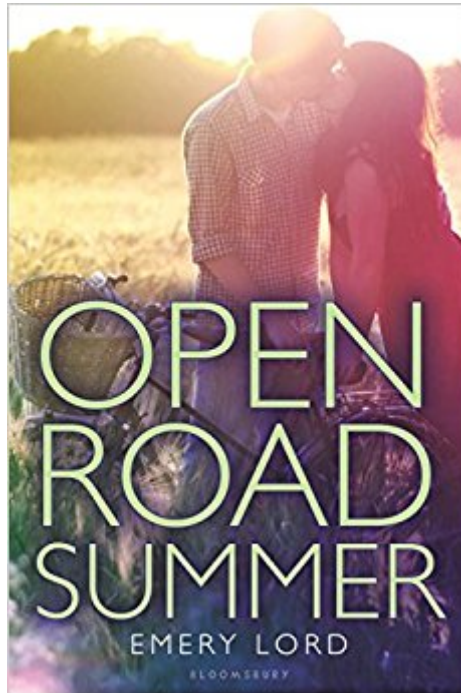




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Open Road Summer



Synopsis

After breaking up with her bad-news boyfriend, Reagan O'Neill is ready to leave her rebellious ways behind. Her best friend, country superstar Lilah Montgomery, is nursing a broken heart of her own. Fortunately, Lilah's 24-city tour is about to kick off, offering a perfect opportunity for a girls-only summer of healing hearts and break-up ballads. But when Matt Finch joins the tour as its opening act, his boy-next-door charm proves difficult for Reagan to resist, despite her vow to live a drama-free existence. This summer, Reagan and Lilah will navigate the ups and downs of fame and friendship as they come to see that giving your heart to the right person is always a risk worth taking. A fresh new voice in this growing genre, Emery Lord's gorgeous debut hits all the right notes of contemporary romance.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Imagine what it's like to be the best friend of a high-school age Taylor Swift or Miley Cyrus. That is Reagan's reality as she embarks on a summer tour with Lilah "Dee" Montgomery all around the country to sold-out concerts of adoring fans. Readers will get a kick out of the backstage tension, as Dee's PR machine tries to deal with doctored leaked photos of the star and spin the public image of their media darling. Reagan is Dee's confidant and moral support, but the girls' friendship is far from one-sided. Dee has long supported

Reagan and helped soften the blows from her friend's troubled past. As Reagan narrates, her sharp-edged tone energizes the narrative and draws in the reader. She gradually reveals the pain and loss she has endured and is upfront about her bad choices and her desire to develop a stronger self-image. Can she trust Matt, the heartthrob opener vocalist who refuses to be put off by her brusqueness? Lord's debut provides an insightful take on friendship, romance, and celebrity culture. Grades 7-10. --Anne O'Malley --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Reagan's tough, wised-up voice and her burgeoning romance with Matt are the engines that keep Lord's engaging debut moving along." Publishers Weekly "Lord successfully adapts classic elements of adult romance novels into a love story gentle enough for younger readers." Kirkus Reviews "Lord's debut provides an insightful take on friendship, romance, and celebrity culture." Booklist "Reagan's tough, wised-up voice and her burgeoning romance with Matt are the engines that keep Lord's engaging debut moving along." Publishers Weekly "Lord successfully adapts classic elements of adult romance novels into a love story gentle enough for younger readers." Kirkus Reviews "Lord's debut provides an insightful take on friendship, romance, and celebrity culture." Booklist

I don't know if I can properly tell you how much I loved *Open Road Summer*. I read it toward the end of March, and I had been having a really rough time reading. Nothing was holding my interest. Finally I cracked open this beauty, and my goodness, it was worth it. I needed this book to get my head back in the game. *Open Road Summer* is one of those amazing books that has literally every component necessary to make me fall in love. It's not just that this is a fun contemporary with a great romance. There's humor, there's substance, there's amazing friendships! There are references aplenty to my beloved home state! This book is the perfect storm of all these things plus just really great writing. While at TLA, I had the pleasure of meeting Emery's editor, and I was able to tell her that it's completely obvious that this book is an act of love of everyone who had their hands on it. I'm serious. It's just incredible. I get a little defensive when I see certain critiques of *Open Road Summer* and Julie Murphy's *Side Effects May Vary*, namely that Reagan and Alice are unlikable because they are hot messes. Look. Not every character can have their crap together. I actually love that *Open Road Summer* is a book about the best friend, not the star. Dee is the perfect girl. I like her, yes, but I don't relate to her that well because she's so level-headed and with

