



# The Space Between Heartbeats

*Melissa Pearl*

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## **The Space Between Heartbeats** Melissa Pearl

Nicole Tepper has it all—beauty, popularity, and the perfect boyfriend. But after a party she can't remember, she wakes up in a ghostly state, trapped between life and death. Nicole's injured body is lying in a wooded area, but she has no idea where—or how long she has left to live.

Only one person can hear her now: Dale Finnegan, a loner classmate that Nicole has relentlessly bullied. Dale's the last person in school who would want to help her, but he sets their tangled history aside to try to save her life. As they dig into what happened at the party, they discover her boyfriend isn't as perfect as he seems—and neither are her friends. With the clock ticking down and her life slipping away, Nicole must face a hard truth: Was what happened to her a terrible accident? Or does someone want her dead?

*This is a new edition of the previously self-published novel *Betwixt*.*

## **The Space Between Heartbeats Details**

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Author : Melissa Pearl

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# From Reader Review The Space Between Heartbeats for online ebook

~Tina~ says

**Betwixt** is a quick engaging read about a girl named Nicole who was stranded by her boyfriend in the middle of no where and gets hit by a car, leaving her for dead.

Nicole is in between living and dying. While her body is on the forest floor, her mind wanders to her usual life of home and school. But no one can hear her, that is, no one but Dale Finnigan, the guy she humiliated by calling him scarface, a nickname that rapidly spread throughout the entire school. A guy that was suppose to hate her, ends up being the one that can hear Nicole and the only guy that can help. Together they have to quickly find Nicole's body before someone else does and before it's too late.

Color me impressed! I really just loved this book! It's spiritually inspiring, surprisingly touching and beautifully told. I'm always a little skeptical of short reads. I always feel like I need more after finishing the story, but it wasn't like that for this book. It has everything it needs for it to be a fulfilling experience. I honestly can't think of a single element I didn't enjoy.

Nicole Tepper gets the wake-up call of her life. She's the kind of girl that's beautiful and rich and popular. Girls want to be her and guys want to date her. She's your average wild child and brat. Gets what she wants and doesn't care who she hurts in the process. Normally I don't usually find this kind of character likable, but there is more to Nicole, something deeper that makes the reader want to hold on to her just a little bit longer. And when we find out the reason why she is the way she is, it'll change your entire outlook and break your heart at the same time.

But I think it was Dale who owned me. He is instantly easy to like and connect with. He is such good people with such a brilliant heart. He has his own hard past to deal with, but unlike Nicole he chose a positive path instead of the destructive road he was already on. I love his personality, quick wit and determination. The way he goes out of his way to find Nicole was fierce and so damn sweet it hurt. He makes it easy to smile when ever he was in a scene and gave Nicole and the reader the encouragement and hope when the situation felt it's most messy or emotional.

I loved those moments when it was just Nicole and Dale. Their chemistry felt natural even though it should have been complicated. Their banter and fire made me laugh. It added perfectly to the charm and ease of their growing friendship.

Melissa Pearl's writing is simply wonderful. It was easy to get sucked into the story line with it's to-the-point start right up to it's tearful conclusion. While this particular concept isn't anything new, I still adore what Pearl brought into this book. I was constantly curious how things would play out, completely invested with these characters and was fascinated by the entire story line. There was one moment in the very end that had me in tears, it was just so beautifully done and touching. Sincerely a wonderful touch making this experience even greater.

All in all, I thought this was a really great great book and very much worth the read. It's a beautiful thought provoking story balancing the lines of life and living, death and dying, second chances and in the end, finally being able to do it right.

Instant favorite!

This review and more can be seen at; [WinterHaven Books!](#)

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## **Emily Anne says**

I really enjoyed *Betwixt*! With realistic, flawed characters and a super cool plot, the book will definitely enthrall reader's and keep them up past their bedtime.

Nicole is in a little bit of a tough spot. Her body is in the middle of nowhere, seriously injured. Thankfully, Nicole's spirit is free to roam around and get help. Easy, right? Nope. Dale is the only person that can hear her, and the two of them have a bit of unpleasant history. Dale was an intriguing character. He seemed to have his priorities straight, unlike Nicole, and had some cool backstory. I really wanted to slap Nicole for, at first, acting so terrible around him.

