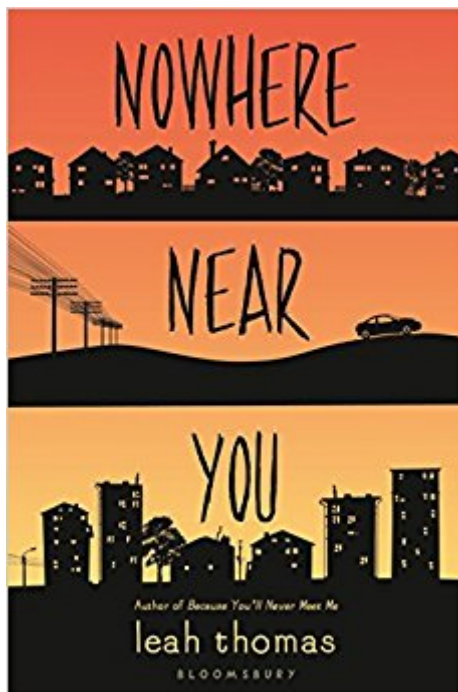


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# Nowhere Near You



## Synopsis

Ollie and Moritz might never meet, but their friendship knows no bounds. Their letters carry on as Ollie embarks on his first road trip away from the woods--no easy feat for a boy allergic to electricity--and Moritz decides which new school would best suit an eyeless boy who prefers to be alone. Along the way they meet other teens like them, other products of strange science who lead seemingly normal lives in ways Ollie and Moritz never imagined possible: A boy who jokes about his atypical skeleton; an aspiring actress who hides a strange deformity; a track star whose abnormal heart propels her to victory. Suddenly the future feels wide open for two former hermits. But even as Ollie and Moritz dare to enjoy life, they can't escape their past, which threatens to destroy any progress they've made. Can these boys ever find their place in a world that might never understand them? *Because You'll Never Meet Me* A William C. Morris YA Debut Award finalist

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up **Gr 9 Up** •This follow-up to Morris Award finalist *Because You'll Never Meet Me* picks up the story of pen pals Ollie and Moritz right where the previous novel left off. Separated by an ocean and by unusual health conditions that could threaten both of their lives should they ever meet, the teenage boys continue to exchange letters as they encounter new challenges and uncover more secrets about the laboratory where they spent time as children. For the first time in his life, Ollie has left his isolated cabin in the woods to join his doctor on a road trip to visit other experimental "Blunderkids" from the lab. Meanwhile, Moritz is adjusting to life at a new

school as well as a burgeoning relationship with fellow student Owen, who is deaf. As in the first book, the strength of the tale lies in the unique bond between Ollie and Moritz, both of whom are forced to confront their limitations and face their fears about their relative places in the world. The boys' voices remain distinct, and the dual narration once again helps to build tension, though the story loses some of the freshness and novelty of the first one. More firmly rooted in science fiction, the tale also ventures toward the allegorical, which feels a bit heavy-handed at times, and the ending leaves loose a few threads that beg for a third installment. VERDICT Fans of the first volume will likely enjoy reading this new chapter in Ollie's and Moritz's lives. — Lauren Strohecker, McKinley Elementary School, Elkins Park, PA

"Unforgettable and distinct voices . . . A fantastic novel that will be especially resonant for readers who struggle with being or feeling outside of 'normal.'" - starred review, Booklist "This brilliant follow-up to a clever and unexpected novel does exactly what it should in keeping the same epistolary format but taking these two unforgettable characters way out of their comfort zones and toward lives that are lived rather than waited out, and the result is powerful stuff indeed." - starred review, BCCB "Ollie and Moritz continue to be compelling characters, struggling to figure out how to use their talents while living within their limitations. In many ways, they are no different than most teens, just a few steps further along the continuum." - VOYA "Part mad science, part convincing portrayal of the volatile, resilient nature of friendship and grief--and that, as Ollie says, is not science fiction." - Kirkus Reviews "The strength of the tale lies in the unique bond between Ollie and Moritz, both of whom are forced to confront their limitations and face their fears about their relative places in the world . . . Fans of the first volume will likely enjoy reading this new chapter in Ollie's and Moritz's lives." - School Library Journal "The pacing is impeccable, as letters move from sunniness (Ollie) and bemused distance (Moritz) to both writers exploring their darkest fears, experiences, and worries for their futures." - starred review, BCCB on BECAUSE YOU'LL NEVER MEET ME "A witty, unusual take on friendship and parlaying weakness into power." - Kirkus Reviews on BECAUSE YOU'LL NEVER MEET ME "Ollie and Moritz are memorable characters with engaging and often humorous voices. . . A quirky, almost whimsical feel even as Thomas grounds it in heartfelt and often painful emotion." - SLJ on BECAUSE YOU'LL NEVER MEET ME "The two may be eccentric outcasts, but their conflicts, heartbreak, and eventual bond form a relatable and engaging narrative." - Publishers Weekly on BECAUSE YOU'LL NEVER MEET ME "It's the distinct, deeply memorable voices of Ollie and Moritz that make this novel an affecting page-turner." - Horn Book Magazine on BECAUSE YOU'LL NEVER MEET ME

This is such an exciting mix of genres. It's like realistic sci-fi, if that makes sense. We follow the two main characters, who have fantastical problems, as they try to make their way into the world. Imagine Eleven from Stranger Things trying to go to high school. It's told through letters the two write to each other, and is a story of a strongly-bonded friendship. It would help if you read the previous book though I don't think it's entirely necessary.

The second in a fantastic epistolary series. The book follows the previous Moritz and Ollie with visits from additional Blunderkids. The book is built on weird science and long-distance friendships, fully capturing the messy and enheartening nature of both. I cannot say enough good things about it. (Full disclosure, I know Leah personally. She is a huge dork.)

