



End of the Alphabet

Fleur Beale

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Ruby Yarrow is a 14-year-old who lives in a busy, loving, chaotic family with her mum, stepdad, brother and two little stepbrothers. Ruby feels a bit like a doormat - she has to help out while her brother doesn't. He wins lots of prizes at school but she has a learning difficulty and needs a reader/writer to help her in exams. What's more, her surname, Yarrow, is at the end of the alphabet and when the roll gets called out she's always at the end. She hates it. She feels she's always at the end of the line.

Not that Ruby is a misery bag at all. She's bright and vibrant. She has great friends and loves clothes, fashion magazines and sewing, which she has a real knack for. She's very keen to go on the school trip to Brazil and so she gets a job to earn the money for her airfare, working in a supermarket for an old grump. She also learns a bit of Portuguese and meeting exchange students.

This book is about having a dream and aiming for it. Ruby learns to stand up to her parents, gets some backbone and starts to see herself in a much better light. There's even a bit of romance.

End of the Alphabet Details

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From Reader Review End of the Alphabet for online ebook

Caitlyn Gallot says

I decided to read End of the Alphabet after finding it in a book sale, the blurb of the book really intrigued me so I decided to read the book. The book was really exciting and I really enjoyed reading it.

This book falls into the category of a book written by a New Zealander~ Fleur Beale. The book really appealed to me as it was about a young girl the same age as me, and I think it can relate to a lot of young teenage girls these days.

The character that hooked me into the story the most was most definitely the main character~ Ruby Yarrow, because as I said before, I and a lot of other young girls can relate to her and her situation. The book is written in first person by Ruby. The whole story is based around Ruby and about how she feels like a doormat to everyone. She is the perfect child, she never stands up to her parents, she does all the work rather than letting her brother Max help. Max is the one who wins all the prizes at school while she has a learning disability. The title of the book "End of the Alphabet" comes from Ruby being the last name called on the roll, and this is how she starts to feel, she's sick of being last with everything, the end of the line. She is perfectly okay staying this way until her bestfriend Tia gets her thinking, she has an amazing opportunity to go on a school trip to Brazil, but Ruby is dubious about it, she doesn't believe that she could be accepted, but she goes for it. And after her decision is made, her whole life changes and turns upside down. Being in Ruby's point of view the whole time you start to feel what she feels, and see the world as she see's it, she's a young girl trying to change and be someone and that's how a lot of teenagers feel, trapped and wanting to do something with their life. This book really sums up how a lot of the young adolescence feels, and I found it really easy to relate to.

One of my favourite quotes from the book is probably "I tried to believe it for so long that I was tired from trying." It is a sad quote that Ruby thinks about halfway through the novel. It's devastating because the quote is what Ruby is thinking after she has tried and tried to become someone different but ended up being beaten down by people who thought she couldn't do it. It is a good quote, because it is how a lot of us feel sometimes, tired from trying and believing. but by the end of the novel you realize that it always works out one way or another in the end.

I have learnt a lot of things from this book. One of them being that if you're not happy with what you're doing you need to change that. Nobody else is going to do it for you, because life doesn't stop for anybody, and it's too beautiful and crazy to waste.

Angie Fehl says

This YA work from New Zealand author Fleur Beale tells the story of 14 year old Ruby Yarrow who takes being "the good kid" in her family to such a level that her family tends to take advantage of her helpfulness, treating her more like a doormat who will do all the dirty work for them. Ruby doesn't see what they're doing to her until her best friend gives her some tough love to get her to snap out of it. It's also during this time that Ruby, for the first time in her life, discovers something she wants just for herself. Her New Zealand school is planning a student exchange program with a school in Brazil and Ruby wants to be one of the students chosen to go. Problem is, Ruby struggles with a reading disability that hinders quite a few areas of her life.

It's so bad, in fact, that she's nearly illiterate. Still, determined to make this trip happen one way or another, Ruby sets out to get an after-school job, ready to pay her own way if she has to, as well as surprising her family when she reveals she's taking Portuguese lessons.

Once Ruby finds a job and starts earning her own money, that small step begins to give her the confidence in herself she needs to tackle other problem areas in her life. She finds ways to confront her family about the ways she's bullied and taken advantage of; she develops more confidence in school; she even discovers she has a brave enough spirit to tackle any roadblock she comes up against. Ruby even has a few special people come into her life who teach her that she is not her disability, but in fact inform her "you are a clever and confident person."

