



Between Before and After

Maureen Doyle McQuerry

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Molly spends her California summer alternately watching out for her little brother Angus and tip-toeing around her mother’s raw feelings. Molly needs her mother more than ever, but Elaine shuts herself off from real human connections and buries herself in the lives and deaths of the strangers she writes about. When Uncle Stephen is pressed into the limelight because of his miracle cure of a young man, Elaine can no longer hide behind other people’s stories. And as Molly digs into her mother’s past, she finds a secret hidden in her mother’s dresser that may be the key to unlocking a family mystery dating to 1918 New York—a secret that could destroy or save their future.

Between Before and After Details

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Author : Maureen Doyle McQuerry

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From Reader Review Between Before and After for online ebook

Sheila Goicea says

I received an ARC of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you!

Review to come shortly!

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The Book Valkyrie says

Maureen Doyle McQuerry has crafted a beautifully emotional story filled with love, loss, hope, and discovery.

Ms. McQuerry's writing style is absolutely captivating, as I can guarantee you will be unable to stop flipping the pages of this book due to its ability to enchant readers. Everything from the plot, setting, and characters in this novel are original and unforgettable. I loved reading in the perspectives of both Molly and her mother, Elaine, for they both had such exquisitely different ways of viewing things.

I loved this book's setting as well. It was very well-developed and vividly written. While reading *Between Before and After*, I felt as though I was actually being transported to another world.

The only thing I would critique about this book is its ending. I found it to be slightly rushed, for it lacked much-needed build-up and development.

But all in all, this is a dazzling story that you won't want to miss out on once it hits shelves!

Elizabeth Mathis says

“The carnage began with the roses. She hacked at their ruffled blooms until they dropped into monstrous drifts of red on the parched yellow lawn ... Only two things kept my mother grounded to us: my uncle Stephen and stories.”

Fourteen-year-old Molly worries about school, friends, and her parents' failed marriage, but mostly about her mother's growing depression. Molly knows her mother is nursing a carefully-kept secret. A writer with an obsession for other people's life stories, Elaine Donnelly is the poster child of repressed emotions.

Molly spends her California summer alternately watching out for her little brother Angus and tip-toeing around her mother's raw feelings. Molly needs her mother more than ever, but Elaine

shuts herself off from real human connections and buries herself in the lives and deaths of the strangers she writes about. When Uncle Stephen is pressed into the limelight because of his miracle cure of a young man, Elaine can no longer hide behind other people's stories. And as Molly digs into her mother's past, she finds a secret hidden in her mother's dresser that may be the key to unlocking a family mystery dating to 1918 New York—a secret that could destroy or save their future.

Rating: 4.5/5 Penguins

Quick Reasons: deliciously poignant; that purple prose slays; believable, flawed characters; the growth discovered in the mystery was on point; this journey will crawl into your heart and stay there

HUGE thanks to Maureen Doyle McQuerry, Blink Publishing, and Fantastic Flying Book Club for sending a complimentary galley of this title my way! This in no way altered my read of or opinions on this book.

"We don't always know what a story means up front. In fact, we can't know until we experience the beginning and the end." He picked up a smooth, flat stone and sent it sailing out across the water. It skipped five times, leaving a widening trail of circles, before it sank. "I was looking at that *Hansel and Gretel* book the other day, the one that was your mom's. Most people don't remember the ending. They think the story ends when the witch is pushed into the oven."

"The children find their way home again."

This book was a journey, Penguins--and a heart wrenching, poignant one at that. The dual POVs/time frames really helped to fully round the characters out, especially in the case of Elaine.

Where from Molly's POV, Elaine seems trapped in her own world, full of secrets...we, as readers, get to see the world FROM Elaine's younger years while also helping Molly unravel the mysteries of her mom.

