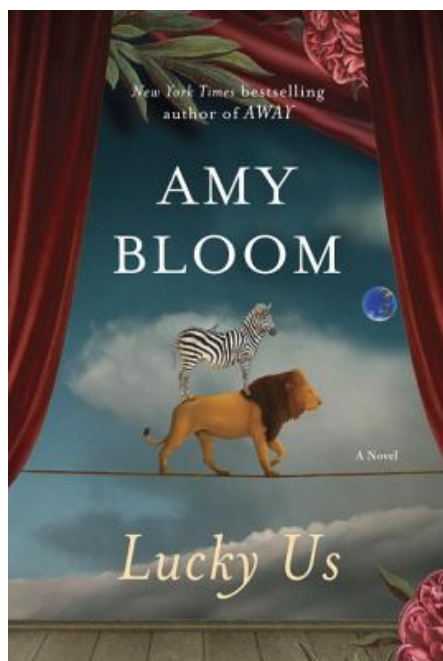




Lucky Us

Amy Bloom

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Lucky Us

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Lucky Us Amy Bloom

"My father's wife died. My mother said we should drive down to his place and see what might be in it for us."

Brilliantly written, deeply moving, fantastically funny, Lucky Us introduces us to Eva and Iris. Disappointed by their families, Iris, the hopeful star, and Eva, the sidekick, journey across 1940s America in search of fame and fortune. Iris's ambitions take them from small-town Ohio to an unexpected and sensuous Hollywood, across the America of Reinvention in a stolen station wagon, to the jazz clubs and golden mansions of Long Island.

With their friends in high and low places, Iris and Eva stumble and shine through a landscape of big dreams, scandals, betrayals, and war. Filled with gorgeous writing, memorable characters, and surprising events, Lucky Us is a thrilling and resonant novel about success and failure, good luck and bad, the creation of a family, and the pleasures and inevitable perils of family life. From Brooklyn's beauty parlors to London's West End, a group of unforgettable people love, lie, cheat, and survive in this story of our fragile, absurd, heroic species.

Lucky Us Details

Date : Published July 29th 2014 by Random House (first published 2014)

ISBN : 9781400067244

Author : Amy Bloom

Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction

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From Reader Review Lucky Us for online ebook

Ionia says

This book grabbed me in the beginning, but then over time I started to lose interest a little. I kept expecting there to be some moment when everything came together and the characters really revealed themselves to the reader, but that never happened.

I felt like I was looking through a window at the characters the whole time and never really got to know them. In the beginning I developed a dislike of Iris, and that never really left me. I did, however really like Eva. I liked that her innocence remained in tact as the pages went by and although she grew, literally and metaphorically, throughout the story, she was still the person we met in the beginning in many ways.

Overall I didn't think this was a bad story. It was imaginative and had good settings. The bonds between the two women were tested by time and circumstance and were interesting to read about.

If you enjoy coming of age stories, this one may very well please you.

This review is based on a complimentary copy from the publisher and provided through Netgalley. All opinions are my own.

Lyn Elliott says

I enjoyed this immensely. Terrific writing, quirky characters and plot. Nothing formulaic about it - a great short read and I will look for more Amy Bloom in our wonderful local library.

Robert says

If I want to learn how to turn a phrase, and fill my life with words and sentences that will make your world spin, I shall turn to Amy Bloom. If I want to fill my world with characters like Iris and Eva, who may not be the most likeable characters on the block, and yet still get you to continue reading, continue your evaluation of a novel all the way to the end, I shall turn to Amy Bloom. If I want to find a historical novel during the period of the Holocaust, where the world was filled with despair and hate, and yet find some token of goodness to keep your spirits up, I shall turn to Amy Bloom.

