its light danced on the water. There was no visible smog belt, but only clear views to Catalina and beyond. Looking back at Alex, I squeezed his hand and felt that at last, I had found my place in this life.

My song for this book is by 3 Doors Down Here By Me

Kylee says

This book, although short, was so amazingly good! I loved every minute of it and I was bawling by the end. Such a great novel & it's always taking unexpected turns! AMAZING.<3

Vanessa Wu says

Although this book had some minor editing flaws that made it superficially less than perfect, I have no hesitation in giving it five stars because of the effortless plausibility of its prose.

The author has captured perfectly what it feels like to be a young girl on the verge of womanhood, wrestling with nascent sexual desires and the expectations of her family and friends.

The story is an unusual one and I didn't expect to like it. I'm squeamish about illness and I try to avoid too much discussion of medical details. But Natalie, the young girl in this story, gets involved with a boy with leukemia, so a certain amount of medical description is inevitable.

What makes the story so readable is the author's steady focus on Natalie's feelings. I particularly liked the emphasis on her insecurities about her body and her lack of confidence in relationships. I could identify with Natalie. The challenge with any piece of writing about sexual feelings is setting an appropriate context for them and Julie Duck does this expertly from the very beginning so that every nuance of Natalie's evolving experience rings true. Natalie's relationship with her family is also very well done.

There is a lot of detail in the book, a lot of very good dialogue, and the characters are developed naturally through their interactions with one another as the events of the story unfold.

This is the first of several books Julie Duck has written aimed at young adults. She says it's the kind of book she'd wished she could have read when she was a teenager. Yes, I believe her. I think many teenagers would

devour this book and identify with Natalie Miller; and I think Julie Duck should write many more excellent books like this for them so they don't have to wait too long between meals.

Jena says

This is one of those books that when you finish you kind of just sit there and wallow in how loaded the story actually was. I was completely satisfied when I finished but I was still doing the whole "jaw-dropping-wow-that-book-was-moving" emotion as well. *A Place In This Life* is not light by any means. It will pull at every single one of your heart strings. It's completely moving, emotional, and extremely raw.

We start with Natalie Miller, and her normal family vacation. She expects it to be boring, but then she meets Todd. And he's not like anyone she's ever met. He's outspoken, good looking in a non-conventional way, a complete bad boy, and well he has leukemia. As her emotional relationship grows with Todd, so does their physical relationship, but cancer doesn't stop for anyone. Then she meets her locker-mate Alex. Alex is gorgeous, and sweet, and obviously into her. With two completely opposite boys, cancer, and emotions running haywire Natalie will have to make a choice and be strong enough to stick with it.

I knew right from the synopsis that this book was going to be an emotion drainer. I knew that my heart might potentially break. But, oddly enough, those feelings are what make me love a book. Each of these characters gets put into such a dark place at times. To watch them all struggle and learn and grow is magic in itself. Especially Natalie. She's one of those protagonists who start somewhere in the beginning of the book and end somewhere completely different at the end, but in a strong I-was-so-proud-of-her way.

There's so many touchy topics that Julie has put into this book in such an exquisite way. She weaved things like first loves, sex, cancer, family problems, and so many more in such a way that has you pulling yourself chapter after chapter to know what will happen next. Also, I have to admit the book didn't end exactly that way I expected it to and that always pleasantly surprises me in the best ways. Granted, my heart was slightly broken and my emotions were shattered all over the place but I truly enjoyed this story.

A Place In This Life is a truly eye-opening and emotional roller coaster of a story. One that will definitely stick with me.

Side Note - There's two quotes that I absolutely fell in love with and I'm not quite sure why. But after I read them, I knew what was coming and the words just seemed to have so much wisdom in them. It just stuck with me.

"When I was in high school I saw two boys at once and it got pretty complicated."

Now my eyebrow was up. "Really? How'd it work out?"

"One broke my heart... and the other is your father," she said with a smile.

and

"You are, right now, the most interesting person in my world, and just about the only one who gives a damn about how I feel. I want to be close to you, as close as I can get, because life is worth living when you have someone to live for."

Mark Weller says

A Place in this Life is a powerful, bold story of teens going through changes that we all experience in our young lives. The story not only shares the thoughts of the characters, but illuminates the humanity within us that for some takes a lifetime to find.

Laura says

3.75 stars, really, rounding up.

I came away from this book feeling that I *almost* loved it. I was drawn to the premise initially: Natalie is seventeen when she meets Todd, a young man struggling with leukemia, while on vacation. In vowing to see Todd through his illness - first as a friend, later blossoming into more - she's making a choice that will change her much more than she anticipates.

It took me a long time to feel for any of these characters (and if not for the favorable reviews, I likely would have given up, to be honest), but after some time, Natalie got hold of me. I never much cared for Todd, but it's easy to see how Natalie gets caught up in him. She is a brave and empathetic young woman, well-written, and whose motivations and decisions are believable.

The young love story is realistic, giving the reader room to feel both Natalie's excitement and worries. The writing is witty and sharp, though unfortunately, the cancer research came on a bit too strong. It felt like the author had researched the illness deeply and wanted to use ALL of the information she learned - useful of course for the author, but no fun for the reader. There are also many spots of mundane description that didn't seem to lend to the story.

That said, it was a moving, thoughtful, and realistic account of first love and the toll illness takes on a person and a relationship.

Racquel says

Excuse me while I wipe the tears away.

