



Big Bones

Laura Dockrill

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The latest teen novel from the sparkling Laura Dockrill, introducing Bluebelle, and her moving, hilarious take on food, body image and how we look after ourselves and others

A heart-warming teen story from the unique voice of Laura Dockrill, about Bluebelle, aka BB, aka Big Bones - a sixteen-year-old girl encouraged to tackle her weight even though she's perfectly happy, thank you, and getting on with her life and in love with food. Then a tragedy in the family forces BB to find a new relationship with her body and herself. Moving, memorable and hilarious.

Big Bones Details

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Author : Laura Dockrill

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From Reader Review Big Bones for online ebook

Jessica (Jess Hearts Books) says

One of my favourite books of 2018 so far! Brimming with body positivity, nugget sized bites of feminism and belly laugh humor. Trigger warning for eating disorders and food related anxiety.

Marie Andrews says

Big Bones follows the story of Bluebelle as she is told to lose weight by her doctor and is instructed to keep a food diary and join the gym, in exchange for allowing Bluebelle to keep her job at the cafe she works at and not pursue further education. Big Bones is therefore told as a "food diary" and follows her journey on her weight loss, as well as her usual, everyday life.

Unfortunately, I had really mixed feelings about this book. On the one hand, I loved Bluebelle's fiery personality and how this book very much has a "body positivity" message, with the importance being on Bluebelle's character, as opposed to her image. I also loved how distinctive each of the characters were - I really liked Bluebelle's sister, Dove, especially her interest in free-running, and her relationship with Bluebelle. I thought the dynamics between the characters were great, as were the feminist rants that were frequently mentioned throughout.

However, what didn't work for me was the way that the book was formatted. It was written as a "food diary" format, which became a bit repetitive for me. I get that it was important to describe the food, but I felt it became a little bit boring as the novel went on of a whole page description of a single food for example and it didn't add anything to the novel. Again, I know this was added because of the format, but as a reader, I feel the number of times this was done could have been reduced dramatically. Also, despite it being a "food diary", it was explaining personal issues such as relationships that just would not be present. Even in the novel, it frequently stated things like "Oh I'm so sorry to my doctor who is going to read all this". I feel like the food diary aspect limited and constrained the book and think it would have been just as successful, even more so, if it was written in a normal novel format - it would have worked just as well.

I do recommend this novel as it does have important messages throughout and the characters are great, but the format and the way that it was written knocked my rating down a little. Still an interesting read though.

Serxxx83 says

DNF .maybe I'll try again one day,but this just wasn't getting to me at all.

Lena (The Printed Girl) says

My feelings for this book have been clearly seperated into two different emotions. The first half of the book was worth 2 stars. It only talked about food and was very superficial. I often asked myself what the point of this book was because it was like reading about any completely normal 16 year old. Really, talking about food is only interesting for so long and 200 Pages is definitely way too long (unless you're writing a

cookbook). The summary also says this is a very funny read but I would call it lighthearted at most, funny is really stretching it. The second half of the book was much better it was worth 3 or even 3.5 stars. The story got way more interesting and finally I could read about things other than food. But 50% worth of 2 stars is just too much to give this book a 3 star rating.

This book is about a "fat" (she uses that word to describe herself and that's the only reason I'm using this insulting term) girl who is completely happy with how she looks. And I have to applaud that because **body positivity is a very positive and powerful thing to write about in a YA book**. That's obviously the part of the book that I like the most. It's also the reason that I would love to give this book more stars. But a good message isn't enough for me to make it a good book. Because the only thing that happens is that she decides at one point to love herself more and to start going to the gym. Not to get skinny, but to be healthy and strong. It's a perfect message but just not enough of a story. It's just sad that everything that's in the summary of this book is everything that happens in the book. There is nothing more to the story besides from a tiny love story.

Bluebelle was a bit too over the top for me. She annoyed me because she really didn't think twice about making life changing decisions and overall really didn't use her brain that much. Maybe I'm being a bit harsh, but I really don't know any other way to describe her. I did like most of the other characters. They were all very different and this book didn't contain too much stereotypes. I just think I was looking for something with more depth and if you are looking for depth, this is certainly not the book for you.

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Kathy - Books & Munches says

Our main character, Bluebelle, got roped into keeping a food diary but she ended up writing down her entire Summer story instead. Every chapter is named after a dish, food, candy... Anything the least bit edible! Guess I can easily tell you guys it got me hungry at times...

I don't need to worry or wonder why the world stares at someone like me; they need to worry and wonder why THEY stare at someone like me.

Bluebelle, aka BB or Big Bones, is a sixteen year old girl who's very comfortable with herself and the way she looks. She describes herself as being fat because it's simply a fact. I love her for it. It can't hurt you if you say it before anyone else can use it against you.

She loves herself, loves her fat, loves her food and she's proud of it. She shows us that it is okay to love food, to love to eat, to not be skinny.

