



Freshers

Tom Ellen, Lucy Ivison, Lucy Ivison

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Uni beckons. Phoebe can't wait to be a fresher - especially since her crush from school will be there too. She'll be totally different at Uni: cooler, prettier, smarter ... the perfect potential girlfriend. She'll reinvent herself completely. But Luke's oblivious, still reeling from the fallout of the break-up with his ex. Thrown head first into a world of new friends, parties and social media disasters - can Phoebe and Luke survive the year, let alone find each other?

Freshers Details

Date : Published August 3rd 2017 by Delacorte

ISBN :

Author : Tom Ellen , Lucy Ivison , Lucy Ivison

Format : Paperback 367 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Contemporary, Romance, New Adult

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Samantha (WLAPP) says

The transition from high school to college can be really difficult. Freshmen follows Phoebe and Luke as they attempt to find their way, and themselves, in this new setting.

- Pro: My favorite thing about this book was probably the humor. I laughed so much!
- Pro: We are seeing more and more of these YA-goes-to-college books, and I really appreciated the way Ellen and Ivison explored how difficult the transition can be. The juxtaposition of Phoebe and Luke was perfect, showing one, who was flourishing and one, who was floundering.
- Pro: I loved seeing Phoebe break out of her shell in college. She had flown under the radar in high school, but here she was making friends, excelling academically, and really growing so much.
- Con: They Americanized this book for the US release, but I wish they hadn't. It was a little awkward, and I really would have liked to have had an authentic peek into the English college system.
- Pro: Though my circumstances weren't exactly like Luke's, I found I connected to his story more than Phoebe's. He felt a little lost. In high school, he had his steady girlfriend, his best friend, and his popularity. He found himself slightly adrift at university, and stayed in situations he was uncomfortable with in order to feel as though he belonged somewhere.
- Pro: These two had some awesome friends. Phoebe's squad was definitely the best. D-dorm for the win, but Luke found a few quality people to support him as well.
- Con: If this was a series, and I knew I was getting another book, I would have been ok, but since it is NOT a series, I must confess, I was a little let down by the ending. There was something that seemed to be starting, which I would love to have seen explored more.
- Pro: I never had this much fun in college (engineering was not a fun major), but at least I got to have some solid experiences via Phoebe and Luke. The parties, kitchen sessions, girl talks, and Quidditch meetings were fantastic, and just added to the overall fun of the book.
- Pro: This book has some drama, but it's pretty low-key, which is always something I appreciate.

Overall: A great addition to the YA-goes-to-college set, which entertainingly captured the ups and downs of that first year of college.

*ARC provided in exchange for an honest review.

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Stacey (prettybooks) says

Tom Ellen and Lucy Ivison are two of my favourite YA authors and are among the funniest, loveliest people in UKYA. With *Freshers*, Lucy and Tom show that you *can* write YA about 18-year-olds and you *can* set in university, and it is *not* this mythical New Adult category. University stories are rare in UKYA – and I'd love to see more!

Freshers, narrated by Luke and Phoebe, captures the first year of university excellently. Both Luke and Phoebe's experiences as first years are *quite* different to mine – let's just say that university wasn't exactly the best three years of my life – but it was great to read about (particularly the Quidditch society!), and I know it'll be similar to lots of teenagers' experiences. I loved the friendship dynamics and wish I'd made those sorts of intense, close friendships during my first few months away from home. I was a little sceptical about Luke (as I told Tom at one of his events), but grew to love him – and Phoebe was just brilliant. They're two of the most realistic teenage characters I've come across (as we've all come to expect from Lucy and Tom!).

Freshers was as hilarious as you might expect from our duo, yet it covers serious topics that are vital to talk about at university, from sexual harassment on campus and one-night stands to 'laddish' behaviour and homesickness. I wish I had *Freshers* to read at university. It's one of my favourite books of the year so far!

Thank you to the publisher for providing this book for review!

I also reviewed this book over on Pretty Books.

Djezelle says

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Eileen (BookCatPin) says

I had a great time reading Freshmen! Honestly when I originally picked up the book I thought it'd be yet another typical drama-filled teen story. The humour in this one though really made it stand out.

Freshmen was a quick read in the most addictive way. The writing was easy to take in and the dialogues were laugh-out-loud hilarious. I was grinning madly and laughing away at/with the characters. It was impossible to peel my eyes away from the sh*t show happening on the pages. While things were a giant mix of madness and amusement the emotions involved, particularly the confusion, felt very genuine in a new-to-college and first-time-away-from-home feel.