If I want to hold onto hope even as I turn my head away, and find myself somehow lost along the road that never ends, I shall turn to Amy Bloom. If I want to think about a story after I have finished a novel, where worlds have collided, and my feelings have not subsided, I shall turn to Amy Bloom. If I want to hear phrases that speak and words that sing in a compact tale of less than 260 pages, I shall turn to Amy Bloom. If I want rich characters, filled with thought, and dialogue that's both realistic and possibly experimental, I shall turn to Amy Bloom. If I want to call myself lucky, or maybe refer to ourselves as LUCKY US, I shall turn to Amy Bloom.

And if you want to read a familial saga told over a period of years with strong women and even stronger prose, maybe you should too.

I received this book for free through NetGalley.

Cross-posted at Robert's Reads

Alena says

For a short book this was almost painfully overwritten. I'm also mystified at how Bloom made such a dramatic period in American history so boring. She also missed multiple opportunities to make coming of age in the 1940s emotionally engaging. Her characters, who had so much potential as misfits, remained flat throughout. Lots and lots of historical background but without a good story or full dimensional characters, this book went nowhere.

So many better WWII novels. Skip this one.

Minty McBunny says

Poorly written with a flat tone, almost as if the author was bored with her subjects. The subjects themselves were not lovable or interesting once I got to know them, and ultimately I found myself wanting to play Two Dots or Threes on my phone more than I wanted to pick this book up and finish it. Not so lucky me.

Diane S ? says

A wonderful story about sisters, families and dreams, filled with memorable and unique characters. What makes a family? In this book one person is left, one is stolen, some are just accepted in the family and another returns home and becomes part of the family. Dreams of Hollywood that turn into scandal, a road trip and the making of one sister, the downfall of the other, but after many set backs the true meaning of family wins out.

Entertaining, poignant, a novel that resonates with the reader and makes one think about the importance of the people in their lives, how special families are regardless of how they got that way.

ARC from publisher.

Angela M says

Thanks to NetGalley and Random House for the opportunity to read this book .

3.5 stars

This is another coming of age story where the teenage protagonist is already wiser than most of the other

characters and becomes the adult who manages to become a good, caring person in spite of her circumstances.

Eva, at 12 years old is left by her mother on her father's doorstep. . His second wife has just died and Eva meets her half sister Iris for the first time. .From here on in, the plot gets a bit convoluted . Iris and Eva take off for Hollywood to get Iris's acting career off the ground. When that attempt fails badly, their father Edgar, arrives back into their lives and the sisters, their father and a make up artist , named Francisco leave for Brooklyn where Francisco's family lives.

And that's only the beginning of this sad , strange group of people that expands to include some other sad, strange people . However, you can't help, but love Francisco and Gus. You won't believe the rest of the story unless you read it yourself . At times that the story line was a bit eccentric , but I loved Eva and the person she turns out to be .It's a short , different kind of story and I would recommend it if you are a fan of Amy Bloom.

Judy says

Amy Bloom just never lets me down as a reader. *Lucky Us* was the last book I finished in 2014 and it was an auspicious moment when I did. 2014 turned out to be a rough reading year for me: personal issues which possessed my attention, illness, eye surgeries. All I wanted to do was read but sometimes all I could do was play Solitaire on my iPad.

So ending my reading year with a book so satisfying, so aligned with my current views about life, actually I must say, so perfect, reassured me that I could still consider myself a voracious reader but better yet, still be one.

Mainly with Amy Bloom for me, it is about the characters. All are flawed, none are completely admirable, but some manage to live and love and create in spite of their flaws. I also think she gets it that no matter how wonderful a person might be, what matters is how that person deals with the people around her or him.

Eva, half sister to Iris, was the gem among a parade of weak or disreputable or self-serving folks. She was abandoned by her mother, a single mom, a one-time lover of Eva's father. Dumped on her father's doorstep, she and Iris, whose mother has just died, form one of those deep bonds which aid survival but are also in ways dysfunctional.

It is the 1940s. The story travels from Ohio to Hollywood to Long Island. The characters' relationships span from Brooklyn to London. They help each other, betray, rescue, and love each other. Eva is fearless, Iris is reckless. The story could have gone for hundreds of pages and broken your heart.