I have been waiting not-too-patiently for this sequel to *Because You'll Never Meet Me*. I loved the friendship between Ollie and Moritz and couldn't wait to see where their adventures took them. I was not disappointed - the book picks right up and sucks you into their world where you cheer for them, roll your eyes at them, or want to hug them as they help each other grow up through their letters. The new characters we meet are well-written and full of depth. I've been recommending these books to everyone I know.

Love it.

The ending left a big detail open so I'm wondering if there will be a third book in the series. I still love the characters and I really liked the new ones Molly and Arthur. One thing I wish there was more of was Ollie visiting more Blunderkinder. He only met two and from the description I was expecting something more. Another thing I missed was Moritz's dad. He only had a few tiny parts in this one. Outside of that it was a solid follow-up and the ending will bring a smile to your face for sure. I wish Ollie all the best. He is the sun after all.

\*ARC provided by Bloomsbury in exchange for an honest review\*  
“Beyond parks are often graveyards.”  
This was the second book I’ve ever read by Leah and it might be my last. Not because it wasn’t for me, but because it tore into me with a ferocity that I haven’t felt in a long, long time. It reduced me to a hollow shell of the human being I used to be. That quote above most definitely

captures what I feel - a feeling. Desolate and forgotten. I experienced one of the worst emotional roller coasters ever with this book and I don't think I have it in me to go through this again. I felt like I was suffocating with every word since it was so hard to swallow them. Hopefully this review gives this masterpiece the praise it deserves because in my mind, it deserves every single one in the book.

"Don't tell me fiction is fruitless, Moritz. Sometimes it's the only escape we got." For those of you who don't know this already, this is a sequel to *Because You'll Never Meet Me*. It continues to tell the story of two of the most unique (and phenomenal) characters I've ever read about. Ollie and Moritz are not your typical pen-pals and this story is told only through the letters they send each other. The last book left us in such a cliffhanger that I was hoping would happen so this sequel was one of my most anticipated sequels ever. If I would've known how shattered I would be at the end of it all, I might have put it off longer. I was still treasuring every word through out the month it took me to read it but it wasn't long enough for me.

"There's nothing so frightening as the full weight of who you are." This book was inundated with beautiful and mind-blowing quotes which is why I couldn't just choose one to feature. Revisiting these characters was everything I knew it would be, plus everything I didn't. My heart was completely stolen by Ollie and Moritz by the end of book 1, so it was astounding to witness as they managed to steal it a second time around.

Ollie's optimism and ridiculous humor was the light of my life until it dimmed. Moritz's pain was my own until he learned to accept it and work to end it. These two made my maternal instincts go haywire; I was utterly protective of them which backfired on me. I had to witness life throw some horrible things their way without any way of helping them shoulder the pain. I felt useless and I wanted it all to stop, but Leah only enhanced it, breaking me even more. These two have come so far from book 1 that my heart was unbelievably heavy with pride whenever they learned new things about themselves and how to navigate the world around them. To think, that their lives are just beginning and they've already experienced so much!

It was a tough thought to wrap my mind around. I absolutely loved seeing the world through Ollie's fresh and untrained eyes. It enabled me to change my perspective over the smallest of things; So not only did Leah give me stunning characters to meet, but she also made me learn things about myself. Speaking of main characters, they aren't the only ones we meet. The side characters that Ollie and Moritz meet throughout their journey are as memorable as the two of them. They easily crawled into my heart

where there will always be a special place for them. I was 100% invested in all of their lives and they all ripped ugly sobs from me with their life stories. “Sometimes we only have delusions and sometimes that’s better than remembering.” There is another quote that captivated my entire being but I won’t write it down here because it has the potential of being a spoiler, if you look hard enough. So I’ll just tell you, that I will definitely be getting a tattoo that represents said quote. This book has torn me apart in every way possible which by doing so, it gave me an experience I will never forget. It deserves to be in so many more bookshelves, and hearts, so I will make sure to help with that. This book was raw, heavy, and most of all, uplifting at the most dire of moments. This was 400 pages of glorious heartbreak. It had the most beautiful ending, but being the greedy person that I am, it ended too soon. This book is utterly precious to me and it has become one of my absolute favorite reads of ALL TIME. 10/5 stars.

Oh, how much I enjoyed reading Ollie and Moritz again. I was entranced by the first book, and while this wasn’t quite to the level of that one, I still loved it so much. It was so good to see my faves again, as well as a whole cast of new characters that I loved getting to know. Ollie has finally left his home in the woods on a mission to find more of kids like him, and tell their story. Moritz has to decide where to continue his schooling. Both of them have completely uprooted their lives, their only constant being the letters they write to each other. Again, it takes a very talented writer to write an entire book in letters, and Leah Thomas is that. Both voices were very distinct, and you really got to see their character through the letters. While Moritz’s letters were in present time, Ollie’s actually lagged by a couple months at first. This wasn’t confusing though. It added a sense of mystery and intrigue to what was actually happening, and I found myself wondering what was happening. While the beginning was a bit slow for me to get into (mostly because I forgot some Important Things that happened in book 1 and was a bit confused), once I got into the groove, I found myself needing to know what was happening. This is a story of Ollie and Moritz finding their place in the world, and with each other. They have both seen some pretty bad things, but they are trying to figure out how to move on and live life. I found myself looking forward to Moritz’s parts more in some places, but I still enjoyed both sides of the story that was being told. I also loved the new characters that we got introduced to and their stories. So, in short, I loved this book. It’s a story about messy lives and messy relationships and living and I adored it, just like I adore Ollie and Moritz.

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