Maureen Doyle McQuerry built a strong story foundation, sprinkling just enough clues throughout that while readers might have a sense of SOME of the darkest abysses to be unraveled, some of the biggest reveals were left to settle in their own time, and with a bang. I really enjoyed the way that the most applicable life lessons were left to fill themselves out and fall into place without being forced. The growth found in the journey, especially in the case of Molly trying to figure out just who she is, was so beautifully rendered.

The purple prose is likewise delicious. Maureen Doyle McQuerry wielded a pen dipped in the finest of words, and knew how to weave a tapestry of gorgeous imagery. I had next to no trouble falling into this story from page one. The characters were believable and so easy to empathize with, as well. The gritty atmosphere and emotional leanings of the time period were equally well-handled, taking care not to sugar coat the hardest lessons but also approaching each with sensitivity and respect.

On the way out, Elaine pointed to the statue of Saint Stephen. A long robe fell to his ankles and in one palm he held a pile of rocks. He looked too young to be a saint.

"That's who Mama named you after." No sense in telling Stephen his namesake had been stoned to death.

Stephen considered the statue. "Lainey, I'd rather he wasn't wearing a dress."

I just CANNOT say enough about this book. It is beautiful, inside and out (no, really, every finite detail was approached with care, from the cover art to the title headings and page breaks). Maureen Doyle McQuerry crafted a winner in my book, Penguins. I encourage those who love historical fiction with believable characters and family secrets to pick this book up--I guarantee you'll lose yourselves in the journey just as easily as I did!

TheReadingCornerforAll Lopez says

The space between before and after is a curious place to define for this is where forgotten truths and secrets often lie. This pocket of time can be founded by the past where all the things we wish to tuck away are gradually layered. However, the space between before and after is not just limited to the past for it extends itself throughout multiple generations that enclose their individual desires and confidences. Author Maureen Doyle McQuerry's usage of dual narratives which span through time in her latest work, *Between Before and After*, demonstrates how the past and the future are inevitably connected within time's grasp.

In 1955, Molly is a young girl who wishes to piece together fragments of her mother's past. Back in 1918, all Elaine wishes is survival for her brother and herself who must fend for themselves after their mother's passing. In the process of reading the story, readers gain a firm understanding of the characters and how mother, Elaine, and daughter, Molly, are reflections of each other yet they cannot find a way to really connect.

The chapters in *Between Before and After* alternate between Molly and Elaine's narrative and time; it arises interesting perceptions about what the present actually constitutes. For Elaine, the idea of time is relative because she is constantly reliving her moments from before; this is a part of her truth and her identity. Molly, on the other hand, who is still constructing her sense of self, considers knowing everything about her mother's past as something integral towards her own personal construction.

I enjoyed how small passages of Elaine's own version of Hansel and Gretel are scattered throughout the story like breadcrumbs in their own right. It serves as a parallel to the ongoing events of the time and is symbolic to how life turns into a story of its own.

Altogether, this was a great historical coming of age novel that blends the generations and brings a great tide of emotions through closure and understanding.

Erin says

#ItsNotYouMsMcQuerryItsMe

KayCee K says

Told in different times the past and future. Elaine's is a young girl worried about school, family and overall life. Given a hard hand in life she does her best to carry her and her brother throughout life. While the other point of view comes from, Molly who spends her summer chasing her mothers past, while dealing with her Uncle who is tossed into the light of the town for doing a miracle.

Once I started this story I was lost into the pages, so it was easy to spend hours reading this book. I finished it in just a few days and I still find myself thinking about it. I enjoyed the characters, for me, they are what made this book amazing. Their wit and caring, made me hope for them. The messages of family, roles of women and faith; parts were beautifully done. Going from the past to the future was done so well, I never got confused about who I was reading. I loved how Hansel and Gretel were sprinkled in between the parts. This title and cover fit this book perfectly. But for me, I loved how much writing and the power of words affected these characters and their lives. I did highlight a few lines that I love and hope they made it into the finished book.

Step into this beautifully written book, that feels like a classic with family, drama & hope!