Watching Nicole grow was one of the best parts of the book. No better time to reflect on your life than when it is in danger of ending! Experiencing her revelations about Dale and her lousy choices was awesome. Lastly, Nicole's voice was perfect, I loved reading with her narrating.

Also, I should mention the mystery involving the hit-and-run driver who nearly killed Nicole. This was a very interesting part of the story!!! Also, all the action that unfold after finding the culprit are some of my favorite scenes. In the end, I am not sure if the villain got what he deserves, but, never fear, my complaint is fixed in the next novella!

Overall, *Betwixt* was a very, very addicting read! The mystery, characters, and development were splendid.

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## **Books says**

What a book! I read "*Betwixt*" in one sitting. When Nicole, the main character, leaves her body after she had been hit by a car, she becomes the proverbial fly on the wall. Not only does she discover some upsetting truths about her cool, wild friends, but she also realizes that things in her own home are not at all what she thought them to be. Dale Finnigan, whom she had nastily labeled Scarface, appears to be the only one who can hear and possibly help her; a fact that forces her to reconsider her attitudes, friendships, and ultimately her very right to be alive.

From the realistically crafted characters and their extremely touching stories, to the nail-biting suspense towards the end, "*Betwixt*" is most definitely one of the best and most beautiful books I have ever read. Not only is it a great story, but also a tale of forgiveness and second chances. The delicate spiritual touch gives incredible depth to the book and the gentle, sweet romance will touch the heart of any reader. I must put a "Kleenex" warning in this review as I most certainly needed some on several occasions during this story. That said, this book definitely has its humorous moments when Jester, the Labrador, bounces onto the scene and becomes quite the hero.

For a truly profound and utterly realistic reading experience, I recommend "*Betwixt*" as an absolute must-read deserving far more than five stars. I hope that this highly gifted author will hurry up and give the world many more such worthwhile books! (Ellen Fritz)

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## Fanny Núñez says

Awwwwww lo amé, me gustó mucho

Dale tiene pase directo a mi lista de chicos favoritisimos <3

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## Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

This book is kind of like *The Lovely Bones* if:

1. The main character is an irritating twit

*"Oh, yeah." I hold the card next to my face and flash a wicked grin at my phone camera. I post the photo to Instagram and show Amber.*

*Watch out, LA, I'm on my way. #retailtherapy #thanksdad*

2. If her family/friends gave two fucks about her death/disappearance

*Trent doesn't bite. "She's probably just run away to LA for the day."*

*"He's right, you know," Lauren chimes in, a little too brightly. "We all saw her Instagram pic. She's probably walking Rodeo Drive as we speak."*

*Amber's expression darkens. "She was supposed to take me." I can hear her thinking, Bitch. I wave a hand in her face. "I didn't not take you, Amber. I'm dying, not shopping on Rodeo Drive."*

*I glance at Lauren, who's back to studying her nails. "Whatever," she says. "You know Nicole. Anything to get attention."*

3. If there was a clichéd paranormal romance between the popular (and dead!) main character and the school Bad Boy

*My heart sinks.*

*It's Dale Finnigan.*

*Of all the people to finally hear me, it has to be the one person least likely to want to help me. If that's not irony, I don't know what is.*

4. If there was a wtf moment of Christian sanctimoniousness

*"Maybe I do. Maybe this is why God kept me alive in that car . . . for this situation right here." His voice shakes with the force of his conviction.*

*"I don't believe in God," I mutter.*

*Dale's gaze softens. "It doesn't matter, because He believes in you."*

Ok, maybe it's not so much like *The Lovely Bones* after all.

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## Monique says

\*Received via Netgalley

Really good premise that falls a little short unfortunately. The saving grace is some great writing but with irritating characters and some disjointed plot lines, it just wasn't for me.

Would encourage you to give it a try for yourself because it does have some wonderful reviews.

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## Tee loves Kyle Jacobson says

Betwixt is one of those stories that tares at your heart. Man I have to say I laughed and I cried. In this day and age there is so much bullying going on in schools it is scary. If you are not part of the popular group then you are treated like you don't exist. You are picked on and tormented by the kids who have more and that is just not right. In this case we meet a girl who has it all. She is beautiful, smart, and has the best jock boyfriend a girl could ask for. Her friends are just as cruel as her and she loves the attention they get as a group.

