



On the Outside

Siera Maley

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From the author of *Taking Flight* comes a new young adult lesbian romance:

High school junior Kayla and her two best friends have always been close. Even after Kayla becomes a cheerleader with a basketball star boyfriend, Riley falls in with the skaters, and Evan loses himself in school, the three remain dedicated to their promise to each other: to remain friends no matter what. But when a disastrous prom ends with Kayla single and her best friends dating, the strength of their bond will be tested. Because, as Kayla soon realizes, her feelings for Riley are more than just friendly. Dating a girl is something that's never crossed her mind before, but more than that, she can't bring herself to hurt Evan. As tension between the two girls grows, Kayla is forced to grapple with the fact that she might be bisexual, in love with Riley, and about to break their friendship apart.

On the Outside Details

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From Reader Review On the Outside for online ebook

Dessy Hristova says

I read this in like... a few hours. I just couldn't put the book down. I love teen angst and the whole storyline is amazing. <3 This is the second book i've read by Siera Maley and I believe she is well on her way to becoming my favourite author.

Netty says

Coming out story..... Not my cup of tea, it was one of them book that got on your nerves but have to finish to see what happens, but it was well written, not a very realistic ending though

Ashley says

I received an advanced copy from Siera, and I'm so glad that I did! I think I read it all the way through in one sitting. It was adorable and the couple (Kayla and Riley) were even more so. And as much as I wanted to hate Evan for being in the way, I just couldn't, poor guy. Great addition to the genre, and something we need more of!

Megzz says

Well... sometimes teen angst isn't that bad for the soul.

Gotta be in the mood for it, though!

Jenna says

This is another solid entry from Siera Maley. A bit lighter than *Dating Sarah Cooper*, *On the Outside* did cover some similar ground. Both were about high school girls coming to terms with their own sexuality, both dealt with friendships turning to love under difficult circumstances.

Dating Sarah Cooper felt a little edgier, though; it had more bite, it examined the different reactions to homosexuality and bisexuality, it looked at GSAs and LGBTQ+ resource centers. While the issues in *Dating Sarah Cooper* existed both in the minds of the characters and the real world, the issues in *On the Outside*, strangely enough, were mostly internal. There wasn't much outside pressure here about orientation, it focused more on the awkward love triangle between three childhood friends. And I'm totally okay with that.

While I would say I prefer *Dating Sarah Cooper* due to its deeper lows and higher peaks, not every coming out story has to feature high drama and external ridicule, especially these days. It's absolutely fine to have

queer teens dealing with situations that have more to do with being human than being gay. That's not to say orientation was a non-issue here, though. There was one scene in particular during which Kayla wages an internal conflict with how to label her sexuality that felt absolutely real.

The characters here were all well-written, all of the principal players were layered and textured, and that was really refreshing, particularly in the case of Evan. A lesser writer would have just made Evan the token male bogeyman, but Ms. Maley didn't do that. He was flawed without being malevolent, and I felt that was a critical component. He definitely had his issues, but they were understandable issues. If he had been utterly unsympathetic, it wouldn't have been a love triangle, it would've been a line.

The editing and proofreading were excellent. That's never a given with independently published titles, but it's definitely appreciated. Having to spend time mentally correcting errors can pull you out of the story, but that's rarely an issue with Ms. Maley's books.

So, to sum up, not *quite* as strong as *Dating Sarah Cooper* in my opinion (which I consider to be a 4.5-star book), but close enough. Both books deserve strong recommendations.

Sabrina Grafenberger says

I don't think this book is as good as Siera Maley's *Dating Sarah Cooper* and *Colorblind* but it's still a cute coming-out story with emphasis on friendship, funny dialogues and adorable characters.

Lexxi Kitty says

This book is the last one I had not yet read – so now I've read everything published by this author. I was going to say that it was also my least favorite, but I see another one that I marked the same rating, and looking over it, and recalling it, that other book is 'worse' so this is my second least favorite book by this author.

This is the story of three friends – they were friends as children, and they are still friends now that they are in high school, even though the three might not normally be in the same 'groups' based on how their lives drifted. Riley, not the main character, kind of has a skater like look, the kind to not normally wear fancy dresses and make-up unless 'forced' to do so by her friend; the kind who joined the skaters (the skateboarders not the roller skaters), and the kind to not have dated . . until this book here started. Evan is the geeky gamer type, the kind who competes in academic competitions, and the kind who might not have otherwise talked much with girls except for falling into a friendship group that consisted entirely of girls (except for him). This leads us to both the third member of this friendship group, and the main character/point of view character – Kayla.

Kayla – since the time the three first became friends – 'blossomed' into the cheerleader 'dating star athletes' type of person. And before anyone shakes any kind of 'she's only dating that guy because she's a cheerleader' . . um . . stick – she actually does find him sexually appealing.

Somewhere near the start of the book, Kayla is going to be going to the prom with her senior boyfriend. She talks her two friends to come along with her in the limo (which will also have other couples). The two reluctantly agree. I mention all of this because: the two friends are under the impression that Kayla might,

might, ‘sleep with’ her boyfriend for the first time that night. Riley, for reasons that later get explained, is super pissed about the issue; and I mention all of this because: though they didn’t start the night a couple, Riley and Evan end up ‘doing more’ than the actual couple did that prom night.

Kayla is quite encouraging in having Evan and Riley hook up. Until time passes and the whole thing just rubs her wrong. It’s . . . disturbing to her for reasons she can’t figure out . . . but might guess.

