



Miles Away from You

A.B. Rutledge

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It's been three years since Miles fell for Vivian, a talented and dazzling transgender girl. Eighteen months since a suicide attempt left Vivian on life support. Now Miles isn't sure who he is without her, but knows it's time to figure out how to say goodbye.

He books a solo trip to Iceland but then has a hard time leaving the refuge of his hotel room. After a little push from Oskar, a local who is equal parts endearing and aloof, Miles decides to honor Vivian's life by photographing her treasured Doc Martens standing empty against the surreal landscapes. With each step he takes, Miles finds his heart healing--even as he must accept that Vivian, still in a coma, will never recover.

Told through a series of instant messages to Vivian, this quirky and completely fresh novel explores love, loss, and the drastic distances we sometimes have to travel in order to move on.

Miles Away from You Details

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Author : A.B. Rutledge

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From Reader Review Miles Away from You for online ebook

Riddhi (desiderium.) says

I am getting a feeling that this book is going to be a tear-jerker. Can't wait for the emotional ride. I know I'd love it. Please, release it already.

Weezie says

I DNFed this around the halfway mark. Review coming with thoughts and why I DNFed.

Katie says

I'm gonna withhold judgment until I know more about this, but am I the only person who doesn't want to read about a trans girl getting fridged for the sake of a cis white boy's character arc...?

Edit 1/11/18: Now that I've seen a lot of people I respect who read ARCs of this and pointed out the transphobia and racism, and having read the book in draft stages and seen the problematic aspects then (and knowing now that the author didn't change anything since then), I'm giving this a 1-star rating.

There's no excuse in 2018 for a book that uses a Black trans girl's suicide as a plot device for her white cis boyfriend to go on an Epic Adventure and fall in love with another white cis boy. Like... nah.

Christina (Ensconced in Lit) says

The contemps this year have been hella good. I don't typically dole out this many five stars in a row. And this one is no exception.

So I want to preface this by saying this is not my kind of book.

You may misunderstand what I mean. I don't typically prefer/read male type protagonists and not typically into road trips/traveling abroad to find oneself. So this book was chock full of stuff that I don't usually like or read, and yet... and yet...

Miles is so typically boy but not. He is fluid on the sexuality scale, and so real and believable but I've never read someone like him before. I loved how he talked about his relationship with Vivian, the beautiful transgender girl. I loved his relationship to his moms, and I loved Oskar. Oh Oskar. I have a crush on him now myself.

Beautiful, poignant, and strangely addictive-- the voice of Miles was unique and moving. I don't really know what else to say. One of my favorite parts was that while he mentioned the hardships of being the way he was, and Vivian's difficult life from being trans, it was so clear that there is something universal in his experiences of loss and feeling different that anyone-- cis or trans, can relate to. And I think that's what this

world needs a little more of-- "us"/"we" and less of "other."
I am honored to have read this book.

Janani says

I see that a bunch of people have tagged this as an ace-spec book (and lord knows I'm always looking for ace and aro-spec contemporary/non-SFF novels), but I don't need to read this Black trans teen's suicide-inspires-white-boy-to-see-the-world story (that's not written by a Black trans author). Not when Black trans folx are already at such high risk IRL, and not when publishing still doesn't give equal opportunity to Black trans (and other marginalized) folx.

destiny ? [howling libraries] says

Note: All of this is coming from my cis perspective. I can only do the best that I know how to do, but if you are a trans individual who disagrees with my perspective, or if you have an own-voice review for this book, please let me know in the comments and I would love to help boost your voice!

There are some minor spoilers ahead, because I couldn't discuss all of the problems I had with this book without them.

Content warnings: suicide, self harm, abuse, transphobia, mental illness, homophobia, pedophilia.

Miles Away From You tells the story of Miles, who is grieving the loss of his girlfriend, Vivian, after she attempted suicide. He documents his grief, as well as his attempt at healing via a summer trip to Iceland, through instant messages to Vivian's abandoned social media account. She's been on life support for a year and a half, and Miles' greatest frustration is the fact that he wants her to be taken off of life support and allowed to rest; meanwhile, her religious, transphobic parents refuse to pull the plug.

Off the bat, the book struggles from White Savior Complex: Miles and his accepting, lovely mothers are all white, while Vivian's transphobic, abusive parents are black. Vivian and her parents are the only characters of color in a book saturated with white people. (While Miles does let us know that he's got a small fraction of Cherokee heritage, it's made pretty evident that he is, for all intents and purpose, white-passing.)

On top of that, Vivian herself is not presented as a likable character. There's actually a line in the book where Miles is "talking" to Vivian and says that she constantly did scary or cruel things to shock him, just so she could be sure he cared. *This is emotional abuse*, and while it's brought up very quickly, it is *never* addressed, and our trans character is not painted in a good light at all.