I was given an ARC of this book, however, this is my 100% honest thoughts.

Rose says

I loved, loved, loved Ms. McQuerry's writing style. The split-time was handled in an incredible manner, with the end of each chapter being left in a cliffhanger. It made the novel difficult to put down. Many times throughout the story, an excerpt from Hansel and Gretel is used, adding character to the story as a whole. Despite everything that I loved, the content was mature enough that I cannot recommend this book to teens. There was a description of how abortion is performed and prematernal sex resulting in a child. There were also numerous comments scattered throughout the novel that were not appropriate.

Personal Rating: 2 Stars

Content Rating: 1 Star

*I received a copy of this book through NetGalley in exchange for a review. A positive review was not required.

Wendy Poteet says

I loved this book! If you're a fan of historical fiction, put this on your must-have list!

Tiffany Lyann says

" The carnage began with the roses.
She hacked at their ruffled blooms
until they dropped into monstrous drifts
of red on the parched yellow lawn"

As far as the story, and writing, go, I have very little to complain about. Several times I found myself losing track of time and space as I was absorbed into the story. More than once I was forced to stop and really think about the events that happened, each one taking a toll on me emotionally as if I was Molly or Elaine, living through it. This is the sign of a brilliant writer. On top of the beautiful prose, each chapter was a significant cliffhanger that kept me turning pages to find out what happened.

"Only two things kept my mother grounded to us:
my uncle Stephen and stories ."

The novel is told in a dual timeline and POV style. Molly's chapters are first person, while Elaine's are third. I really thought I would be distracted from the dual POV - especially with it changing between first person and third person, but I found that it worked well within the story. I have read novels previously that this style led to a jumbled mess of confusion. Between Before & After did not. It was fluid, beautiful, dark, and charming all at once.

Elaine's chapters were, for me, more captivating than Molly's chapters. Maybe it's my preference in setting and style or that Elaine's story was where the mystery lies -either way, it caused me to consume Elaine's chapters more rapidly each time. Molly's chapters just seemed dry at times for me.

The "miracle" also didn't really appeal to me - I've read that story line far too often - so that seemed to detract from Molly's search for answers about her mom for a bit of the story. Others who enjoy that type of story line would probably thoroughly enjoy that particular story line. Despite his story line though, I found that Uncle Stephen was one of my favorite characters in the book.

On the way out, Elaine pointed to the statue of Saint Stephen.
A long robe fell to his ankles and in one palm he held a pile of rocks. He looked too young to be a saint.

My favorite part of the entire work was the characters. The characters were believable and, honestly, extremely accurate. Molly, Elaine and Stephen were so real that I felt like I was sitting next to them at times. The flaws of normal human beings - instead of a heroine that is constantly perfect - really anchored the story and kept them well rounded. Elaine's descent into her depression was an accurate and painful thing to watch. Elaine's chapters really gave her a depth that we otherwise wouldn't have had. I really feel like this rounded her character and made her relatable. The secondary characters were just as palpable as the MCs were. I truly felt like I knew them, their ideals, and their thoughts - when explored through Elaine's chapters. The depth of these characters is again, a testament to the author's abilities.

"That's who Mama named you after."
No sense in telling Stephen
his namesake had been stoned to death.

Stephen considered the statue.

"Lainey, I'd rather he wasn't wearing a dress."

The novel covered some pretty intense topics, things that I didn't expect popped up several times - sending the story in different directions.

I was enthralled by the perseverance of the characters, and the process that McQuerry used to allow the conflicts to come to a close organically. Many times resolutions feel forced and not completely rounded. This was not the case for the ending of this story. There were of course small plot holes and things that didn't line up quite right, but overall - I found the ending to be a fitting ending for the story and the characters.

Over all, I gave this novel 4/5 stars.

Karen • The Book Return says

Read this review and more on my blog.[The Book Return Blog](#)

*I received this book for free from the Publisher in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Elaine is the child of poor Irish immigrants. She is growing up in turn of the century New York City. When Elaine's mother dies from the Spanish flu, Elaine struggles to keep her family together.