Then, to complicate matters, Kayla’s sister comes home for the summer and has a party. Because of the Riley/Evan issue, and because Kayla ‘just wants to fuck already’; Kayla’s going to go to Nicole’s (the sister) party with a plan. Somehow that ends up with her kissing another girl, getting caught and . . . complications galore.

So... Evan’s a massive asshole in boyfriend mode. Riley doesn’t really fancy guys. Kayla might be bicurious. And no, not ‘the end’, because ‘these things’ are dealt with before ‘the end.’

I’m not really sure why specifically I disliked this book, but, I did. Eh, was readable. I read it. On with the . . . oh, right, that’s everything currently out by this author. Um. On with the next author?

Rating: 2.76

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Elizabeth says

An extremely generous 3 stars.

I didn’t realize when I read this that it was the same author who wrote *Taking Flight*, but in retrospect I can see a LOT of similarities.

Like *Taking Flight*, this book isn’t bad, but it’s not particularly good either. It’s as middle of the road basic as you can get. But it kept my attention the whole time and more positive representations of bi main characters are always good, so there’s that.

Sometimes things are just TOO on the nose, though, which often gives it a very Degrassi, after school special type of feeling. Which isn’t a terrible crime, but it sometimes makes the interactions just feel so forced. Also, I felt all of the resolutions were REALLY rushed right at the end, and Kayla and Riley’s relationship felt just a little too tame for me, but overall it wasn’t like this is the worst thing I’ve ever read in terms of YA.

Heinerway says

If you like teenage angst and high school drama, this book is definitely perfect for you.

Rain says

"Things between all of us were just showing signs of being on their way back to normal, but every time Riley and I looked at each other, I could tell we were both thinking about ruining it all."

3.5 stars. High school best friends who discover they have feelings for each other. Predictable but cute. :)

Angie says

On the Outside is all about a trio of friends: Kayla, Riley, and Evan. They've been friends since first grade, and before starting high school promised to stay best friends no matter what. It's been hard, but they've managed to stay friends, although not quite as close. Most of this is because Kayla has a boyfriend, but as soon as they break up, Riley and Evan start dating making things even more awkward. More awkward still would be Kayla realizing that she's jealous because she likes Riley too!

I loved the On the Outside had a very strong focus on friendship. It's all from Kayla's POV, so we get to see how awkward things feel to her as she watches her two best friends snuggle up together, then go out without her. Of course, we also get her struggling with her sexuality. Realizing that she likes girls (or at least just Riley) really throws Kayla off. She doesn't know if she's really gay, but she does still like boys, so is she bi? Is she allowed to label herself as bi if she isn't sure, or if Riley is the only girl that she likes? I really liked seeing this, because those are exactly the kind of thoughts that lead to bi-erasure. There is not quota of same-sex people you need to like to be bisexual. If you feel like you are, then you are. It was nice seeing Kayla come to terms with that at the end.

The one thing (or maybe two) that kept me from enjoying On the Outside more was that it ends pretty suddenly. I've noticed with other books by this author, that she rushes the endings. Normally it's just skimming over some final details, but in this case, I felt like everything was building, building, building and then just ended. Even just an epilogue could have taken care of that. I wanted to see how Riley and Kayla being together affected their friendship dynamic, because we got to see that with Riley and Evan. I also just wanted to see Riley and Kayla together, period. There isn't much of that at all, once the truth is out.

I definitely still really liked On the Outside. It's a very quick read, which I finished in one sitting. I love stories of friendship as well as friends-to-lover Romances, so this was certainly going to be a hit for me anyway. I was just disappointed with how everything was resolved.

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alyssa says

i love love loved this book so so much. everything about it was amazing!!! the friendship!!! the relationship!!! it was so realistic. i think my favorite part was the fact that no one put a ton of pressure on who their first kiss was and what it was supposed to mean to them. their first kiss didn't have to be special and it wasn't made out to be some big deal. im not sure if that makes a whole lot of sense but it was

something i loved so much about this book. everyone PLEASE READ THIS BOOK!!!

Julia says

Quick, fun read. The story was cool and the girls were super adorable together and Siera Maley writes the sweetest hilarious moments, but things just felt very rushed. I kept comparing this to *Dating Sarah Cooper* which I read recently, and the similarity that caught my attention the most was that they're both written in first-person so you read all about what the protagonist is feeling, but you can still perfectly tell how the other female lead feels too. The author writes all sorts of hints into every interaction between the girls from the very beginning, and it's fun to notice all the little things one does that the other completely misses or misinterprets since she's not aware of her feelings yet. As I said, though, everything happened too fast whereas in *Dating Sarah Cooper* the time it took the girls to realize their feelings and deal with the whole thing was much more realistic.

Michele Rivera says

I really loved Riley's character. I wish there were more scenes with her in them. I really didn't like Evan. I was hoping he'd grow on me but he only annoyed me more and more as the story progressed. I would have loved more intimate scenes between Kayla and Riley, but I also can appreciate that is young adult. That said, I would've been content with more kissing even. I do like this author though, but I'm not particularly fond of this book. I am giving this book three stars instead of two because I think it answers some of the questions that many people have when they're discovering their sexuality and that's important. Feeling represented in anything positive is important. That said, this story would probably be a good read for anyone who is struggling with and/or questioning their identity.

Abbie says

Felt quite slow, and I didn't love the characters, but it was an okay read overall.