But it is a short novel, a mere 256 pages. A very artful compression of time, incident, and emotion. I was left not with despair but delight. We are human, we get by or we don't, there are an infinite number of variations on how to live.

And so we go on. Living is a story. Some write them, some read them. I may not get my stories written but I am living a story and I love reading the stories of others.

By the way, each one of the 29 chapter titles is the name of a song from the 1930s and 1940s. I am listening to those songs now after reading the book but I wish I had listened as I read. Go ahead readers. Nerd out on

that!

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

I received a copy of this from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I have read several books by Amy Bloom, and I think my favorite remains *A Blind Man Can See How Much I Love You*. I think that is because I prefer her writing style in short stories than in full novels, because even in a novel like this one, it's told in pieces.

The story is of two sisters who are two years apart, but don't know about each other until the wife of their father dies. That wife is only the mother of one of the daughters, and the second mother drops the younger daughter off with the father after the funeral and never comes back. Iris and Eve are left with a vacuum to fill with each other as sisters.

The story jumps forward to Iris moving to Los Angeles to try to make it as an actress, and various parts of the family following at different times. There are relationships and children and accidents and relocations.

Some of the story is told in letters, both sent and unsent, so the reader is privy to more information than the characters are. I liked all the pieces but I'm not sure I liked having to write the story in my head between them.

Margitte says

"Family isn't always blood. It's the people in your life who want you in theirs; the ones who accept you for who you are; the ones who would do anything to see you smile and who love you no matter what." - author unknown.

This is the expression I was thinking of when I read this book. And after reading it, I had to let it simmer for a while. Yes, it is one of those books!

Lucky Us is so multidimensional that it will take a while to think it over. There's the moral dilemmas versus the unscripted destinies; the narcissism versus altruism; the versions of history written by ourselves versus the one written for us by others. And when all these elements blend into each other, a story such as *Lucky Us* becomes possible. Profound, shocking, endearing, and mostly believable. It is as much relevant as historical fiction as it is about family and the bonds that are redefined: old ones negated and new ones formed out of necessity as prescribed by destiny.

1939 - 1949

The theme of the book is not new. The Holocaust - pre- and post events. What makes it different, and worth reading, is the American history, some events in America itself, impacting the family's lives, added to the millions of books written about the subject. This story revolves around a father, Edgar V. Aton, and his two daughters, Eva & Iris, who found themselves destined for hardship or happiness when his first wife dropped off Eva at his second wife's home after the latter passed away. Iris was the daughter from his second marriage. From Ohio to Hollywood, to New York, to Germany, to Israel: the journey to finally come to terms with their own choices. Destiny would lead them through avenues of flimflammy, of surrealism, to be ultimately confronted by the truth, which none of them ever thought possible. Deception and dishonesty

finally collided with reality and integrity. Hope finally wrote their own new history.

The rich cast of characters include:

Eva: autodidact, who becomes the biggest con artist of them all: the psychic, with a sign in her shop window stating "ASSOCIATION FOR METAPHYSICAL RESEARCH" . The young girl who had to clean up after everyone else, and who eventually concluded that : *"father had been a beaker of etiquette and big ideas, Iris was a vase of glamour, and I was the little brown jug of worry."*

Iris: narcissistic, yet surprisingly kind when it suited her;

Francisco: the make-up artist, the Mexican gay man who would become Eva's mainstay;

Edgar V. Acton(né Isador Vogel): the conman, womanizer, but also wise mentor in his children's lives;

Clara Williams: - twenty years younger than Edgar, the Negro woman with the magical voice and the conscience

Torellis - fairy-tale Italian family - who made their lives bearable;

Reenie & Gus (who became Karl Hauser, then Gersh Hoffman, Jewish schoolteacher) - the cook and the mechanic, who brought substance and meaning into their lives;

Then there is **Carnie, Bea** and **Ozzie Patterson** and finally **Danny**, the orphan, who found an unlikely bond within the newly chosen family. Love has a magical way of defining destiny for all of them.