However, she also teaches us that even though you might be overweight, you still have to take care of yourself and your body. It's such an important message to add and it's what made this book so special to me.

I am proud to be a girl. Because that's a fact. But prouder that I love myself. Because that's a choice.

Bluebelle's sister, Dove, is also one admirable person. She's skinny, fit, loves a challenge and is pretty much what Bluebelle isn't when it comes to their bodies. Knowing that Dove still supports BB in her decisions, her way of life and is always the upbeat person she is.. Family means everything when you're "different".

I've learnt that people secretly like it a bit if other people don't like themselves because it gives other people power.

As for the actual content: it broke my heart at times. Some situations, memories, trains of thought were so familiar to me. It reminded me of everything I had to go through. I do love how there isn't any actual mention of bullying in Big Bones since it isn't only the bullying you struggle with when you're overweight. It's so much more than that.

During the first.. 10% of this novel I really wanted to DNF it. There are some things said at the start of this novel that felt so offensive. After a while it became clear that it wasn't exactly meant that way, more as a way to show how some people think, but will definitely not be the only one who thinks it starts out a bit offensive.

I've forgiven the book for it, but I doubt everyone would?

If they don't want to be skinny, that's just as offensive as calling somebody fat. Funny how people think it's rude to go round calling people fat but not skinny. Skinny people get self-conscious too.

As for the writing style of this book, I liked it, but I disliked it at the same time. Bluebelle's voice is definitely very unique. She's sassy, straight-forward, sarcastic and... well... Sometimes a bit egocentric. All of that but add an extra scoop on top?

It felt like too much sometimes and it took away from the message the author wants to send, I guess.

You have to love yourself. It's the start of everything, the rest will follow naturally.

All in all I did enjoy this novel and I love the message it holds. You simply have to dive into it with an open mind and get in deep enough to actually see the point of this story because it's an important one! I also used a lot of quotes in this review because all of them are so... true and really went straight to my heart when I read them.

There's also mention of **bulimia** in there, so be warned of that.

4 / 5!

Kathy

Quotes used in this review originate from an uncorrected proof and can differ to the finished copy.

Hannah says

I received this book via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Actual rating 3.5 and this is one where I really wish goodreads had the 1/2 star function. It's not quite good enough for the 4 but the 3 feels a bit harsh.

I have fairly mixed feelings about this book. I love the body positivity and the fact that Bluebelle didn't just eat junk food- which I think is a huge misconception about overweight people in general but especially teenagers. I generally enjoyed her voice and cared about her and her family. Also Max is lovely and there need to more love interests like him in YA.

I loved the food descriptions, the portrayal of family, work and the trauma of going to the gym for the first time. I also really liked the emphasis on going to the gym to get fitter and better yourself rather than going to get skinny.

One of my issues was that one of the main points of the book was to not judge people by appearances but BB does this **all the time** there are constant snidey comments about how other women look. Whether it's based on their appearance, their clothes or their size. I found this uncomfortable considering how much BB hates being judged by her weight.

Another small issue I had was that I really hate toilet humour- the entire chapter dedicated to diarrhoea was a big no no for me but I understand that there will be people who found it funny and/or relateable.

Overall, this is a solid 3.5, I'm glad I read it and will look out for more by Laura Dockrill.

Lauren James says

This was absolutely fantastic. Stand-out UKYA. Funny and smart and feelgood and with the BEST descriptions of food I've ever read. Not to be read hungry. I now wish it was summer & I can wear all my patterned floaty dresses again.

C.G. Drews says

I don't want to write negatives reviews anymore but -- **I'm just going to highlight this one for massive ableist trigger warning.** Basically a secondary character has an accident and ends up in a wheelchair, causing the protagonist to (a) freak out so much she stops eating, (b) keeps talking about how life is "so short" and we should all be physical and move around while we can in case we "end up in a wheelchair." I...this is just so hella offensive. And that's only one thing I'm furious about so...

Solid no. Having a disability is not the end of your life.

Anne Pauline says

Porté par un excellent premier personnage, ce livre n'arrive cependant pas à répondre à toutes les promesses qu'il annonce. Les jolies réflexions sur la grossophobie et la confiance en soit sont vite gâchées par les énumérations incessantes d'aliments.

Plutôt feel good, ne vous attendez pas a beaucoup de péripéties, il ne se passe quasi rien. Heureusement que Bluebell sauve la donne par sa personnalité.

Charlotte says

This book was sent to me by the publisher in exchange for an honest review

From the outset, the protagonist Bluebelle – nicknamed BB – is told by a nurse that she is fat and needs to lose weight, and given a food diary to track her eating habits. BB is a very forceful, in-your-face kind of character who knows exactly what she wants and that is to eat what she wants, when she wants and to leave school. So she is forced into a deal with her mother: shift some pounds, and she can leave education.