One night changes everything for Nicole Tepper. She is the popular girl you love to hate and boy oh boy can she be mean. At first I had trouble having any sympathy for her but when she is struck by a car and left for dead I started to feel for her. No one deserves to be treated like that. No matter what they have done. Nicole is left for dead and the only person who can hear her is the one person she dogged out and branded him a freak. Dale Finnigan may have a scar on his face but his heart is made of gold.

Nicole starts to haunt Dale and he wants nothing to do with her because of the pain and humiliation she caused him. But Nicole realizes that he is the only one that can save her so she will stop at nothing to get Dale to help her. Dale is the only other person who can help her besides the person who hit her and wants to finish the job off.

What will Dale do? Will he rescue his tormentor? Will he leave her to die like she should because she is so damn mean? Boy oh boy I loved me some SWOON worthy Dale and how the story ends will surprise you!

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## Jennifer says

Giveaway! <http://somelikeitparanormall.blogspot...>

Nicole's boyfriend was getting too frisky so she gets out of the car and starts to walk home, on a dark desolate road. She gets hit by a car and falls into a ditch. No one knows where she is and they think maybe she ran away. Nicole leaves her body in a ghost like state and no one can see or hear her but Dale hears her. The one boy who was nice to her and she called him Scarface. Now it is up to him to figure out what happened to her and where her body lays before it is too late.

Nicole starts off as a typical snooty mean girl. She is popular and hangs out with all the wrong people. She

does it mostly to protect herself from pain. A tragic past that she is trying to escape. Nicole didn't realize just how bad her friends were until she was able to spy on her friends while walking around as a ghost. They are laughing and not even worried about where she is, and her boyfriend, is cheating on her. Her boyfriend that knows she got out of the car, walked home by herself, and is now missing! Yet he wouldn't tell anyone what happened.

Dale has a large scar on his face and is mostly ignored and picked on at school. The scar has a tragic back story so he is able to bond with and understand Nicole like no one else. Even though he gets ridiculed he is a strong character and stands up for himself. Dale argues with Nicole and tells her the truth but also shows her how she is worth more. He has learned his lesson about what is important and helps Nicole learn the same lesson. He works really hard to save Nicole. Although one thing that kind of bothered me was that he wouldn't skip school. If I knew someone was out dying somewhere, I would skip a couple days to search for them. I think the circumstances call for it!

Nicole can't remember what happened before she woke up in her ghost like state so she has to put the pieces together. It isn't really a big mystery as most clues are unfolded quickly. But there is a lot of intense build up and worry. The whole time I'm like please find her already! It was upsetting that everyone wrote her off and just assumed she ran away without looking for her. Her family was very broken and they lacked communication. Dealing with loss, grief, and getting back to where you were before tragedy were big parts of the story. The accident was one that Nicole and her family learned from not to mention she met Dale, someone who truly cares about her.

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"I think that's another reason why I was so annoyed this morning. All the people you choose to hang out with have no idea who you really are. They're spending too much time bringing out the worst in you to discover how awesome you can be."

Dale's there in a second, gently catching me against him. His arm around my waist holds me tightly to his side.

"I want to catch you when you fall." He grins.

I roll my eyes.

"That's the cheesiest thing I've ever heard."

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\* I received a free copy in exchange for an honest review\*

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### ♥ Sarah says

Mean girl Nicole's body is lost in the woods, hovering between life and death. But somehow her consciousness or soul finds Dale, the "weirdo" loner she dubbed Scar Face (on account of the huge jagged scar running across his face). For better or worse, he's her only hope at a second chance in life.

As she travels back and forth, in and out of consciousness, she discovers who her true friends are, what led her on such a destructive mean girl path, and what she may truly want in life, if given a second chance. Dale & Nicky work together to find her body before time runs out and she's gone for good.

I liked how the story started and progressed, although I'd have to say the overall message was borderline

preachy. I liked that Nicole faced her past and found the will to fight; also, I appreciated the whole “everything happens for a reason” cliché, but I was a bit perturbed with the religious undertones.

I did enjoy the story, but I felt extremely uncomfortable at times with Dale. Maybe it’s just me but I felt he was a bit self-righteous at times. Or maybe I was just in shock because usually, it’s the “goody good” girls saving the bad boys. Instead, in this story, the “bad boy turned extra good” saves the “troubled, messed up mean girl living an empty, rotten life.” Also, I was kind of embarrassed when he told Nicky that he wanted to hold off on *making love* until he found his wife. Normally, I’d be supportive of guys with such strong resolve, morals, & respect for women. Yet somehow when it came from Dale, it just sounded condescending? Maybe it was because he was SO judgmental of all the “cool” kids?