The well-written prose (particularly the epistolary alternation in the rhythm of the tale), the story line, the surprise elements, the constant drama and the detailed history in the book, kept me glued to the story. I was constantly awed by the immense, mind-blowing, detail behind the characters' thoughts, geographical-, as well as historical surroundings, the music, cuisine, literature, day-to-day activities, political landscape, landmarks, everything! It was also my first encounter with the author's work and it will not be the last. This quality of prose does not pass one by often.

RECOMMENDED TO EVERYONE! In fact: a must-read for the more serious reader.

The book is destined for publication in July, 2014.

It was provided as an ARC by Random House through <http://edelweiss.abovethetree.com>

Brita says

Book Lust

Left on her father's porch at the age of twelve, Eva suddenly finds herself living in the shadow of her half-sister, Iris, though the two love each other dearly. Eva follows Iris to 1940s Hollywood as Iris pursues her dream of being a star. When things there go awry, the girls travel across the country to New York, to start new lives. Iris' beauty and talent continues to overshadow Eva, who only wishes for the family she was never allowed. There is joy and success, but also loss and heartbreak for both girls.

I was really excited to read this book. It has already gotten a lot of praise, and Amy Bloom has gotten a lot of recognition for her past books. Also, I'll admit that I probably first judged it by its cover, which is pretty cool. But it turns out that this book was just bland. There were one or two interesting characters, but in general I found the cast difficult to like. The two main characters, in particular, were impossible to sympathize with. What's more, the plot was uninspired.

Verdict:

I'm not sure what Bloom was going for in this book, but she didn't achieve it. Unless you're a die-hard Amy Bloom fan, I'd skip this one.

Dianna says

This novel looked very promising, highlighting the lives of half-sisters, Eva and Iris, with the backdrop of 1940's America.

It had started out interesting and I was hoping for more, but it became a mishmash of odd situations. The writing felt disconnected and disheveled. I wasn't sure where the next chapter was going to lead and when I got there it left me confused and sometimes frustrated. The switch of narration between 1st person and 3rd person had me badly in need of a scorecard trying to decipher who was talking. I was also not happy with the ending. It felt rushed like it was missing a few chapters.

I won this book through GoodReads for an honest review and am disappointed. I will squeak out 2.5 stars.

Jill says

So often, avid readers are hooked by the very first lines...or not. Here are Amy Bloom's first lines: "My father's wife died. My mother said we should drive down to his place and see what might be in it for us."

How can you resist a book that starts like that? And the good news is, the prose and cadence remain consistently good throughout *Lucky Us*.

The author of *Love Reinvents Us* focuses again on the themes of love, reinvention...and also, the families we're born into and the families we choose. Eva, our first-person narrator, and her half-sister Iris are plucky young women, coming of age in 1940s America. As they stumble their way through scandals, unusual turns-of-events, heartbreaks and more, Eva's grandmother's words resonate: "It's good to be smart, it's better to be lucky."

In the hands of a less assured writer, some of the plot twists might strain credibility. One of the key characters embraces her essence as a gay woman; another woman – a black singer – becomes involved with a white man. We're talking the 1940s – a decade before the McCarthy era – yet although there is censure, the outrage and moralizing of that decade is muted and the acceptance comes without much cost. Would that it had been so!

Also, some of the narrative is punctuated by epistolary entries, primarily from Gus, a character who plays an increasingly significant role, to the teenage Eva. The letters retained the tone of the narrative; I did not see them as the distinctive voice of Gus. In fact this character – who truly is reinvented time and time again – and his enchantment with Eva through the decade did not quite seem organic to me.

The strength of the writing and the story were such that I never – not for a minute – wanted to abandon this book despite these perceived flaws. The ability of these characters to redefine – no, reinvent – their definition of family and indeed, their definition of the future – is what will remain with me. It's not perfect, but it's a darn good book.

Gayle says

While I was reading Amy Bloom's new novel, *Lucky Us*, I had a few questions: How did a book like *Lucky Us* get published, as is? Did someone read it – really read it – before it got published? If you're Amy Bloom, with a few great successes under your belt, does that mean that you get to bypass the editing process?