The story really highlighted the different sorts of people you'll meet, in this case, at school. There was so much drama but it was all really fun to watch unfold. Some legit amazing friendships were formed. They started off in the weirdest and most random way but through the course of the book managed to smoothly morph themselves into meaningful relationships. The romance(s) were messy with complications everywhere. Yet each instance helped the characters grow a little more. I was surprised but also pleased with how things were handled at the very end.

I experienced a bit of a cultural shock with Freshmen. It opened my eyes to many English things I hadn't known or noticed before. I knew they drank a lot of tea but wow do they also eat a ton of toasts and play games called Sardines. It's basically hide and go seek but in reverse and it sounds fun! Last but not least, Frosh Week sounds bonkers! And that's all I'm going to say ;)

Freshmen was such a riot to read. With a wry sense of humour, larger than life personalities and the most surreal of moments, this is a book you'll not want to put down once you've got it in your hands. Go pick it up now!!

Dannii Elle says

You can find my full review of this book and many others on United by Pop.

Finally! A book that lends an authentic voice to recapping the university experience! This split-perspective

narrative from the two authors that co-penned this, meant that a diverse array of experiences were covered and almost every sort of Freshers participation exposed.

Freshers reminded me of my own university experience and Tom Ellen and Lucy Ivison wonderfully and authentically brought to life the heady heights and frightful fears of that confusing time in my life. This accuracy is what ultimately drew me to this narrative. This had me feeling achingly nostalgic for the chaos of my own first year, and also reminded me just how appreciative I should be that this time of unrivalled unsteadiness is now at a close. For the one thing that binds each and every one of the characters is their own identity crisis at a time of so much change and expectation. I may be glad my own days of debauchery are over, but it's good to know I have a place to always relive them here.

Lucy (TheBookBelle) says

One of the best YA books I've read all year!

Georgina says

?3.5 stars?

I haven't posted a proper review in months and this is the first book I've finished so far this year so I feel like a bit of a fake, but I do have a good, genuine reason: university. So it feels quite fitting that this book is my return to goodreads. This book wasn't necessarily anything special, but it *was* real. It was realistic and I felt like at any point all of the events of the book could be happening to the people around me at uni and it wouldn't be at all out of place. It definitely captured the essence of the first term of uni, and having just finished my *own* first term of uni, it was really comforting.

Phoebe, Negin and Frankie are adorable. I love love love their friendship and the comfortableness of them all draped in their duvets half the time just living their lives together. Their dynamic definitely helps to emphasise Luke's more isolated experience, especially in the face of his expectations of making friends in the same way. The accuracy of the uni experience that this book conveys really made it hard for me at times to decide who was in the right and who was in the wrong. I adore moral ambiguity, and I felt sorry for both Luke and Phoebe at times when I knew that technically I should probably be judging them a little bit.

The things I enjoyed the most were actually the little details: the constant cups of tea; the weird ways in which drinks are mixed at pre's (bathtubs, buckets and spades, washing up bowls- you name it, someone's mixing vodka in it); Luke walking into the wrong lecture and just rolling with it. Silly things that made me giggle and say '*yep, that sounds about right*'. Luke and Phoebe study English, and so do I, so I must admit there were mentions of things that made me think '*nooo I'm reading this for fun, please don't remind me of the work I need to do !!!!!*' (*cough* Sir Gawain and the Green Knight *cough*), but for the most part I really enjoyed the similarities and things I could relate to regarding their course.

What I liked the most about this book is the emphasis on the fact that people are more than they appear. No matter what you think a person is like, they are still a person and have so much more under the surface than you can see from afar. I loved the fact that Phoebe realises this with Mary- whilst she is amazing once she gets to know her, it's different than the character of her that the girls had previously created just from seeing her around. I wasn't really a fan of the writing style I have to admit, sometimes things felt under-explained or

unfinished and it meant I had to reread things at times in order for them to make sense. Despite this though I did really enjoy this book, and I want to try and read more YA books set at university because it's not something I've come across that frequently. It was fun and easy to read, and it's been on my shelf for bloody ages so I'm really happy I finally got round to reading it!!

Maddie says

I had so much fun reading this and thinking about my Freshers experience! (Spoiler: it involved zero drinking and a lot more Netflix!) It reminded me a lot of my fave graphic novels series of all time, Giant Days, and the female friendship in 'Freshers' was equally strong. I laughed out loud a lot, too, which hardly ever happens, so it must be funny! Also, I need to applaud that ending because I didn't see it coming but I respect it SO MUCH.