\*\*Still, this could just be me being overly sensitive, because he was justified in his judgments. Nicky’s friends AKA the Cool Kids *were* messed up.

Nicky’s friends and horrible EX bf were such cardboard characters. They were so disgustingly clichéd and I couldn’t help but feel the author sloppily and lazily put these characters together; no spark, no individuality, no dimension – just flat or overly exaggerated. I found their reactions and behaviors to be truly despicable and too coldhearted. It was hard for me to believe these kids were even *human*!

But in the end, it doesn’t really matter because the plot really revolved around Nicky’s redemption, or second chance in life, and somewhat sweet romance w/ Dale. And because the overall message was so uplifting and positive, I wouldn’t rate this any lower than a 3/5. An entertaining clean read with a positive message.

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## **Kristin (KC) - Traveling Sister says**

### **\*3 Stars\***

A decent read, but didn't work for me quite as much as I'd hoped. Although its concept was intriguing enough — A desperate spirit in a state of limbo battling time to find her "killer" as her physical body teeters on the brink of death — I found that I never fully connected or committed to this story.

**Nicole** goes to a party one night and wakes up the next morning to find she's dead. Well, not *really*...

But almost.

Her gravely injured body lies dying in an obscure forest, but she has no recollection of how she got there, where she is, or who's responsible for putting her there. As her spirit floats in and out of physical form, she becomes aware that she needs help — and quick — if she wants to save herself. But no one can see or hear her pleas ... except for **Dale**: The boy she so heartlessly crushed with her cold and cutting words not days ago.

I enjoyed that this story didn't waste any time getting to the heart of the plot and steadily moved at a quick and energetic pace. The main characters had a decent amount of depth, each harboring their own struggles and misfortune, although the secondary characters were a lot less layered. The overall idea was original, and I appreciated the figurative and literal theme of a lost soul *finding her way back home*.

What I didn't particularly care for was the actual execution. I get that this is a young adult novel, so I fully expected it to read as one, but I couldn't get past the unnatural feel of the dialogue. Everything felt a little too

planned and plotted and rehearsed; taking away that "genuine" feel I search for in fiction. I also felt the story became slightly predictable at times, never delivering the shock-factor I had initially anticipated. I found it hard to stay focused on, and even more difficult to embrace.

That said, this book securely held my curiosity straight to its somewhat race-to-the-finish ending, and I can definitely see why many have enjoyed this read.

#### **Book Stats:**

? **Genre/Category:** Paranormal/YA

? **Steam Caliber:** Clean

? **Romance:** Slow building. Young and sweet.

? **Characters:** Broken and complex.

? **Plot:** Intriguing and energetic. Slightly predictable. Youthful.

? **Writing:** Simple and clean. Fluid.

? **POV:** 1st Person: Heroine

? **Cliffhanger:** None/Standalone

? **HEA?** (view spoiler)

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### **Jessica says**

Wow, this was brilliant! The story kept me on the edge of my seat the entire time and even moved me to tears. What a pleasant surprise! :)

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### **Cynn says**

**Wow.** Increíble. Una vez que empecé a leer este libro no pude parar. A pesar de que la historia es algo trágica y triste también es entretenida y fácil de leer.

En *Betwixt* nos encontramos con la historia de Nicole, la típica chica popular. Tiene un novio y un grupo de amigas que siempre están con ella. Una noche va a la fiesta de Matt y tras pelear con Trent, su novio, Nicole decide caminar por la carretera hasta su casa, hasta que un auto la atropella abandonándola en el bosque. Ella piensa que muere, siente el dolor y sabe que nadie va a ayudarla. Pero a la mañana siguiente vé que todo está como siempre estuvo, está en su cama, en su casa y puede escuchar a su madre. Pero su madre no la escucha ni le responde, lo que ella parece tomar como algo normal ya que su madre hace el llamado "tratamiento de silencio" cada vez que pelean. Pero algo va mal cuando llega a la escuela y ella se da cuenta que está en la **línea de la vida y la muerte**. Nadie puede escucharla ni verla, salvo **Dale Finnigan**, el chico que ella humilló delante de todos sus amigos. Dale es capaz de escucharla y sentirla, pero después de todas las cosas malas que Nicole le hizo, quiere ignorarla. No tienen mucho tiempo antes que ella realmente muera o aquel que la atropelló la encuentre y termine lo que empezó. ¿Dale estará dispuesto a ayudarla a pesar de todo?

