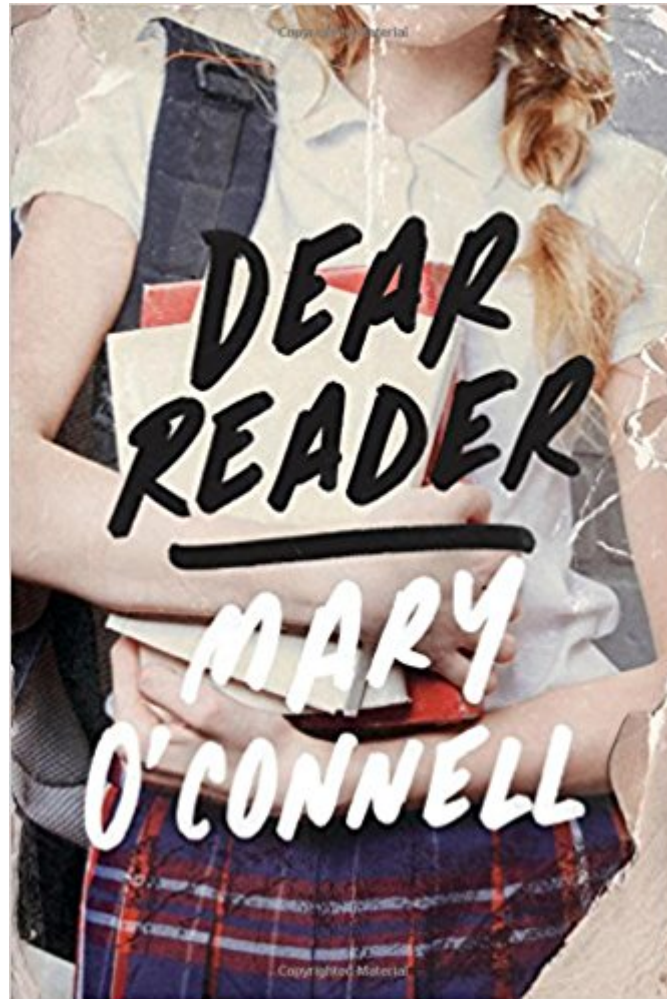




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Dear Reader: A Novel



Synopsis

“Imaginative, exhilarating, genre-bending, and one of the best YA novels of the year.”
“An audacious tale. Like much classic literature and like growing up, reading this immersive novel is all about the experience.”
The Horn Book
An IndieNext Pick! Gilmore Girls meets Wuthering Heights in Mary O’Connell’s Dear Reader, a whip-smart, poignant, modern-day take on Emily Brontë’s classic novel. For seventeen-year-old Flannery Fields, the only respite from the plaid-skirted mean girls at Sacred Heart High School is her beloved teacher Miss Sweeney’s AP English class. But when Miss Sweeney doesn’t show up to teach Flannery’s favorite book, Wuthering Heights, leaving behind her purse, Flannery knows something is wrong. The police are called, and Flannery gives them everything except Miss Sweeney’s copy of Wuthering Heights. This she holds onto. And good thing she does, because when she opens it, it has somehow transformed into Miss Sweeney’s real-time diary. It seems Miss Sweeney is in New York City and she’s in trouble. So Flannery does something very unFlannery-like: she skips school and sets out for Manhattan, with the book as her guide. But as soon as she arrives, she meets a boy named Heath. Heath is British, on a gap year, incredibly smart yet he’s never heard of Albert Einstein or Anne Frank. In fact, Flannery can’t help thinking that he seems to have stepped from the pages of Brontë’s novel. Could it be that Flannery is spending this topsy-turvy day with her ultimate fictional romantic hero, Heathcliff, reborn in the twenty-first century?