Meanwhile, the bulk of the story is less about Miles' grief, and more about his adventures in Iceland and his determination to get laid. He's pan/demi, but spend most of the book pursuing sex with women in a manner, and with a mindset, that felt really objectifying and gross. All of the women in this story, besides his mother and Vivian, seem to only exist to serve Miles' sexual fantasies. He does eventually pursue a meaningful relationship with a gay man, and the love interest's character was the only genuinely enjoyable part of the story for me.

The LI is surprisingly three-dimensional: we meet his family (including his abusive and homophobic father), and watch him overcome an abusive and controlling relationship with a pedophile. **(Of course, one of the only TWO gay men in this book is a pedophile, so there's also some furthering of *that* trash stereotype.)** The moments we spent with this character were the only times I was able to connect to the story, though even those exchanges were typically laced with annoyance. Miles felt the need to endlessly make fun of the love interest, whether it was out loud or in his own head (remarks about the man's appearance, style, hair, accent, etc.). All of this grew old fast, when coupled with Miles' seeming disregard for Icelandic culture and customs in general (most of which were not painted in a very kind light - are you seeing a theme?).

Finally, one of the biggest issues I had with this book: Vivian's incredibly slow, drawn-out death. Her suicide is a vehicle for Miles' story, rather than being depicted as the genuine tragedy it is. When she finally passed away, her parents dead-named her headstone, and it was such a low blow! The thought of an unsuspecting trans kid picking this book up and reading this feels so bad to me, and makes me wish I could keep this story from ever hurting anyone. If it felt this bad to me, as a cis person with cis privileges, I can't fathom how harmful *Miles Away From You* could be for a trans individual.

Thank you to HMH Books for Young Readers for providing me with this ARC in exchange for my honest review!

Tara says

This book was exactly what the stars describe.. *Ok*. It's also hard to review, besides saying that I wasn't a fan of Miles, so..

As this was entirely from his perspective, you can imagine how this affected my enjoyment of the story.

Still, it was quick and easy to read, with lgbt+ diversity galore (the only characters of color were the religious, transphobic parents of the girlfriend, though, so that's an issue).

2 stars.

Edit: One of the stars is for the eventual love interest, who I actually really liked. They were an interesting, fleshed out character and another redeeming quality that kept this from being a one-star read.

Amy says

Well, that was awful.

Before I start -- I know there's been some discussion on the premise, and the fridging of a trans character -- I was uneasy going in, but honestly, I wanted to read it because I heard Miles was Demi, and I'm Demi, and I so rarely see Demi characters in books that I was willing to take what I could get.

This was HORRIFICALLY BAD Demi rep.

Quite frankly -- Miles is not Demi.

Just gonna flat out say it. I totally get that everyone has different experiences in the community, and there's a lot of different and valid ways to experience a sexuality. But this was different. For those unaware, Demisexual is basically defined as not experiencing sexual attraction without emotional attachment. There's greyness in all things, but that's the easy summary.

At several points Miles literally says he "craves flesh" and he spends the **WHOLE BOOK** ogling and sexualizing everyone he meets. **EVERYONE**. His friend even sexualizes one of his Moms, so like, even the characters it shouldn't have been possible to sexualize got sexualized. In the course of the book, Miles goes down on a woman he doesn't know, he thinks hopefully of having an orgy with 3 people he just met, and is constantly jerking off in the shower. He reads online (and super misogynistic) articles on how to get laid in Iceland. He wanders around nightclubs attempting to get laid. He goes home with a girl he just met, hoping to get laid. Like, this is horny teenage boy everywhere, on every page.

I know the author identifies as Demi, but if this is what she thinks it's like, I'm wondering if she's mislabelling herself? Or maybe she assumes it's different for men than women? I don't know, but I found it all pretty repulsive.

I'm not qualified to speak on the trans issues in the book, but I found the fridging icky. And Vivian, the trans girl, isn't really portrayed in a positive light in most of the flashbacks. And her family, the only non-white people in the book, are also portrayed pretty negatively. So, that wasn't great.

On the positive side, the book is a pretty fast read, and the pacing is decent. I found the love interest engaging and fully formed.

But the love interest and pacing can't save this from being a truly wretched portrayal of demisexuality, not to mention a poorly handled fridging of a black trans character (idek, is there a way to handle that well?).

K.A. says

This book was hilarious, beautiful, poignant, heartbreaking, and downright sexy in places.

Miles, the MC, was easy to relate to. He had a great sense of humor, and instantly felt like a friend. The voice was perfect, the setting phenomenal; the author added so many little details, which made the Icelandic setting all the more real for me. If you're someone who's ever struggled with what they thought was right, or struggled to find themselves in a world that is constantly trying to define them, for those who've been madly in love and had things all fall apart, you might really like this book.