La historia está narrada en 1º por nuestra protagonista **Nicole**, lo que logra que sepamos todo lo que ella siente y piensa en cada momento. A pesar de que al principio odié como era con Dale y con el resto de las personas, al final terminé sintiendo lástima por ella. Ella sabe que está **quebrada**, que algo está roto en ella y supone que siendo mala persona puede borrar cómo era antes. Piensa que todo lo que le sucede se lo merece. La gente dentro de su círculo popular le da la espalda completamente, nadie se pregunta dónde está o qué le pasó y eso es simplemente muy triste.

Nadie se preguntó por qué no aparecía Nicole, ni siquiera sus padres, excepto **Dale**.

**Dale**, wow, sin dudas me enamoré de él. A pesar de cómo Nicole cuenta su apariencia física puedo decir que, aún con todas las imperfecciones, era alguien que valía la pena. Y más cuando Dale nos cuenta por qué tiene esa cicatriz en su cara. Sin dudas él es el personaje con más fuerza en esta historia. Es el encargado de mantener tranquila a Nicole y darle la fuerza que ella pensó que nunca le daría. Las cosas que hace, las búsquedas y las palabras que le dice... me dieron escalofríos.

*"Sometimes we just have to accept the fact we can't explain everything. Life happens, whether we want it to or not and we don't always have a reason why. Our job is to try and make some good come out of it".*

**Betwixt** es un libro que recomiendo sin dudas. A pesar de que a veces te dejaba con el ceño fruncido por culpa de la preocupación y las injusticias que tuvieron que pasar Dale y Nicole también te deja con un sentimiento extraño. Te hace cuestionar muchas cosas. Te enseña que no siempre deberías dejarte llevar por lo que dicen o hacen los demás. Y sobre todo **no juzgar a las personas antes de conocerlas**. Lo amé.

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## **Amel Armeliana says**

"I don't believe in God" (Nicole Tepper)

"But He believes in you" (Dale Finnigan)

Just imagine, in one moment you're a very popular girl with very popular friends and a hot boy friend. But then you're hitting by a car, you're "betwixt", you're not dead but you're soul outside your body, looking for help, and the only one who can hear you is the guy that you publicly humiliated.

Nicole Tepper adalah cewek cantik dan populer dengan "click" yang super populer juga. Nicole hanya mengencani cowok-cowok "hot" dan merasa berhak "berakting" bitchy dengan siapapun yang tidak dia atau teman-teman click nya sukai. Termasuk dalam hal ini cowok dengan bekas luka di wajahnya, Dale Finnigan. Dale Finnigan adalah murid pindahan dengan masa lalu yang digosipkan "kelam". Cowok seperti Dale tidak akan pernah masuk hitungan bagi Nicole dan teman-temannya.

Suatu hari Dale mengembalikan ipod Nicole yang tertinggal di kelas dan ternyata mereka menggemari rock band yang sama dan Dale memberikan CD dan kalung rantai dengan "dog tags" yang merupakan aksesoris asli dari group band tersebut. Kegembiraan Nicole langsung berubah menjadi rengutan dan pura-pura sebal dengan kehadiran Dale begitu clicknya, Amber dan Penny mendekati mereka. Dan ketika Dale mencoba

mengajak Nicole untuk hang out, dengan kejam Nicole menjawab, "Whatever, Scarface." Setelah itu julukan scarface melekat pada Dale. Sesungguhnya, di dalam hatinya Nicole menyesali apa yang diucapkannya dan ingin meminta maaf. Tapi kata maaf itu tidak pernah berhasil keluar dari mulut Nicole.

Nicole tetap Nicole seperti biasanya, party dengan click nya, memacari cowok-cowok populer bahkan mencuri kartu kredit ayahnya. Dia seperti berusaha membuat dirinya se bitchy mungkin dan orang tuanya seperti membiarkan Nicole seperti itu. Di malam itu, seperti biasa Nicole pergi "belajar bersama" dengan clicknya dan pacarnya, Trent. Hal terakhir yang dia ingat, dia berjalan sendirian di malam yang gelap dan kemudian ada cahaya yang sepertinya berasal dari lampu mobil dan dia tertabrak dengan keras dan terjatuh melewati pagar pembatas jalanan.

