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# Empress Of The World



## Synopsis

Nicola Lancaster is spending the summer at the Siegel Institute Summer Program for Gifted Youth—a hothouse of smart, articulate, intense teenagers, living like college students for eight weeks. Nic's had theater friends and orchestra friends, but never just friend friends. And she's certainly never had a relationship. But on the very first day, she falls in with Katrina the Computer Girl, Isaac the West Coast Nice-Guy-Despite-Himself, Kevin the Inarticulate Composer...and Battle. Battle Hall Davies is a beautiful blonde dancer from North Carolina. She's everything Nic isn't. Soon the two are friends—and then, startlingly, more than friends. What do you do when you think you're attracted to guys, and then you meet a girl who steals your heart?

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

While the characters in this first novel are not fully developed and the dialogue often feels clunky, Ryan nonetheless surpasses many of the trappings of stereotypical gay teen representations. At a summer school program for the gifted, anthropology student Nicola, or "Nic," pens everything in her "field notes," from over-scripted exchanges with her dimensionless new friends, like outspoken redhead Katrina and spacey music student Kevin ("It's like we're in a chat room and he's got a really slow connection") to painfully detailed descriptions of their clothes. Nic's driving need to label everything wears at her fledgling relationship with Southern belle Battle (tension comes to a head on

their "two-week anniversary"). Ryan is to be applauded for taking this story beyond an identity struggle; at story's end, Nic is unsure if she is a lesbian or bisexual, but she comes to accept her feelings without having to label herself, and learns to tolerate outsiders' judgments. Mostly she grapples with the ordinary drama and traumas of teen romance. Ryan also does not shy away from describing the physical relationship between Nic and Battle (though nothing beyond kissing is made explicit). Her story unfolds slowly and, ultimately ends up feeling unpolished, but many teens will be drawn to the subject matter, and Nic herself is an appealing heroine. Ages 12-up. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Grade 9 Up-Written with understanding, humor, and heart, this first novel explores a teen love relationship bounded by time, inexperience, and an enclosed community setting. Nicola goes away to a summer program for gifted students, expecting to explore her interest in archaeology while also continuing her artwork. On the very first day, she is attracted to another girl, but she refuses to be labeled as a lesbian because she thinks she's also attracted to boys. And that is the rub with which Nic is faced in this realistically flowing plot: she thinks and analyzes everything she feels, everything others say to her, things left unsaid. This, rather than the gender orientation of her first serious relationship-which does unfold, collapse, and then bloom again before summer's end-is what she learns about herself. Ryan places Nic not only in a romantic relationship with a girl who herself is willing to explore sexuality with a girl and a boy in the same summer-school period, but also in credible friendships with an evidently straight girl and a couple of straight boys. The strength of this novel lies in this interweaving of types of partnerings: the ones driven by desire, those driven by respect for emotional understanding, and others that teens undertake for reasons-frustratingly for Nic-that simply can't be analyzed. These characters seem to breathe in their realism, and the setting of a secluded campus, inhabited by brainy teens for a couple of months, is evoked in sensual detail. Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This was an amazing book. I don't think I've read a romance book I've loved as much as this one. The "gay thing" wasn't even an issue here. It seemed perfectly natural. I loved Nic's Empress doll and her feelings toward her girlfriend and how she described her. This was just a beautiful book. I wish Nic and Battle's story was continued in Rules For Hearts.

One of the defining books of my teenage years, Empress of the World will always hold a very

special place in my heart. I realized with a start recently that while I still have my dog eared and beaten up hardcover copy on my shelves, I still hadn't purchased a digital copy! With a birthday giftcard I fixed that right away. Unfortunately I discovered an eBook that wasn't up to snuff, with myriad formatting issues and (worst of all) a lack of extra content as is promise by the cover. This doesn't have the promised forward by David Levithan, nor the additional comics that were included with the reprint of the physical book. It's the formatting issues that force me to take away one star - switching erratically between Nic's handwriting (often for strike throughs) and standard text was the biggest offense. I hope Penguin will take the time to correct these formatting errors soon!

Good characters, witty dialogue, an endearing love story. Empress of the World is great. Ryan's prose is smooth and flawless, you get quickly immersed in Nicola's way of thinking and looking at the world, which is not something easy to do for any writer. While it was evident the character of Battle was the intended "goal" of the story, I thought Nicola was a much more interesting person and puzzle. Perhaps that's just my personal taste, but it was her who made this book be so worthwhile. It may not be a life-changer book, but it's definitely a highly recommendable one. The kind of read that will make you laugh, smile and get all mushy inside.

terrible book. plot was overly cliched and [possible spoiler] the climax argument that they have is simply unreasonable. the characters barely end up together (though they do). it isnt really worth buying, maybe reading in a library, but even then I am very disappointed.

I may be out of the high school reading level now, but I still enjoy reading young adult novels. I was excited to get started with this book based on the great reviews. Unfortunately, I found myself having to force myself to finish this. The novel had potential, but I felt like the author made the characters try too hard to be likable and in turn, made them seem unreal to me. I would skip out on this one.

The plot could use more exposition and detail, but the characters are accurate for the age they represent and the dialogue reflects that. The characters are all likeable, but there was room for development that wasn't expanded on. It's a great book if you're looking for short and sweet about two girls discovering themselves and each other.

This book has becoming one of my favorites in my collection since it really shows some of the

inquiries that a girl goes through as she realizes her attraction to the same sex. The binding is very good and as long as you take care of your books it should last you a long time. I know several people whom have read this book and enjoyed it. It is a good book for teen to adult ages to read.

I guess it was a good read. It kept me entertained. This is Just your average teen lesbian book. Would read again.

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