



Nothing to Lose

Alex Flinn

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I shouldn't have come back to Miami . . . I've been escaping cops' notice for a year now. I'm no longer Michael Daye, high school athlete with a promising future. Now I look like someone with no future.

When Michael saw a chance to leave town with a traveling carnival a year ago, he took it. Back then, his home life was spinning violently out of control. The carnival, with its "no questions asked" policy, seemed like a welcome escape. But now Michael's job has brought him back to Miami, where his mother is on trial for murder, making him wonder how much longer he can hide from his past . . . and his future.

Nothing to Lose Details

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From Reader Review Nothing to Lose for online ebook

Natalie says

I'm going to keep this short because I'm feeling a little underwhelmed.

I picked this up because Alex Flinn's *Breathing Underwater* has stayed with me for the last fifteen years. It punched me right in the **gut**. This book also tackled a tough topic - domestic abuse. While both are YA, *Nothing to Lose* felt *much* younger. I may have been more affected had I been a teenager reading this.

This was more of a **2.5 Star** read for me, but I still think it's an important topic that shouldn't be shied away from.

(For what it's worth, a book I felt did a better job tackling this topic was *Split*.)

Thomas says

This is probably the fourth or fifth book I've read from Alex Flinn, and although it was one of her first novels published way back in 2005, I still loved it just as much as some of her more recent novels. In "*Nothing to Lose*" Michael Daye's mother is being prosecuted for killing her abusive husband, who is also Michael's stepfather. The book alternates chapters to retell the events that Michael experienced under Walker's (the stepfathers) roof and explain what Michael is currently experiencing; living life as a Carny, and taking small steps to save his mom from what seems to be an inevitable fate.

Flinn has an extraordinary talent to suck readers in and keep them there. I just couldn't put this book down and had to finish it in one day (when I should've been studying). I give this book 4/5 stars because although it was an interesting read, I felt that it lacked a bit in certain areas. For instance, although Michael went through some very, very awesome character development I don't think any of the other characters went through any change besides some slight modifications. Also, this book was just a tad light-hearted in some areas of the plot that would've seemed tougher if described in real life times.

Still, "*Nothing to Lose*" was definitely worth the day I spent to read it.

Bona Fide Book Reviews says

Did you ever dream about joining the circus and running away when you were a kid? Did the thought of never-ending popcorn and cotton candy thrill you? What if it was more than a simple desire to escape chores and cleaning your room? For Matthew, that decision has a much darker motivation than riding the Tilt-A-Whirl all day.

At one time Matthew was a star football player one of the lucky few to be part of the upper crust of his high school. When his mother marries Walker, everything changes. Instead of scraping by and eating out of cans, they are eating lamb chops and watching the ocean from the windows of the mansion they live in. People on the outside think Matthew is fortunate, but they do not know that his mother has become a slave and is

beaten more days than not.

By his sixteenth birthday, Matthew has decided that he can no longer live a carefree life and continue playing ball and going to parties. He hopes that sacrificing his youth will protect his mother. So far, his presence at home has done nothing to keep her safe, but feeling trapped, he gives up. Fortunately, on his birthday he dares to go to the fair, filled with dreams of the days when his mother would take him. This time, he does not get lost in the joy of the side-show but falls in love. A week later, Walker is dead and his mother is on trial for murder. With no other way out, Matthew becomes carnie Robert Frost and a missing teen. A year can really change a person, and when the fair returns, Robert is faced with the choice between hiding with the circus and putting on Matthew's shoes again to help his mother.

It is not often that a story blows me away, but this one did. I was afraid that the back and forth from the present and the future that is throughout the entire book would distract me. Luckily, it added to the story and created a rich mystery. Ideas swirled around in my head as I tried to figure out where the story was headed, and while I did eventually reach the correct conclusion, it was a joy to get there. The characters were splendid and the pace was fast, keeping perfectly in synch with the past and present. The journey of Matthew was fantastic to read, and was easier to see having a more realistic outcome than other books with a similar plot. This book might be labeled Young Adult, but it is a wonderful read for those who are looking for something deeper to tug on the heartstrings.

The rating:

Genre and general reading age – mystery/social and abuse issues for teens and adults.

Level of sexuality – very low and appropriate for teens.

Is there graphic language? Only a few words.

Did I cry? No, but it is far from a light story.

Did I laugh? No.

Is there part of a series? It is a standalone.

Level of character development – very high. From Matthew to the girl he loves to his broken mother, each character has a clearly defined purpose and they meet those needs perfectly. It was easy to slip into Matthew's shoes and feel what he was going through.

This book does not disappoint. From start to finish it is a rollercoaster of emotions and tough choices. Do not jump in expecting a fluffy feel-good YA. It is heavy and can elicit some strong feelings. Abuse is a major theme, so be prepared when you pick this up. I hope you love it as much as I did. I am excited to give it ????????? stars.

Ashley says

One of Flinn's better stories. She tends to be really hit or miss for me- (Breathing Underwater was INCREDIBLE, most others are just, okay). While I don't think this one is as good as BU, I do think it's probably her second best... Or close to it :)

Bailey says

"She was the one who started me on the road I'm on now. If I can find her, maybe she'll help me figure out where I'm going."