Keesokan harinya Nicole terbangun di tempat tidurnya di rumah, tidak kurang apapun juga, tapi masih berpakaian sama seperti hari sebelumnya. Nicole terburu-buru bangun, takut terlambat ke sekolah. Nicole meminta tumpangan dengan Ibunya, tapi Ibunya seperti tidak mengacuhkannya. Nicole fikir Ibu nya marah padanya. Sampai di sekolah, Nicole berhasil menyelip ke kelasnya. Di kelas, bff Nicole, Amber and Penny tidak mengacuhkannya, bahkan tidak mau melihat ke arahnya. Kesal, Nicole akhirnya keluar kelas dan malah menemukan pacarnya, Trent berciuman dengan cewek lain. Murka, Nicole bermaksud memukul Trent, tapi ternyata cuma udara kosong yang dipukulnya, pukulannya menembus badan Trent. Dengan penuh kengerian Nicole menyadari bahwa ternyata memang tidak ada yang bisa melihat dia. Panik, Nicole tiba-tiba tersadar dalam kesakitan yang amat sangat. Rohnya kembali ke badannya. Tubuhnya tidak bisa digerakkan dan sepertinya tangan dan kakinya patah, kepalanya berdarah. Yang Nicole lihat hanya pepohonan di sekitarnya, tapi dia tidak mengetahui di mana dia berada, dia bahkan tidak ingat apa yang terjadi.

Ketika rasa sakit yg amat sangat kembali menyerangnya, roh Nicole kembali keluar dari badannya. Ingin mencari tahu apa yang sebenarnya terjadi, Nicole berusaha berada di sekitar teman-temannya yang sepertinya sama sekali tidak peduli dengan tidak munculnya Nicole. Mereka malah beranggapan Nicole kabur. Ketika Nicole berteriak kesal, Dale Finnigan tiba-tiba menatap ke arah dirinya, seakan-akan mendengar suaranya. Mulailah Nicole "menghantui" Dale. Dale yang awalnya seakan-akan bersikap tidak mendengar, luluh juga ketika Nicole meminta maaf dan bersedia membantu Nicole. Such a sweet Dale.

Dale kemudian menanyai Trent yang mengaku tidak tahu menahu tentang Nicole dan bahwa dia menurunkan Nicole di rumahnya malam tadi. Tidak percaya, secara diam-diam mereka menggeledah mobil Trent dan menemukan iphone Nicole di dalamnya. Nicole kemudian ingat kalau malam sebelumnya dia menolak ketika Trent mengajaknya having sex dan dia diturunkan di tepi jalan. So touched ketika Dale bilang, "The only person who should be touching you like that is someone who loves you and that dickhead doesn't" yang di jawab Nicole dengan pahit, "If that's the criteria, no one would ever touch me."

Ketika kembali ke badannya kembali, dengan rasa sakit yang semakin menggerogoti, perlahan Nicole ingat bahwa dia ditabrak oleh mobil yang pengemudinya sepertinya mabuk dan dia terlempar melewati pagar pembatas jalan dan terjatuh di tepian sungai di antara pohon-pohon yang menutupinya. Tapi Nicole tidak bisa mengingat di mana tempatnya. Amber dan Penny, yang "katanya" teman-teman Nicole, tidak melakukan apa-apa selain menjelek Nicole di belakangnya.

Dari sahabatnya yang murid teladan dan juga teman masa kecil Nicole, Adam Hutton, Dale mengetahui kalau Nicole dulunya adalah anak yang sangat baik. Segalanya berubah setelah kematian adik Nicole, Jody yang terjatuh dari pohon di depan rumahnya. Sweet Nicole berubah menjadi bitchy Nicole. Nicole sengaja berteman dengan orang-orang yang "shallow", yang tidak akan pernah melihat langsung ke dalam dirinya, seperti Dale. Nicole menolak membicarakan Jody dengan Dale.