If you're 18 and are looking for a YA that represents you better than most of the high school books on shelves, I'd totally recommend it, and if you're looking for a glimpse of early uni life, this is perfect too!

Alice-Elizabeth (marriedtobooks) says

I met both authors last year at a book signing for Freshers, I was super excited to read this one as there isn't many YA novels that are set during the start of University life. Overall, I was pleasantly surprised by most of the humour featured and the settings of a University campus.

Freshers follows Phoebe and Luke, both are first-year students at University but went to school together. It mostly follows their life, living in halls of residence and meeting new people. Some of the drinking scenes were a little uncomfortable and I couldn't relate to them much as I'm an non-alcoholic. The Harry Potter Quidditch references were the best, the dialogue made the story flow well. Some of the behaviour at times was quite naughty, but I honestly do appreciate this new perspective on a Contemporary YA. I would happily read more books by both authors and would recommend to readers aged 16+.

Carlene Inspired says

Freshmen is the story of two young adults from the same high school that find their lives entangled during their freshman year of college. Phoebe is the smart, pretty, but usually lost in the masses girl that's set out to be a new version of herself. She'll be fun, she'll party, she won't have a curfew, and everything will be great, especially since her longtime crush is there too. In just one week Luke breaks up with his girlfriend, makes just one true new friend, and lands himself a spot on the soccer team. He's a bit lonely, but things are looking up when he starts hooking up with Phoebe. The Wall of Shame changes all that though, leaving Luke trying to fix things and Phoebe seeking answers to what might truly make her happy.

Freshmen is a classic NA college novel, the pages filled with partying, hook ups, and an occasional class. Tom Ellen and Lucy Ivison take the fun a step farther by exploring loneliness, homesickness, and shameful events that can make or break the college experience. I really connected with both Phoebe and Luke, their experiences similar to my own four year adventure. It was a fun-to-read novel, the sort that gets you out of reality, but doesn't challenge you too much. I laughed quite a bit, appreciated the focus on events beyond

drinking and one night stands, and ultimately found this book to be a really great, positive new adult read. It was a very authentic portrayal of college that took me back in time.

Though Freshmen is labeled as a YA novel, I'd put it more in NA adult territory. There is a lot of drinking, time spent between the sheets and literally everywhere else, and a serious, thought provoking question of appropriateness and questioning what everyone else is doing. I really appreciated the secondary characters, but they seemed more well rounded than Phoebe and Luke at times, their voices more mature and adult than that of the narrators. Additionally, the end left me feeling like it was unfinished, like maybe there must be more to the story, a happier ending. I wish there had been an epilogue that revealed all is well for the characters after a dramatic freshman year.

Freshmen is a must read for young adult and new adult fans, I mean, I want to hand it out to freshmen on college campuses right now. It was so accurate, funny, and had a very smart message to it.

ARC provided.

Bee (Heart Full of Books) says

This is definitely one of the most fabulous books I've read this year. I loved literally everything about it! The way the characters interconnected, the voices, the humour, how it ended...everything! It was so realistic to the Freshers experience, the only thing is no one was incapacitated for two weeks with freshers' flu!

I couldn't predict where the story was going, and the way it's split up into five parts really drives the plot. (A contemporary with plot? Who knew!) I REALLY need a sequel! And in the meantime I need to re-read all of Giant Days.

Vicky Who Reads says

3 stars

Phoebe can't wait for everything's to come with college--she'll be better than ever and maybe have a chance with her childhood crush Luke who is conveniently attending the same college as her.

Luke finds himself redefining who he is and dumping his long-term, long-distance girlfriend, as well as changing nearly everything about his life, except for soccer.

But, when things start looking up, drama heads Phoebe and Luke's way as rumors about the Wall of Shame, a secret text chain run by Luke's soccer team with compromising photos of girls, spreads. The women on campus are determined to expose the team and shut it down, and Luke and Phoebe are left grappling with confusing feelings and unsureness about whether they'll make it through freshman year.

I read this really quickly in one night (there's just something about contemporaries and nighttime that really works for me) and I did enjoy reading it.

But, there were a few things that I wasn't peachy keen on.

I really liked how this was a college book because we're lacking a lot of YA literature in this genre. A lot of the times when you do find a college book, it's usually a *smut* college book and not something suitable for understanding that transition from high school to college.

Teen readers come to high school prepared--that's what all this high school YA centers on. But we need more college YA and I'm so happy that this book is one of those books.

I've heard that it's also loosely based off of something that did actually happen at a college, and I like how the Wall of Shame aspect was incorporated and made a central part of the novel--there are ups and downs to college life.