Michael had a decent life. Sure, it had its ups and downs but he always knew he would get through it. He was a great football player and had a group of people that cared about him. This all changed when his single mom married Walker. For two years Michael watched as his mother was hit and abused by his stepfather. Feeling too weak to do anything, the vicious cycle of abuse continued. He even quit football in order to make sure that no harm came to those he loved.

Reluctantly he broke this norm, and instead of staying home, he went to the carnival one night. There he met and fell in love with a girl named Kirstie. The carnival season brought so many things including love . . . and the death of Walker.

One year later, Michael's mother is put on trial for the mysterious death of her spouse. Michael, now a runaway and an employee of the carnival, has returned and wants to save his mother from the inevitable outcome of prison.

Nothing to Lose is a story of love, forgiveness, and discovering that you are not to blame for another's actions. The book frequently changes from Michael's past to present with each passing chapter. I loved that this was done due to the suspense between each piece. I would recommend this book to anyone who has read Alex Flinn's amazing writing style and for those who haven't. You will not be disappointed that you did!

Nicole ((lost in the book's world)) says

Goodreads lost my review... -_- I read this book, two times and I wanted to revise my old review but my old review is gone -_0

Whatever

Nicole ((lost in the book's world)) says

I am almost give this book by 5 rate but one little thing that I dislike about this book so I give this book by 4.5 because of Kristie. I am hope that Kristie and Michael will meet up in the end of book but it didn't. ugh... But it is so good book.

Alanna P says

When it all goes wrong, I often say I want to join the circus. This is what happens when the circus brings you back.

Lacy Partin says

This story was about a boy named Michael Daye that goes by the name of Robert Frost that ran away from Miami and dropped out of school because of a mother that committed a crime that he wanted to get away

from. Michael works at a carnival as a carny. The main characters are Michael and his mother Lisa Monroe and his wealthy yet abusive father and step father. His mother is on trial for murder and his step father is now dead. Michael's main problem in the story was running away and keeping his fake identity and not getting caught by the cops. His mother's problem was obviously not getting put in prison and being called a murderer. Michael's father faced the problem of giving up his hard earned money on Lisa and his son. My favorite character was Michael because I can relate to a lot of his actions and life choices in the story. I can relate to Michael in the story because he feels that he needs to get away from his family and change his whole demeanor because of his family's actions. I felt the same as Michael in a way because he hates his family yet he still cares about what happens to them. He also is made to take a side between his mother and father and I've been put in that situation when a divorce happened in court. I liked this book yet it was kinda hard to follow and get to know who and what everyone's point in the story was. I liked this book because I love books with suspense, mystery and crime. My favorite part was at the end when his mother found out she was pregnant with a father that is now dead. That is crazy to think about because imagine having to tell that kid later on in life that their father is dead and your very own mother killed him. The author portrayed domestic violence very well and the impact it can put on kids and a family bond. This subject is taboo to talk about and the author shows it all. The author could have showed the characters' characteristics more. Yes I would recommend this book to someone who has went through domestic violence and needs some comfort with it and advice. The type of person who would like this is someone like me.

Jim says

Not sure why this was on my shelf, but there it was when I needed a quick read and it wasn't bad. I think young adults will enjoy it; I was pretty certain fairly early what the ending would be, and I was right, but maybe a newer reader won't. I thought about giving 2 stars, but since I finished, and quickly, I kicked it up one. I am not sure what book of hers is the best, but if I find out, I might read it.

Bre says

3 STARS!

Breathing Underwater is my absolute favorite novel from Alex Flinn. That book stuck with me since I was 12 or 13 (now I'm 24). This story wasn't bad but it was alright. I liked the storyline surrounding the drama that was going on in Michael's household and why he acted the way he did with his social life. The ending was surprisingly good. Mrs. Flinn does a great job when it comes to penning stories about domestic abuse.

Melissa Dwyer says

Originally rated E by Rosanne Cipollone

Michael Daye has a secret as to who killed his stepfather which could send someone to prison but he is not ready to reveal it yet. This story is well written and holds the reader's attention.

Caroline Nixon says

This is a book about a young boy who's life starting spinning out of control when he step father is abusing his mother and there is nothing that he can do to stop. Then one day, after he quit the football team and left all of his friends, an old friend asked to take him to the fair. When Michael gets tot he fair, what does he find? Trouble? How about love? After meeting someone new at the fair his life seems ot be getting a little better. He spends time with his new "friend" and forgets all about home. He keeps his mothers beeper with him just in case. Although, he knows that his mother would never page him if somethign went wrong. This book just made me want to keep reading and never put it down.

Brigid says

I love Alex Flinn's contemporary YA novels. While Beastly is one of my favorite books ever, I'm not as big a fan of Ms. Flinn's other paranormal/fantasy YA. This early dark stuff? Amazing. Just like with Breathing Underwater, Nothing to Lose tackles some heavy issues (in this case, spousal abuse leading to the stepdad's death and the stepson running away -- this isn't a spoiler, it's the basis of the book). I enjoyed the characters, and I really appreciated the resolution. Definitely worth a read.

Michelle Moczulski says

It was a dramatic story, with a very ironic ending. I really enjoyed the irony but I'm not sure many people can relate to the story, and I find it enjoyable when you can relate to the characters.