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Customer Reviews

An IndieNext Pick! "Audacious. Like much classic literature and like growing up, reading this immersive novel is all about the experience. Bookish readers will be entranced and perhaps inspired to seek out the source text. The Horn Book "Dear Reader is so real, even the magic of books is literal. It's imaginative and exhilarating and genre-bending and one of the best YA novels of the year. Book Riot "Illuminates the complex chaos of life and love, demonstrating that seemingly inconsequential choices and people can have lingering effects. The use of *Wuthering Heights* intensifies the impact of Flannery and Miss Sweeney's corresponding journeys; even readers who haven't read the classic will find significance in the parallels." Publishers Weekly "I loved *Dear Reader* the wild romance of it, the joy in the language, and the celebration of the imagination that the whole book is. It's like a book dipped in love, and I can't think of another quite like it." Alison Uminger, author of *American Girls* "Dear Reader breaks the YA genre wide open. Captivating, intelligent, and the most exquisitely written of this year or any year. Wendy Lawless, New York Times bestselling author of *Chanel Bonfire* "Imaginative, fresh, and sometimes wickedly funny, and a book with real compassion at its core. I loved everything about it. Laura Moriarty, New York Times bestselling author of *The Chaperone* "In a world of Apple stores and texts, can literature still be a guide to life? Mary O'Connell's *Dear Reader* sends its heroine, Flannery Fields, on a daring mission to find out. Armed with a dog-eared copy of *Wuthering Heights* and O'Connell's intoxicating, funny, and genre-bending prose, she discovers that reading remains the key to understanding the human heart, even in modern day New York. And readers of this novel will discover an unforgettable testament to the power of imagination, friendship, and our enduring capacity for self-discovery. Whitney Terrell, author of *The Good Lieutenant* "I am broken-hearted that these characters aren't my real-life friends. Katrina Leno, author of *The Lost & Found*

MARY O'CONNELL is a graduate of the Iowa Writer's Workshop and the author of the short story collection, *Living With Saints*, and the YA novel, *The Sharp Time*. Her short fiction and essays have appeared in several literary magazines, and she is the recipient of a James Michener Fellowship and a Chicago Tribune Nelson Algren Award. She lives with her husband and her three children in Lawrence, Kansas.

I treasured my time with this book. I kept a pencil to underline the phrases I didn't want to forget.

Biased being from under the big sky as referenced the world was an oasis to escape into and relive days of youth and young love while rooting for both voices/characters. For all the teachers with histories, (their students could never imagine!) this book poses the dichotomy of this arrangement with grace, humor and poignance. As O'Connell suggests we do want to change our narrative and can. O'Connell once more takes on religious hypocrisy and gives hope to the "unpopular". It's just a matter of time. If only time could imprint the lessons of kindness and high school could truly change. If not this is a literary poultice. Books certainly transport us but can also give us "lessons about meaning, sense, and clarity".

This book is lyrically and lovely. Flannery and Miss Sweeney intertwined stories are exhilarating and sobering. Life never quite takes you where you were expecting and neither does this book. Not your typical YA fare, not to be missed.

I loved this book. Mary O'Connell, with her beautiful prose, took me on such a wonderful literary journey in DEAR READER. It's an English major's dream combination of stories, combining the three narratives, if you include Wuthering Heights. I don't like to give spoilers in reviews so I prefer to read books without knowing too much going in. This is what I can tell you: I was captured from the first page. I loved the characters voices and how O'Connell blended them with Emily Brontë's voices and then how I was reminded of my own college triumphs, regrets, and mistakes. There's a little bit of magic in Dear Reader too, but it blends seamlessly. I recommended keeping a pencil in hand to underline the lovely sentences. But also, you may find yourself, as I did, writing lengthy thoughts on DEAR READER, but also your own stories and memories in the margins of this dreamy book.

This book is perfect for teens and adults. I think it would pair greatly with the classic that it is based on. Like other reviews have said it's almost reminiscent of Gilmore Girls...with a hint of Mean Girls. It covers important topics that do need discussed so I think it'd be great for a mother daughter read.

Nobody writes with more wit, intelligence and humanity than Mary O'Connell. Dear Reader follows the journeys of two uncommonly smart, perceptive women and their love of books. It's a beautiful story how books are a refuge in a world that

doesn't always appreciate sensitive and thoughtful young women. Mary has an amazing ability to lift even the most mundane details of life, like a young mother in a Laundromat with her child, and turn it into something sublime. Get it!

I loved this book! I bought it for all of the YA readers in my life as a gift. As an adult, I thoroughly enjoyed the creative premise, O'Connell's way with words and the development of her characters. It is enjoyable and thought provoking for all ages.

Excellent book. Beautifully written.

This book was okay... Just okay. It doesn't exactly follow along with what it says it's about, though, at least in my opinion. It says it follows Flannery as she tries to find her English teacher, and it does do that, but it makes it sound like the story is supposed to be about Flannery, but really it's about Miss Sweeny. Most of it is actually told from Miss Sweeny's point of view, and honestly it makes Miss Sweeny seem crazy... which isn't a good thing when she's supposed to be Flannery's best teacher. So yeah, the point of view was weird on it, and I didn't really like it. And also, it was a lot more crude than I was expecting it to be, especially because, again, Miss Sweeny is supposed to be the sweet, awesome teacher. Note: I received this book for free through Goodreads Giveaways.

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