Dale dan Nicole mencoba menyusuri sepanjang jalan yang mereka perkirakan di lewati Nicole malam itu, tp tidak membuahkan hasil. Nicole mengikuti Dale ke rumahnya, ke kamarnya tepatnya \*grin\*. Keuntungan menjadi invinsible, Nicole bisa "mengamati" Dale berganti baju tanpa ketahuan \*bad girl,Nicole\*, dan ternyata Dale has a hot body dan bekas luka di wajahnya justru membuat Dale semakin seksi (Ouch!! I can imagine that \*big grin\*). Anjing kesayangan Dale, Jester ternyata bisa "merasakan" Nicole dan sepertinya sangat menyukai Nicole. Melihat keakraban keluarga Dale, Nicole merasa tertampar, ingat dengan keluarganya sendiri sebelum kematian Jody.

Pulang ke rumahnya, Nicole menyaksikan ibunya menangis kehilangannya dan bertengkar dengan ayahnya. Ayahnya mencoba meminta bantuan sheriff Hutton, ayahnya Adam. Tetapi sheriff sepertinya tidak menanggapi dengan serius. Kembali ke badannya, Nicole merasa badannya semakin sulit untuk digerakkan. Kemudian Nicole seperti mendengar suara, langkah kaki dan ringtone telepon genggam. Nicole ingin berteriak, tetapi tiba-tiba merasa takut. Bagaimana kalau ternyata orang itu adalah orang yang menabraknya dan sekarang benar-benar ingin menghabisinya? Yang dia inginkan adalah kembali kepada Dale.

Nicole mengikuti Dale ke sekolah dan ketika Dale mencoba bertanya kepada Amber dan Penny, mereka malah menghina Dale. Jadi seperti itulah dia dulu juga memperlakukan Dale. Kemudian Trent tiba-tiba mendatangi Dale dan memukul Dale karena masih mencari-cari Nicole. Nicole kesal karena Dale tidak membalas Trent. Mereka malah bertengkar hebat. Ucapan Dale berhasil menyakiti Nicole dan berakhir dengan Nicole meninggalkan Dale. Kembali ke rumahnya, Nicole kembali teringat dengan Jody dan teriakan adiknya memanggil dirinya ketika dia terjatuh.

Nicole sangat terkejut ketika tiba-tiba Dale datang ke rumahnya. Dale berusaha menjelaskan kepada orang tua Nicole untuk mencari bantuan dengan serius atas hilangnya Nicole. Dan ketika Nicole berbisik "thank you" di telinga Dale, Dale langsung buru-buru meminta maaf karena telah menyakiti perasaan Nicole. Nicole akhirnya menceritakan betapa terpukulnya dia dengan kematian Jody dan Dale juga menceritakan asal luka di wajahnya. Dale ternyata dulunya adalah anak berandalan, tetapi suatu kecelakaan di mana dirinya adalah satu-satunya yang selamat merubah semuanya. Dale telah berjanji kepada Tuhan, apabila dia mendapatkan kesempatan kedua maka dia akan memanfaatkannya untuk kebaikan.

Ketika Nicole kembali ke tubuhnya, dia kembali mendengar langkah kaki yang kali ini diikuti dengan pembicaraan dua orang yang intinya mereka harus menemukan Nicole hidup atau mati dan "membereskannya". Kembali kepada Dale, Nicole menceritakan pembicaraan dua orang tersebut dan adanya petunjuk cat biru yang tertinggal di pagar pembatas jalanan akibat tabrakan tersebut. Sekarang mereka harus menemukan mobil berwarna biru dengan cat yang tergores. Nicole selama ini mencurigai Adam Hutton, anak sang sheriff yang juga sahabat Dale karena sejak kejadian itu mobil Adam tidak pernah terlihat lagi di sekolah. Tapi Dale berkeras bahwa Adam tidak mungkin bertindak seperti itu, lebih mungkin Trent yang melakukannya.

Dale dan Nicole akhirnya berhasil memperoleh daftar siapa saja yang mempunyai mobil berwarna biru. Tapi suatu kejadian menyebabkan Dale akhirnya tertangkap oleh Sheriff Hutton dan dijebloskan ke penjara. Keadaan semakin genting, karena waktu semakin sempit bagi Nicole dan Dale. Terutama Nicole, mampukah Nicole bertahan sedikit lebih lama lagi sampai Dale menemukannya? Atau justru orang yang menabraknya yang akan menemukannya lebih dulu? Dan siapakah sebenarnya yang menabrak Nicole? Trent atau Adam? Dan bagaimanakah caranya Nicole dapat membebaskan Dale dari penjara?