Kirsty McGhie says

DNF. I was so looking forward to this as the MC is pansexual but he's a white cis dude and it's all about his experiences after his black trans girlfriend commits suicide and we literally do not need another story about a

black trans girl killing herself to further a white guys development.

Brooke — brooklynennereads says

This book was an intense and difficult read that I surprisingly enjoyed immensely. Before going into this book, I do have to put the disclaimer out there that it deals with heavy content some of which is sexual/physical/emotional abuse, bullying, suicide, and depression. Honestly, that is such a small description of the depth and heaviness in this novel.

In opposition, this novel is incredible in that it truly packs a punch when it comes to diversity. What I mean is that, considering the length of the novel, I'm happily surprised with the level of diversity that the author included. This novel includes members of the LGTBQ community and issues that individuals can face, characters with different backgrounds and ethnicities, and interracial relationships. For some readers, all of these aspects are common and accepted in everyday life. However, this is not the case for the whole world and there still is quite a lot of prejudice out there so I really appreciate when a novel includes such a large amount of diversity within its contents. Life is diverse, so novels should reflect that.

When it comes to the story, it was a very important yet heartbreaking novel. For those that love novels such as "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" or "Thirteen Reasons Why", I would recommend this to read. It includes important content but then is told in a relatable and realistic way.

The style of the writing adds to the fact that this was a quick read. It's written in a letter format from Miles to Vivian and it flows, which makes the book difficult to put down. It was fast-paced and I needed to know more while rooting for a happy(ish) ending for Miles. Speaking of that ending though, what does it mean? I need to know more. I don't know if a sequel is necessary or is being planned, but I just wish I knew more when it comes to the ending.

Overall, although it's a difficult novel to read, it's a very important one. This may not come close to your reality but the fact is, it's close to reality for some.

Thank you to Raincoast Books and HMH Teen for sending me this advanced reader's copy in exchange for an honest review

C.G. Drews says

Oh wow, so this was basically about a Iceland and sex and sex *in* Iceland. Aaand that's about 89% of the book RIGHT THERE. 0_0 I also realise this is a controversial one, and I totally acknowledge people's concerns. I'm not trans, so I won't critique that aspect, but I do point you to a twitter thread by a trans person in publishing that talks about why it's problematic and I highly encourage you to read that.

+ Look I really really REALLY don't want to rant, but Miles was also horrible.

I mean...the dude was just...I couldn't stand him. I *do* think he improved a bit as the book went on, but even by the end, he just presented as a really selfish (and very horny) asshole and I wasn't here for that. **Reasons for my disgust include:**

- All he thinks about is sex, to the point where he's sexualising literally a dude putting washing in a public

laundromat.

- To the point where he says *he craves flesh*.
- Ew.
- He basically gets an all-expenses trip to Iceland paid by his mums and that's not even a big deal for him?!
WHY IS EVERYONE SO FRIKKIN' RICH IN YA.
- He also hooks up with his *childhood babysitter* in Iceland.
- Even though it's his black trans girlfriend who's in a coma from a suicide attempt, Miles is like "this is so selfish and cruel *to me*".
- He mocks hipsters while 100% being a hipster
- **HE BODY SHAMES HIS TRANS GIRLFRIEND** and basically says "why couldn't she just hurry up and accept herself so we could have more sex?!"

No joke, this is the quote (taken from the eARC):

Beside me, Frankie undressed to. AFAB, in case you were wondering. Zero shame about her body, though. Yeah, you heard me, Vivian. A non-gender-conforming stranger got completely, shamelessly nude in front of me and the world did not end.

Miles is such an asshole I can't even believe it. (He never takes any of this back, btw. So I hardly see it as a learning curve.)

+ I just felt his whole attitude to Vivian's coma was how HE was affected and HE was hurt and HE was ruined.

I get that suicide leaves a wake of pain and trauma. Knowing someone who's died/near death is NOT easy. But it's 2018...are we going to stop acting like suicide is an option for people who are "too selfish" or something?! It's a mental illness. Depression *can kill you*. I basically hated the way suicide was treated in this book. **Vivian seemed portrayed as selfish and nearly villainous at times.** I really really feel grieved at that.

+ I almost think the book isn't YA tbh?

It's basically about sex. SEX AND ICELAND. I think YA should/can involve sex, obviously, but we just went from hook-up to hook-up and most of the characters were at least in their 20s. (Miles was 18 but out of school.) Sex and alcohol and Miles' whining. I can't even.

+ Okay buuut see I'm conflicted because there are things I did like!