I found this quick little read to be such an inspiring story for readers of any age, a story that shows that there are ways to make dreams happen no matter the setbacks, if you just have enough belief in yourself and your abilities. It also stresses the importance of finding and holding onto self-respect, and how it's not a weakness to vocalize "I deserve better" from anyone taking advantage of you -- even if that person is blood. This book is geared towards the middle-grade / early YA market, but that's a message that I can see resonating with people of all ages.

I also really enjoyed all of the cultural aspects of New Zealand that are written into the storyline. I will say, works from New Zealand and Australian authors can be tricky to get physical copies of in the US, but if you do happen to come across this one for a good price sometime, I'd definitely recommend giving it a go!

Suzannah Seerden says

The End of the Alphabet, its a nice ,cool story about a girl . That does everything her mother tells her to do. She does it , but she really thinks her brother should help too. And then everything goes from good to bad. Its a must read..

Ella Edwards says

A really, really, really great read. Although the cover is unappealing the story is amazing. Highly recommend it.

Ella says

Reread! I haven't reread this book in YEARS but reading it again today brought back all the fond memories I have of it! Ruby is such a mature character and being 14, her maturity is a pleasant, refreshing surprise. <3 A true NZ classic! Could not recommend it more!

Anna says

I loved it

Hannah Hawthorn says

Read this in one sitting- it's so good, except perhaps the ending which seems a little rushed. Still, a very satisfying read about the complex dynamics within a family. Great main character who we root for all the way through!

Rachel says

really enjoyed reading this.?

Jess Hale says

I've read and re-read this book quite a few times, and it's just such a SATISFYING read. A peculiarity of Fleur Beale's writing is that she can get me completely absorbed in characters with whom I have nothing in common - Ruby is very unlike me, but it's so good to go on her journey and watch her grow.

Ruby is in a situation with her family where she is genuinely ill-used - loved, yes, but taken for granted and disadvantaged compared to her book-smart younger brother. Ruby is dyslexic, and is used to being written off as "useless" and without a future. The book starts with her gaining a backbone, and her growing confidence and ability to stand up for herself is a joy to see.

Emma says

I LOVED IT

Mimi Potter says

I wasn't sure what to think of this book when I first picked it up, but once I started reading it I couldn't stop! Ruby Yarrow is a character that we can all relate to in some way and is very inspirational to anyone who ever had to fight for their rights!

Rossy says

Another great surprise in the YA genre!

Ruby Yarrow has always let people push her over, especially at home. She doesn't have a voice, until her friend Tia makes her open her eyes and she starts to grow a backbone. She won't let her brother Max leave her with all the housework and she won't let her mother continue spoiling Max and leaving her aside and

doing everyone's chores. She wants to go to Brazil, she wants to get a job, she wants to learn Portuguese, and no one will stop her, even though it's so hard at times, and Ruby can't read or write very well and that makes her feel not perfect, but not anymore! She will go after what she wants :)

I loved Davey (her little brother) and her stepfather, they were charming characters, Ruby also, of course, but I couldn't stand Max or her mom, such a shame there are some many people like them in the world, who belittle others and don't care.

Emily says

I thought this book was amazing and I could not put it down! I think everybody needs to read this book it was so inspiring and really looked into some of the problems within our culture right now.

Alex Anderson says

I decided to read this book as i had gotten it for my birthday and it looked really good so i got stuck into it.

This book falls into the category a New Zealand author - Fleur Beale and this was very interesting to me because i was struggling to find a book that i really liked buy an NZ author and then i got this and i didn't even realise it was by an NZ author until i looked it up.

My favourite quote from this novel is "What now? I'm in a hurry " He used his calm voice the one that meant : you can't argue with me". I liked this quote because it shows exactly the type of person that Max is and it really reflects his personality.

Something i learned from this book is that no matter what you should always stick up for what you believe is right. In this novel Ruby (the main character) sticks up for herself when she knows that what her mum is doing is wrong. I believe that sometimes parents are not always right and so you should always do what is right and stand up for the important things that you believe are right.

An interesting character to me was Max. He was interesting to me because he was so annoying and dislikeable but also charming. He wraps people around his little fingers so that they will do anything for him. He forces his mum to give him the biggest room in the house and leave the small one for his 3 other siblings. He is really smart and always doing anything to get out of doing chores and homework by bullying his sister into doing it for him. He was really devious and made the book a very interesting read for me.

Emma says

I remember thinking, as I read this, that I wanted all girls to read it.