I really didn't like *Lucky Us* much at all. It is supposed to be a jazzy novel set in the 40s about how an unconventional family finds each other and survives the ups and downs of a turbulent America. Eva and Iris, half-sisters with deeply flawed parents, leave their home in Ohio and head to Hollywood, only to head back East when Iris has an affair with a young actress and is then shunned by all of show business. They return to New York and make their living as a governess and a tarot card reader, and their irresponsible but charming father re-enters their lives, and some other people come in and out of it, and honestly I don't even have the heart to summarize the rest of it.

The relationships in this book were implausible and the plot was meandering and improbable. Characters came and went with no introduction or future relevance. Terrible things happened – a main character died in a fire, a boy was separated from his brother in an orphanage, a German-American is extradited during WWII – but there was barely any emotion expressed about any of it. Iris and Eva become estranged about halfway through – but why? Eva's anger at Iris makes no sense. Nor does her pining away for a man she believes to be dead.

Lucky Us was a chore to get through. I didn't care about the characters at all and I was relieved when it was over. There were a few poignant moments throughout the book which were touching and showed Bloom's potential, but they were so few and far between that I can't recommend it. Judging by Goodreads, a lot of readers agree with me that there was not much to like about *Lucky Us*. But some people loved it, so if you're a diehard Amy Bloom fan give it a read.

switterbug (Betsey) says

The title of Bloom's latest novel, which takes place between the years of 1939-1949, is meant to be tongue-in-cheek, on the one hand. But, perhaps a backwards glance would reveal some truth behind those words. *Lucky to be alive*—and what I mean by alive is more than just breathing. These characters fight for their footing--they courageously and sometimes unwittingly climb out of many sad and tragic moments, and use their wits to move forward and carve out a niche for themselves, even if that niche is largely precarious.

If I described the plot, my review might end up as long as the book (which isn't long, but so very full). It is about two half-sisters, Eva and Iris (Iris being the elder), who finally meet in their teens when Iris's mother dies and Eva's mother dumps Eva on Iris and Eva's mutual father's doorstep. Edgar (their father) steals Iris's hard-earned money that she won for speeches—she was very talented. So the sisters begin hiding Iris's earnings, and they take off for Hollywood together after Iris graduates high school. Eva was the scholar but since she was fourteen, she didn't get to finish (although she had skipped grades). However, she was a compulsive autodidact.

Eva and Iris undertake the hard knocks school of survival, especially Eva, because after a horrifying accident, Iris ends up in London, doing plays and setting up a clinic, leaving Eva and their life in America. We learn about Iris through her letters.

"I don't have much confidence in what people remember...I remember some things at a gallop, some moments...bearing down upon me in huge detail, and other things are no more than small leaves floating on a stream. Memory seems as faulty, as misunderstood and misguided, as every other thought or spasm that passes through us. ...I still thought I was made to triumph. That I was, in fact, owed a triumph."

The story is a combination of Eva's narrative, intermixed with various characters' epistolary accounts. Braided within the novel are many wonderful songs of the times, lyrics that lend a buoyant context of the era. Even some of the short chapters are titles of songs, or lines from popular tunes.

After being kicked on her ass by Hedda Hopper and blackballed from Hollywood, they take off for more rogue adventures. Fortunately, Iris's hairdresser, Francisco, becomes a close family friend. Their dad, Edgar, back in the picture, secured a job as a butler with a fairly wealthy Italian family in a NY suburb, and moved the sisters in. Then there is Gus, who was married to Reenie, the cook where they lived. Iris, looking for love in all the wrong places, falls in love with Reenie, and subsequently has Gus captured as a spy. This was, after all, the years of WW II. Many of the letters are from Gus, and his adventures in Germany.

Although Iris had essentially kidnapped a young boy from a Jewish orphanage (because she wanted to mother him with Reenie), Eva was left to raise him, with her dad and Edgar's black-almost-pass-as-white girlfriend, Clara, a successful jazz singer.