it. Reagan, however, has made mistakes and is trying to move past them. Then, she makes more. I love it! Real life is difficult and messy, and Reagan is living proof of that. Personally, I like my main character with flaws. If you don't, then honestly, this book might not be for you. Meanwhile, I'm going to be over here with Reagan, slightly jaded but hopeful and working to move past it. I think the best aspect of *Open Road Summer* is hands-down Emery's ability to perfectly capture beautiful relationships, both friendships and romance. I love Reagan and Dee's dynamic. It makes me so sad that some readers don't accept Reagan's messiness because Dee loves her for it, not even in spite of it. These girls have so much going on individually, and I love how supportive and loyal they are no matter what they have going on. Sometimes, when you're friends for that long, you just instinctively know what your friend needs. Reagan and Dee totally have that. Sure, we also witness a crazy fight, but again, life is not neat. Sometimes you also have to fight for the good things, even if you have to fight the people you love. I also love the friendship between Dee and Matt, who are the contemporary version of Aria and Roar. They are totally 100% platonic, but they understand each other in a way that Reagan will never understand either of them. I love the way Emery showcases their artistic connection. I actually don't want to say too much about Reagan and Matt's romance because I think that's best experienced first-hand. I think the two of them are great together. They heal one another. Both of them are hesitant to open themselves to love, and it's really awesome to watch them attempt to overcome those walls. So much about this book could have been cliché and ridiculous. I love books and I love music, but I normally find songs that were written for books to be cheesy. In this case, I think Emery displayed great talent as a songwriter because Matt and Dee's lyrics are spot on with minimum cheese. As I said earlier, Emery delivered all the things I expect and want/need from a summertime contemporary, but she made everything unique and fresh, even the small-town 4th of July festival. I found this book to be compelling and relatable, and I think the only I want is more! I would be completely happy with a book or novella from Dee's perspective because I think there is a little more story to tell. The only thing I left to tell you guys is that this is one of the best books I've read all year, and you really should just go ahead and read it already!

I think I've found my favorite contemporary novel. I'd heard amazing things about this book and every single one of those people were right. Truly, I don't think Emery Lord could have delivered a better debut. I'm declaring Reagan as my soul sister. I loved her voice and her character and her tough-as-nails demeanor. Moreover, while Reagan has one hell of a rough exterior, there's a deep vulnerability to her that just made me love her all the more. Reagan's a

little bit broken, both physically and emotionally, and she sees the summer ahead of her as way to heal, pick herself up and start fresh. Then comes along Matt Finch and she gets lost in the feelings he brings forth—feelings that scare her shitless, all the while lifting her higher and higher. Here is a girl who's endured harsh, cruel words and not only has it hardened her heart, it's also made her reluctant to trust and open up.

Reagan's built numerous walls around her, and as the story goes on, we see as she slowly lowers them around a boy that has the power to undo her. Matt Finch was everything that I wanted and more. So much more. He was a bit cocky and smug, but most importantly, he could dish it right back at Reagan. I loved every interaction between the two. I was either smirking, laughing or smiling any time they were together. Like Reagan, Matt's been hurting deeply for a while now. I just wanted to wrap him up and never let go. It might be cheesy of me to say so, but Matt and Reagan really do heal each other. Not only does Matt challenge Reagan to lay down her barriers, but she challenges him to let her see the real him. Neither Reagan nor Matt are perfect, but they are perfect for each other. They may argue and disagree on many things, but together they brought out the best in each other, and really, what more could I

want? It's not often that an author can make us fall in love with both the primary and secondary characters, but that's what happens in *Open Road Summer*. Even though the novel is told in Reagan's POV, the picture depicted of Dee was whole, and one that I fell in love with as well. Furthermore, I was just as invested in Dee's life, that I was with Reagan's. Reagan and Matt were it for me, yet I was still hoping and rooting for Dee and Jimmy. Really, never have I loved a secondary character as much as I loved Dee. And to make things even better, the paperback copy I own includes a bonus chapter in Dee's POV that was beautiful and amazing and everything I could have wanted. Not only did I fall in love with Dee's voice, but I got to see a different side of Reagan and their friendship—which was a beautiful entity in its own right. Words truly cannot express how much I loved *Open Road Summer*, and while it was a damn shame that I didn't read it sooner, I'm glad I don't have to wait a whole year to experience more of Emery Lord's captivating and beautiful words.

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