Betwixt is such a good book. A quick read and a great story. Mengingatkan kita bahwa setiap orang berhak untuk mendapatkan kesempatan kedua. Mengingatkan kita juga, betapa pentingnya to believe in God, to have faith. It doesn't matter what religion we believe in to, as long as we believe in God, we'll never loose

our way.

I do love our boy here, Dale Finnigan. Walaupun bekas luka di wajahnya menjadikan dia an "outcast" dan sering dicemooh, tapi dia tetap berkeras untuk mempertahankannya dan tidak berniat untuk menghilangkannya sebagai pengingat seperti apa dirinya dulu. Sedangkan Nicole adalah a lost girl, seorang gadis yang dulunya so sweet and a book freak tapi berubah menjadi such an irritating and bitcy girl untuk menutupi rasa bersalah dan rasa sedihnya karena meninggalnya sang adik, Jody. Tapi akhirnya takdir mempertemukan mereka berdua dalam situasi yang sungguh tidak terduga.

As usual, I like to put a themesong to a book that I reviewed. And for this book, I choose one of my favorite song from Switchfoot, Only Hope. Mungkin kebanyakan lebih tahu lagu ini karena dinyanyikan oleh Mandy Moore sebagai Ost A Walk to Remember, but I love the original one ;)

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## **Sana says**

Even though Betwixt is little over 200 pages long, it managed to stir up a range of emotions inside me. The story begins when Nicole was out partying as usual but then things turned from bad to worse when her boyfriend Trent leaves her stranded in the middle of nowhere. More annoyed than frightened, she starts walking down the road cursing, gets hit by a car and wakes up invisible to everyone but Dale Finnegan. With no memory of what happened last night, Nicole really thinks she is doomed.

On the surface, Nicole seems like the run of the mill popular, mean girl in high school who spend her days partying and staying out late at nights. She has almost convinced herself of the persona she adopted ever since Jody. The tree that Nicole tried to avoid looking at in order to forget the pain of what happened. To be mean and rude so people end up hating her which is so much easier than letting them see the damage in her.

There are little revelations along the way, as the discovery for Nicole's body continues with Dale's help. Being invisible to everyone except Dale, Nicole gets to see the true face of all the people in her life. When the initial shock wears off and search efforts go futile, Nicole gets the overwhelming feeling of deserving to die. To never be found. But it's more about the journey of getting to her body than the destination. Especially when she drifts inside her body from time to time and the unbearable pain makes her realize the grave situation she is. She might just die if no one finds her in time.

Dale is a unique character in the book, he has an easygoing aura around him and the fact that it's difficult for something to get to him. He might just have a scar running down one side of his face but he feels more proud of it than ashamed. No one know how he got it. He attempted to talk to Nicole before but she more than harsh with her and he finally had to let go. So when he comes across Nicole's voice in school, despite being wary of her he decides to help her.

For all the time Nicole spends with Dale, she actually likes it but is afraid to admit so. Saddened by her parents initial reaction of her running away, Nicole goes through strong emotions when her parents consider the graveness of the situation as days pass. Dale and Nicole try to locate her body and find themselves more times at a standstill than they'd have preferred. However, when Nicole catches two people trying to find her body to bury her, things starts looking up.

The time Nicole and Dale spend together, confiding in each other and just being together is stirring. When Nicole gets to look at her life from the outside, she realizes how empty it really has been. And she knows

why. It's heartbreaking and gut-wrenching when her parents finally realizes that Nicole is worse off then they'd believe. What pulled them apart is part of the mystery and same goes for Dale and his headfirst approach towards life.

Betwixt is an engaging story of the time Nicole spends in between the state of living and dead. Will she survive and whether she would amend her falling out with her parents is an engrossing discovery. Betwixt is a thought-provoking book which jolts the reader's mind to question the existence and why do we choose what we choose. Melissa Pearl has written a beautiful story of not just surviving life but living it. Yet for all that Betwixt offers, it's a forgettable story because of its genericity.

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## **Melissa Pearl says**

It's here. It's finally here!

I feel so privileged to share this book with everybody. It's been an amazing project to work on and it feels SO good to have it out in the world.

My aim for writing this book was to pull a few heart strings, make my readers laugh a little, cry a little and hopefully catch a glimpse of what unconditional love looks like.

I hope you all enjoy Betwixt :)

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