Elaine's daughter, Molly, is growing up in 1950's San José, California. She is crushed by the breakup of her parents marriage and desperately attempting to understand her distant mother and learn her secrets.

I really love historical fiction. I find I enjoy YA most often when it has some history to it. It gives the story more depth and perspective. I was really pleasantly surprised to discover that 'Between Before & After' contained dual timelines from the 1950's and 1910's.

I also loved that the timelines were of a mother and daughter with the mother included in the daughters timeline. I really liked Elaine's 1910's story more than Molly's 1950's story. The struggles (including poverty, abuse, and alcoholism) of immigrants in New York in the early twenty century is harrowing. I felt like Molly's story was a little less put together than Elaine's. A few times the dialog in Molly's point of view seemed a little rambling. Also, I really thought the whole miracle thing with Uncle Stephan took away from Molly's story.

I thought the story wrapped up well. It gave a good conclusion without being tied up too neatly. I really enjoyed 'Between Before & After'. A family historical drama with two great YA protagonists. One of my favorite YA's.

Little things I loved about the story: 1950's pop culture (the characters first trip to McDonald's), the homing pigeons and that whole thing with the roses.

Jackie says

* 4.5 stars *

A book that managed to tie the past and present together with the undertones of a fairytale gives us a story that shows how far someone will go to protect the ones they love and just how similar mothers and daughters can be.

“Between Before and After” finds Molly digging through her mother’s drawers when she finds a mysterious envelope that makes her question what secrets lie in her past and what it can tell her about their future as a family.

I really loved the style of this book setting us up with Molly’s discovery and her quest to find answers intermixed with the past told in her mother’s point of view as she and her brother struggle to survive when the odds are stacked against them. All the while we gets hints in Molly’s sections that something happens to make her mother lose all faith and over the course of the book we see what happened and why the past doesn’t always get to stay there.

Both of their stories were so beautiful and tragic in that these two share a lot of similarities but seem to clash more often than not. It’s especially true when we see their counterparts in their respective younger brothers and that plays to the roles put on older siblings to be more responsible even if it means putting your own happiness aside. Also due to the times in which this story takes place there’s always this lingering sense of dread when it comes to Elaine’s story that very much plays into the feeling most women have in their life at some point or another and in her case her anger towards those who (and this is as best as I can say without spoiling) believe one life is more important than another.

My only real critique is that the ending didn’t feel final to me it was almost as though someone had tried to make it something that would stick with you long after you turned the page but for me it felt a lot like I was missing one which was a bit underwhelming considering how much I enjoyed the rest.

Both of these stories are told with the undercurrents of Hansel and Gretel sprinkled in between and as the reader you know that though this is a story grounded in reality, one of them must meet the witch and you hope that they survive and as it blends heavy topics like the roles of women, generational struggles and faith you follow them along on this path and make their way back home.

special thanks to the publishers and netgalley for providing an arc in exchange for a fair and honest review!

Paige Green says

Disclaimer: I received this book from JustReadsTour! Thanks! All opinions are my own.

Rating: 4/5

Publication Date: February 5, 2019

Genre: YA Contemporary

Recommended Age: 13+ (pain, past, secrets, loss and love)

Publisher: Blink

Pages: 304

Amazon Link

Synopsis: “The carnage began with the roses. She hacked at their ruffled blooms until they dropped into monstrous drifts of red on the parched yellow lawn ... Only two things kept my mother grounded to us: my uncle Stephen and stories.”

Fourteen-year-old Molly worries about school, friends, and her parents’ failed marriage, but mostly about her mother’s growing depression. Molly knows her mother is nursing a carefully-kept secret. A writer with an obsession for other people’s life stories, Elaine Donnelly is the poster child of repressed emotions.