It is okay to know all this, because the plot grows not linearly, but in a varying, circular, and alternate pattern (if there is a pattern to speak of). The novel is often like a romp, where characters pile on to characters, and the definition of family takes on new proportions.

LUCKY US is about luck—good and bad, and about what makes a family, and how to renew and resuscitate the non-working parts. With Bloom at the helm, you know there will also be the perils of being Jewish during WW II, and the horrors of that period. But Bloom is a master of style and unflinching portrayals. She doesn't depict all ethnic minorities as flawless, heroic, and victimized by the ethnic majority. Her characters are fully dimensional-- flawed, striving, and unorthodox. She is a gifted, gregarious, piquant writer, who is both light and weighty, a wizard with her words, a booming heart through all her passages. Lucky me for reading this book!

Valerie says

I won Lucky Us for free in a GoodReads giveaway. I received a huge trade paperback with a smartly designed jacket and a beautifully illustrated cover and 238 pages of tightly-packed serifed font.

Much has been made in reviews and in praise of the book's opening lines: "My father's wife died. My mother said we should drive down to his place and see what might be in it for us." And they certainly ring with the deliverance of great literary promise. These first sentences of the book are even on the back cover, so that they are the first thing you see from the back of the book. And judging from their use in almost every online review, they are certainly as much as everyone read.

For me, unfortunately, the promise of the hook of a great first line did not deliver. If one should remember not to judge a book by its cover, then many here should be admonished to not judge a book by its introductory lines.

What has been marketed as a beautiful cast of engaging characters reads as a confused and disjointed series

of improbable relationships and forced events in unbelievable circumstances. The story flow is staccato and often interrupted by the reader's attempts at working out the circumstance from the last plot point to the next.

It is not beautifully written. The prose is sparse and flat and comparable to the observant journalistic voice that has become so common in today's entry-level fiction. The punctuation and composition is often poor and the narrative perspective jumping about with no real setting or segue is disconcerting and annoying and adds to the labor in keeping things straight. Facts and events are thrown at the reader without context or background and one just eventually accepts the next flimsy premise to get on along to the end of the thing.

And get on along to the end of the thing, I did. With no real joy or compassion for the characters, who were often contrived and dislikeable.

Nothing fits in *Lucky Us*, much like the Zebra on the Lion on the Tightrope on the cover. This aptly chosen cover illustration is not a beautiful allegory as much as it is a hidden warning to the truly insightful reader.

To finish with another old idiom, "one man's trash is another man's treasure". There will certainly be those that honestly enjoy *Lucky Us*. I recommend it for those who still believe that *Moulin Rouge!* and *Eyes Wide Shut* are great cinematic achievements.

Abby says

"My father's wife died. My mother said we should drive down to his place and see what might be in it for us."

Sometimes an opening hooks you right away and the book delivers on its promise. And sometimes the opening hooks you right away and the book lets you down in the end. I have liked Amy Bloom's fiction and non-fiction. Her writing is fluid and she shows real understanding and compassion for her characters. I heard her speak once and she seemed warm, unpretentious and like someone you wanted to have lunch with. But "*Lucky Us*," a coming-of-age story about finding family when the one into which you were born lets you down, let me down.

Evie and Iris are teen-age half-sisters who leave Ohio around 1940 for Hollywood where pretty, talented Iris will rise to the stardom she deserves. Like the novel, Iris's career starts promisingly enough. But when it blows up in scandal, the sisters reverse direction and wind up first in Brooklyn then in Great Neck, Long Island. Hardship and catastrophe follow, Iris decamps for London and is subsequently heard from only in letters. Secondary characters appear and Evie makes her way. But I didn't find Bloom's gift for characterization in evidence here. The novel seems to be more about what happens to the characters than about who they are. They never came alive for me and the familial ties that develop seemed more like plot devices than genuine bonds. "*Lucky Us*" (the title is both sardonic and sincere) is not uninteresting but I found it lacking the depth that would have given it emotional resonance.