I was really interested in reading this because of it being pegged as a “body positivity” book and, as a fat girl myself, I wanted to see how this would play out. Sadly, it did not have a good outcome. All BB does is talk about food. And I mean that’s all she does. For over 60% of this book. Each chapter heading is a reference to food and the contents focuses either on a memory or her current situation surrounded by whatever food is taking the centre stage. I get that this book is essentially meant to act as the reader traipsing through her food diary but there’s only so many food descriptions and recipes processes one person can read before they are left wondering where the plot actually is. I mean, a fat girl who only talks about food? That’s really breaking the mould... It isn’t until 75% in when the plot really gets going and BB actually starts to re-evaluate her behaviour and start to become more of a formed character. I just wish that had been there from the start.

Of course, her sister – Dove- had to be the exact opposite: she’s skinny and super fit, her main hobby being parkour and I really liked her. I loved seeing her relationship with BB and how they stuck by each other while their separated partners feuded but once again that was piled under layers of food talk.

Big Bones was a book that could have been a game changer. Sadly, it wasn’t one for me.

Maddie says

I loved this reading experience because it felt like I was living with BB. I knew what she had to eat every day, but you get to know so much more about her and her family, it was just great to be surrounded by interesting characters and feel a real connection with them all.

It didn't help that I was constantly craving a snack while reading this because the descriptions somehow make everything sound tasty. I've read about the opposite side of the spectrum when it comes to toxic relationships with food, so to get the other perspective was eye opening.

Overall, this is a great book about body positivity, trying to be healthy and finding a balance. I loved the development of BB's attitude and genuinely care about what happens to her after the final page!

beth says

2.5 stars

DNF :(First time in a while.

rtc closer to release date

K. says

Trigger warnings: fatphobia, fat shaming, injury to a loved one, poop, mention of eating disorders.

So here's the thing: I was sold on this by the first page, where the protagonist gushes about how much she loves crumpets. Because SAME, GIRL. SAME. But with the exception of a couple of hilarious scenes, I mostly found myself let down by this.

It's the story of a fat teenage girl who's instructed to keep a food diary. And instead of just using it to track what she eats, she treats it more as a literal diary, where she writes down everything that's happening to her. Each chapter is named after a different type of food and starts out with her thoughts on that food. Which, don't get me wrong, I quite liked.

However. This was VERY light on plot. Like, until about the 50-60% mark, this was literally just BB talking about all the different kinds of food she loves and how she wants her boss to sign a piece of paper granting her an apprenticeship. Which got pretty boring pretty quickly.

In contrast, the second half of the book had almost TOO much going on. And it turned into a weight loss story, which wasn't really what I was expecting given how much the book focused on body positivity and being happy as a fat girl. I think the intention was more of a "you can be fat AND fit" sort of a deal, but it didn't really come across that way to me.

So I wanted to love this book, I really did. But ultimately, I found the format a little repetitive and I almost would have preferred if it had been in more of a Bridget Jones format - a literal food diary at the start of each chapter, followed by all BB's thoughts on what's been happening lately. I also found BB not the most likeable of characters at times. She's very...extra. And 90% of the time, I preferred her little sister, Dove.

All that said, I laughed more than I should have when she faked an asthma attack to get out of spin class, because that was literally how I got out of swimming classes in PE for most of high school. Swim a couple of laps, then suddenly start wheezing. So...same, girl.

Colleen Fauchelle says

what a perfect first read for the year. We all set weight loss goals at the start of each year. And here is Bluebell who loves food and is happy with the way she looks. When she is told to keep a food diary for the summer she is not a happy camper but soon it becomes part of her day. Each chapter is a different food how she feels about it and how it makes her feel. She loves the preparing, the cooking and the eating of food. She is funny and sweet and a bit crazy when she is upset. I loved Bluebell aka Big Bones and now that I have

finished her story - diary I miss her.

"I am proud to be a girl. Because that's a fact. But prouder that I love myself. Because that's a choice." pg 302.

Clair says

Bluebelle, aka Big Bones, loves food. Every chapter of this book has a food theme, starting with one of my personal favourites - crumpets! This is the food diary that Bluebelle was encouraged to keep following the appointment with the nurse that her mum dragged her to.

Bluebelle is a body confident 16 year old who has a very close bond with her sister and thinks she knows what she wants to do in life. She has just finished her GCSE Exams and wants to start an apprenticeship at Planet Coffee rather than stay on at school. This may (or may not) have something to do with Max who also works there. Dove her sister is the complete opposite of BB. She does not sit still and loves free running/parkour. Somehow Dove manages to eat what she likes and stay slim.

When a family tragedy strikes it prompts BB to reassess her relationship with food and start taking more care of her health.

I really enjoyed reading this warm and funny book. Bluebelle has such an honest voice (it is possibly too honest in places!) There were some moments where I genuinely laughed out loud. I still wonder where the author got the idea for bum tills...

This book will really appeal to teenagers who like reading humour/contemporary fiction.

NB: There is a brief mention of a bulimic incident involving a coat hanger (p282) However, the main character regrets this instantly. "Never had I wished I could undo an action so quickly".