Molly spends her California summer alternately watching out for her little brother Angus and tip-toeing around her mother’s raw feelings. Molly needs her mother more than ever, but Elaine shuts herself off from real human connections and buries herself in the lives and deaths of the strangers she writes about. When Uncle Stephen is pressed into the limelight because of his miracle cure of a young man, Elaine can no longer hide behind other people’s stories. And as Molly digs into her mother’s past, she finds a secret hidden in her mother’s dresser that may be the key to unlocking a family mystery dating to 1918 New York—a secret that could destroy or save their future.

Review: I thought this book was so captivating and fantastical! I loved how wonderfully vivid and real the writing was! The characters were all well written and the plot and world building were done well as well. The book was structured amazingly well and it left me constantly wanting for more!

However, the ending was not as fantastical. It felt really rushed and ex machina. I think it needs to be built up a bit more but overall it’s pretty well!

Verdict: A amazing book!

Amber says

Thanks to the publisher for sending me a free copy of the book.

This was an interesting book. It delved into some pretty deep topics, which were heavier than I expected. I was really captivated by the endurance of these characters, and found myself fully immersed in the world Doyle McQuerry has created.

?One of my favorite aspects of the book was its dual timeline narrative. I recently had a conversation with a fellow booknerd about how much I appreciate the buildup that comes with this type of storytelling. It's like getting two stories in one. I love that it creates a bit of mystery and suspense - you know the two storylines are going to converge or cross paths, but you don't quite know how they're going to get there.

?However, my absolute favorite part of this book were the two main characters, Elaine and Molly. These two gals both found themselves in similar situations involving having to raise/look out for their younger brothers, while they were both still children themselves. But what I loved about that was their perseverance. They were such strong youngsters with a fierce sense of survival. And they were also just strong female characters in general.

?". . . But let me give you some advice. Let all of this go. Guys don't like girls who are different, girls who overthink things."?"Then I guess that saves me from worrying about what to wear to prom. . . I'm not going to stop thinking because it makes some guy uncomfortable. I'll ask whatever questions I want!"

?I'd definitely recommend Between Before & After to anyone looking for a historical YA read that'll pull you in and make you think. It's not all sunshine and roses, but it's strong characters, perseverance, and family bonds.

Megan Chance says

Complex and beautifully layered. This story of family secrets, hope and change is wonderfully written. It's a gem of a novel with all the hallmarks of a classic.

Rachael Cox says

Between Before and After by Maureen Doyle McQuerry is one of those books that captivates you from the very beginning. I was a little hesitant going into this book as historical fiction is very much out of my comfort zone, but I was pleasantly surprised by McQuerry's beautiful writing style. She fantastically crafts a story of past and present, and of sorrow and love. I was shook by the end.

Elaine, one of our protagonists, is growing up in early 20th century New York City. She struggles to keep her poor family from falling apart after her beloved mother dies from the Spanish flu. Through sorrow and grief Elaine remains to be one of the strongest YA protagonists that I have read about in a long time, and she will forever remain one of my favorites.

Elaine's daughter Molly, our second protagonist, is growing up in San Jose, California in the 1950s. She is crushed by her parents' recent, devastating divorce. Desperate to understand her distant, mysterious mother, she sets out to uncover some secrets about her past.

As someone who had never read historical fiction in the past, I found this book engaging and highly entertaining. I found that the history elements woven in gave this book some richness and depth that most

YA books do not have. Maureen McQuerry wove the two plot-lines and time periods beautifully. Overall I preferred Elaine's story over Molly's. Her struggles, including abuse, alcoholism, and poverty were so well developed and intriguing. I feel like her story was a little more put together than Molly's, but I still enjoyed Molly's story very much.

Overall I would highly recommend this book. The writing is beautiful and the characters are very intriguing. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in trying out historical fiction. You will not be disappointed.

I was sent this book by JustRead Publicity Tours and NetGallery in exchange for an honest review. All thoughts and opinions are my own.