Betsy Robinson says

Lucky Us is the story of a patchworked family: two sisters (by different mothers), their "blithe, inscrutable, crooked father," and their various acquaintances who become new patchworked families — all manipulating and scheming their way through the 1940s US of A.

This is voluptuous American writing. Like the family, the story is patchworked — the pieces, not necessarily linear, but when put together, they tell a more perfect story than tales that are forced into a tight chronological narrative. Events are revealed through a simultaneous tide-in and undertow-out flow of action and letters from the future; the writing voice changes from third person to various different first persons and yet it is never confusing. Why? Because Amy Bloom writes at the pleasure of a muse that is uniquely her own — a truly authentic and organic voice and structure. Bloom's voice and structure are so naturally honest that they seem easy. But I've read writers who I've suspected have tried to copy her, and, in their copycat hands, you realize this level of honesty is anything but easy. Amy Bloom copies no one. She writes at the pleasure of her Original Voice. And so few writers find, let alone express themselves in or from their original voices that it seems rare. Maybe that's just the way it is. An Original Voice is treasure. This book is treasure.

I mean that in both an emotional and physical way. I found myself running my hands over the physical book — the lush colors and embossed type on the cover, the exquisite interior design and thick matte, deckle-edge paper (Susan Turner, designer), a reprise of the cover art in endpaper illustrations (Deborah Van Auten), and even a red detail on the top and bottom edges of the inner spine: this book — Bloom's text and designers' interpretation — is complete, cohesive, sensuous art. I read it as slowly as I could, rereading passages, not for the reasons I usually do — because a writer is "being literary" and therefore incomprehensible. I reread because I was savoring it, the way you would incredible food that you want to taste for as long as possible before swallowing and digesting it. Here's a morsel, spoken by the younger sister, Evie, about her job telling fake fortunes in a beauty salon:

If you'd asked me what I understood about fortune-telling, I would have told you that no one came to see someone like me because they were happy. I would have said, People come because they are so frightened, they wake up in a sweat. They look into the well of their true selves, and the consequences of being who they are, and they're horrified. They run to my little table to have me say that what they see is not what will happen.

Filled with real human beings and out-of-left field gallows humor, *Lucky Us* is a masterpiece.

Alisha Marie says

I thought that *Lucky Us* started out really intriguing. I love historical fiction and I love books about sister relationships, so I had assumed that I would love this one. Unfortunately, that didn't happen. In fact, I didn't even really like it all that much.

My main issue with *Lucky Us* was that it seemed somewhat rushed. Rather than have a full-fledged story with a plot, it seems as though this book was just snapshots of a life lived as opposed to a story about a life lived. Now, normally I don't mind books that don't have much plot as long as they have really interesting and/or unique characters, but *Lucky Us* didn't. The characters in this book were all bland. I had no strong feelings for any of them. I just didn't care about what they were going through.

I also felt as though the language used in *Lucky Us* was a touch too modern. I didn't feel as though it was taking place in the 1940s. Placing characters in situations that happened in the 1940s is not a historical fiction novel make (or at least not a good one). You have to follow through with their actions as well as their dialogue to make it all ring true. And I felt that *Lucky Us* just didn't do this.

So, I don't think I recommend *Lucky Us*. While it did have some interesting parts, for the most part it just meandered on. The characters weren't engaging, the overall plot wasn't gripping, and I found the writing to

be uninspiring. I say skip it.

Jennie Canzoneri says

This surprising book. I loved the title, the cover, and every single character, from the worst to the best, most of them a blended combination of both good and bad, which kept wonderfully reminding me of life. Life is beautiful and ugly, with good people doing horrible things and horrible people showing up for us when we least expect it, and we keep surviving through it all. And then there was this refreshing streak of history that felt both thoughtful and subtle.

I caught my breath at the excellent writing and cried as it ended, wanting to spend more time with Eva and her family, just to see where her life took her next.

I just really loved this book.