So it wasn't like a total black hole imo (but do the good cancel out the problems?!) **But I loved...**

- how basically the whole cast was on the LGBTQIA+ spectrum!
- The author's note indicated she went to Iceland for research and you can totally tell because I REALLY feel I explored Iceland too! IT WAS AMAZING AND GORGEOUS.
- Not gonna lie, Oskar (the love interest) was incredible and cute and extremely complex. I 100% adored him.
- I think Oskar/Miles' sexual tension was done really well and I *so* shipped them. (But awkwardly since the whole book is Miles' writing letters to his comatose girlfriend sooooo???)
- The very very last epilogue chapter was like EEEP.
- It was short and fairly easy to really fly through! Engaging, like watching someone burn their birthday cake on their head is engaging.

ALL IN ALL? Nope. I have no freaking clue what to think. I've heard from too many people how

damaging it is to have *yet again* a book that features the sole trans starring character as a suicide victim (plus she's black and the only other black people in the book are her parents who are awful) and actually casts her as selfish and wrong. AND even that aside, Miles was so selfish and self-involved. But Oskar was truly adorable and it's really nice travelling to other countries in a book?! **I think this book could've had a ton of potential but it fell into some blackholes that are not acceptable at all. I think it should've known better.**

Nicole says

This review can also be seen on: [NicoleHendersonReads](#)

This was originally one of my most anticipated releases of this year solely because of its intriguing plot and cover. But that was before I read some very negative reviews about this book, involving using a trans character's suicide attempt as a plot device and portraying people of colour to be terrible people. I also recognized that this book presents the white saviour trope (as almost every character is white and the blacks in this book are looked down upon). When reading this book, I understood the problematic elements that were present and read it more critically than I normally would. I had so many issues with this book (you have no idea) and it could take years to write them all down. So I'm only going to list some of the key problems I had with the story. Just a forewarning there will be some spoilers as I can't discuss my issues without them.

Miles. Miles, Miles, Miles?!?!?! This guy was trash. He was the most needy and self-centred character I have ever come across while reading YA (and I've read plenty of them). Miles came across as this pretentious little shit who was extremely judgemental to those around him. His character also managed to sexualize almost everyone he came across and it was just gross. For example, Miles wanted to have an orgy with these three girls he barely knew; to which they proceeded to beat him up and steal all his stuff which I was quite happy when that happened. I just couldn't stand his misogynistic ass, especially when he was looking at porn links his friend sent him to find girls to fuck in Iceland. He also went to the extent of body shaming his transgender girlfriend basically stating that a cis-gendered person got naked in front of him and the world didn't end. Like first of all, what a fucking dick, secondly, why message that to her in the first place, and lastly this further proves his selfish and judgemental ways of treating people.

I understand that Miles was writing messages to his comatose girlfriend, but I always had this thought in the back of my mind which was: what if she wakes up and finds these messages of his sexual escapades and him crushing on (and basically having sex with) another person that's not her? I believe she would've been devastated. I say this because even though she's in this coma, she was technically still alive which meant she could've woken up at any given moment and found them. And with that constant thought in mind, I felt extremely uncomfortable while reading the majority of this book.

I think the way Miles handled the entire situation of this book was very poor. There were so many different ways he could've handled it. But instead he had to make the entire situation about himself and how *he* was hurt and damaged throughout this whole thing without considering how Vivian must have felt before she attempted suicide. He made her out to be this villain, which is also not the best way to portray someone (especially if they are a person of colour). Going along with that, the way this book handles suicide is not good. Suicide is a very sensitive topic and so it should be handled as such. And although I personally cannot speak on the demi/pansexual and trans rep, I've heard from other book reviewers that they were handled poorly. Overall, this book was poorly done all around.

Okay, I know this book was a shit show **BUT**, there were also some aspects I liked. One of them being Oskar, Miles' love interest. I thought Oskar was a very guarded individual, but he was also kind to those he cared about. And he was a well-developed character who I wanted to know more of. I was honestly more interested in Oskar's story arc than Miles' so that's how you truly know I didn't enjoy this book. The second aspect I liked was the setting. I've never read a book that took place in Iceland so it was interesting to read about all the various places and scenery. I thought her way of describing Iceland was well done and researched; it felt as if I were there. And lastly, it was how fast paced this book was; which is good because if it were any slower it would've been pure torture to read. The writing style did make it much easier to get through and I greatly appreciated that. But none of those issues excuse how this book was horribly executed.

Now you know why I would not recommend this book for anyone to read whether or not they are LGBTQ+ or a person of colour.

I was sent a physical ARC by Raincoast Books, so thank you to them for sending this my way in exchange for an honest review.

Lulu (the library leopard) says

a book that uses the suicide of a black trans girl to fuel a white cis dude's plotline?

hell nooo

call me back when ya fiction is publishing books with #ownvoices representation of black trans girls in charge of their own stories.

Brooke Banks says

Oh hell no with this sacrificial black trans woman to teach a lesson nonsense. Fuck this transphobic and racist shit. BLACK TRANS* WOMEN AREN'T YOUR PLOT POINT.