Candace says

This was one of the most emotional books I have read in a long time. It deals with so much. First love, cancer, growing up... It was all very well woven together and felt very realistic to me. It brought me back to my teenage years and going through my first love(s). And so much of what Natalie goes through with Todd is very similar to what I've gone through, except without the cancer.

First of all, Natalie is a pretty naive 17 year old. Maybe naive isn't the right word, just inexperienced. She seems to know what's going on in the world with other teens, she just hasn't experienced much romantically

herself. When Todd pays attention to her she practically basks in it. She's desperate for something to change and to grow up a bit. But Todd has cancer, and while this is a concern of course, it's his cavalier attitude about sex and his somewhat obsession with it that has Natalie a bit worried. She does surprisingly well on her own, holding back his advances, but he's very persistent. I have to say that I had a lot of mixed feelings with Todd and I actually think that's a very good thing. I think that's what the author had in mind. First of all, his persistent and constant sexual innuendo is grating and made me not care for him much, but as we saw that he really does care for Natalie I liked him a bit more. And on top of that we see him suffer as Natalie brings him to treatments and stays by his side through some rough times. I guess I could say that I pitied him. He really had to go through a lot and he really only had Natalie.

Now at the same time Natalie has gotten to know Alex, who is her locker mate and a very cute guy. She's had some temptations and mixed feelings. At first I was annoyed with her behavior to sort of string each guy along, but keep reading because you'll see how this gets straightened out. It's something I didn't love, but with how much I did love the book, that was minor.

Family ends up being pretty important in the story. It's not that there's anything big, but her parents are present. They stand by Natalie as she goes through everything. They offer encouraging words and advice but never push her too hard to do any certain thing. They hold her hand when she's down and really losing focus on life and they are the kind of parents that every child should have. At the same time they weren't perfect, which made them more realistic.

This book wasn't perfect, but when I finished it I realized that this was one that really makes you think, makes you feel. And all the little things here and there that I didn't love were put on the back burner and were quite minor to me compared to how much I loved it.

Also, I have to put out a warning that this is for mature YA readers. There is sex and while it's not romance book sex, it is somewhat descriptive.

You can find this review and others like it on my blog at <http://www.candacesbookblog.com>

Sam says

You can read more of my reviews at Falling Books

Delightful, yet heart-shattering at times.

For Natalie Miller, it's just another family vacation. For someone else, it's the opportunity he's been waiting for.

With only a single peck from a guy named Frank, Natalie's anything but experienced with boys. But when Todd pops out of the water, says hi, and tells Natalie he has leukemia, all of that changes.

She's never had attention like this from a boy, let alone one who's a real charmer with sex on the brain and the experience to match. Drawn to Todd like a magnet, Natalie gives him her friendship, her love, and her body. Even when she's tempted by gorgeous, healthy schoolmate Alex, Natalie's desire to love and care for Todd pushes her to see how far love can go in spite of the potential for death of the relationship — and death of the one she loves.

I've never read a book like *A Place in This Life* before, where a character has to go through an illness and can potentially die at any moment. It was frightening, but Julie makes up for that by adding humour to the book.

This is a wonderful adventure that you won't want to end.

Natalie, a normal girl on holiday, meets the boy that changes everything. Todd, a charming young man, unfortunately dealing with cancer. I didn't like Todd at first, he seemed boring and not worth my time but as the story went on, I became drawn to his startlingly happy and cheerful personality. Natalie didn't react the way many girl would, which is to run away from the scary guy who looks like a skeleton. But Natalie sees past that, to the boy within, yearning to come out. They have an instant connection, it's truly beautiful. They're relationship becomes serious, they see more of each other. That is, until Alex, Natalie's (gorgeous) new locker mate, shows up.

It was hard to see the main character go through pain. Natalie probably felt useless, not being able to help Todd as he suffered through his medication and hospital visits. It was also hard to see such a nice young boy go through such a traumatic experience. I do admire Natalie for being so brave, to fall in love with a boy who might not be in this world much longer.

I feel that the ending was just right. Julie really gave an ending to be proud of. It's one that hits you hard in the chest. One that you want to change so badly but you know that it would be wrong to do so. I cried buckets and I'm sure anyone who reads *A Place in This Life* will at least shed a few tears.

I know you must all be thinking:

Yeah! I know how it's going to end! It's so obvious!

But let me tell you something, it's not. It's not the ending your expecting. This book truly shows you love and loss, in the most tragic way.

I think this is Julie's first novel? I'm not sure, but one thing I'm sure about is she is going to deliver some good stuff! Overall, this is a book everyone should read, it sends quite a strong message: Hold on to everything you've got. You never know when it might not be there any more. Something along that line, I'm not the best person with words.

Andrea P. says

Originally posted on Cozy Up With A Good Read

I wasn't really sure what to expect when I came into this book and I was really surprised. I found I could not put this book down at all as I read it. Julie did an amazing job bringing this story to life.

It had to have been difficult to take on such a heavy topic as she does here. This is not a light contemporary read, Julie really took on the emotional issues and the difficulties of what it is like to care for someone who is dying. I found myself crying throughout the book quite a bit.

Julie did a great job showing the thoughts of Natalie. This book will resonate with teenagers very well, in the way that Julie writes Natalie (she shows she really understands what teenagers go through). I really enjoyed reading as Natalie dealt with the different issues of a teenage girl coming into her sexuality (it was very real!)

I definitely recommend this book, Julie writes with a lot of heart, and shows her readers that sometimes you really can't help you fall in love with.

Check out an interview with Julie