The characters were fine too--I couldn't super-connect with them, but I understood where they were at and what they were doing. (Although, I liked Phoebe more than Luke.)

It's just that part of my problem was *when* the Wall of Shame was introduced--it seems to have happened a little past the halfway point, if I remember correctly, and I really wanted that introduced a little earlier because of how it's been advertised in the summary as a big plot point.

I wouldn't have minded this if it wasn't a huge summary point, and I do think there are benefits on not dwelling on it for too long. Although this is a serious thing, Ellen and Ivison managed to keep it from getting overly tense while still treating it as something that is serious.

My main problem with this story was Luke and his character arc. I liked Phoebe's character growth--I think she learned a lot of things that year--but Luke's brought up some issues with me.

I just felt like he didn't grow enough or truly understand the repercussions of his actions and his silence about the Wall of Shame and didn't learn enough from it.

Like, Phoebe, hun, I get it. He's your childhood crush. But he's also a dickwad.

He didn't grow enough or feel enough shame for his silence despite him knowing and I wanted to see him grow without the end goal of getting Phoebe back. I wasn't convinced at the end that he had grown enough to truly make a difference, and this made the story feel incomplete (or you could say that it portrayed a bad message for boys).

I felt like Luke's storyline needed a lot of work, but I did enjoy the rest of the novel and sped through this in one night. It's a good slice of college life and I enjoyed reading this and getting that familiarity with college that I had with high school.

Overall, I think this is a good book if you're looking for college YA, but I do think if you do decide to read it, don't take Luke as a role model because his actions and behavior aren't what they should be.

Thank you so much to Delacorte Press/Random House and Netgalley for providing me with a digital review copy in exchange for an honest review!

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Holly Bourne says

It's very early to call it, but I'm calling it - *Freshers* is the funniest YA book of the year. It's snort-tea-out-of-your-nose hilarious. It also totally nails the chaotic giddiness of being a university student - YA readers will completely relate, whereas older readers will grin uncontrollably with nostalgia.

However, in amongst all the laughter, Lucy and Tom tackle the darker and deeper issues lurking in student life behind stolen traffic cones. The books expertly explores campus culture of toxic masculinity, loneliness, male mental health issues, and navigating unhealthy romantic relationships. It's a noticeable maturing of voice for the duo, and yet fans of *Lobsters* will be anything but disappointed.

Becky says

I was so, so, so unexplainably excited to read this and I've just been dropped on my arse. I couldn't finish it - I didn't enjoy it. I couldn't connect to the characters, to the setting, to the story... nothing seemed to do it for me and it just wasn't the fun read I thought it was going to be. It read more like a "this happened, then this happened, then this happened, ooo dramatic plot twist, then this happened" ... and it was all very dull to be honest.

Oh well! Onwards and upwards!

Definitely give this a try if you're a fresher yourself as it might get you pumped up for starting uni. I just don't think I'm the right type of person to "get" this story - I don't tend to subscribe to the typical college/university life so I just don't enjoy reading about it.

Alaina says

I have received this ARC from NetGalley for an honest review.

Freshmen was a really cute book. It's a dual POV from Luke and Phoebe and it's about their first year at college. Their experiences are way different than my time in college.. especially my Freshmen year. I went to about 3 colleges: The first, was out of state and felt like it was basically a community college than a university. The second, was actually a community college in my home town and was extremely easy. Third, and my last switch-a-roo, was again in the same state but a bit a drive. It definitely felt like I was at a real college but in a way I also wasn't really prepared for it due to my first two college experiences. I had to shift gears pretty early on because my usual studying and not taking habits sucked ass.

Back to the book, I loved Luke and Phoebe! They were basically friendship goals! Now I will admit that it took me a while to start to like Luke. However, it was the complete opposite with Phoebe! I loved the girl and the friendships she made while at school were real and genuine. I laughed so hard when her and Luke signed up for Quidditch because it does exist in colleges. Every time I saw someone on a broomstick while walking on campus I couldn't stop myself from laughing so hard. No, I didn't sign up for it but I did enjoy watching the games.

Besides learning to love Luke and Phoebe and watching them grow throughout the book - it was hilarious! I couldn't stop laughing from one scene to another. Basically everything was realistic in this book. One night stands to being homesick is what college kids go through. Now I'm not saying everyone goes through one night stands.. but they do get homesick.

Overall, I really enjoyed this book. I feel like I breezed through it once I found it on my kindle. I also really loved Tom and Lucy's writing style. I will definitely be looking into more of their books in the future!
