

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin white lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming larger, more prominent clusters.

The Farm

Written by Emily McKay

Published by sanmarco-sf

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The Farm

By Emily McKay

The Farmers Union

Life was different in the Before: before vampires began devouring humans in a swarm across America; before the surviving young people were rounded up and quarantined. These days, we know what those quarantines are—holding pens where human blood is turned into more food for the undead monsters, known as Ticks. Surrounded by electrical fences, most kids try to survive the Farms by turning on each other!

Well, well. Color me impressed. If you would have told me, three months ago, that someone could still offer an original take on vampires, I'd probably have laughed in your face. So far we've seen nightwalkers, daywalkers, vegetarian vampires, vampires with magical powers, sparkly vampires, bloodthirsty monsters, gorgeous vampires, hairless ugly vampires, and just about everything else you can possibly think of. But Ticks? Trust me, they're new.

They're not quite vampires, true, but genetically al Well, well. Color me impressed. If you would have told me, three months ago, that someone could still offer an original take on vampires, I'd probably have laughed in your face. So far we've seen nightwalkers, daywalkers, vegetarian vampires, vampires with magical powers, sparkly vampires, bloodthirsty monsters, gorgeous vampires, hairless ugly vampires, and just about everything else you can possibly think of. But Ticks? Trust me, they're new.

They're not quite vampires, true, but genetically altered humans, even more frightening because of their mindlessness. They drink blood, but they take it straight from your heart after they rip it out with their bare hands. The one real vampire in this book is still a far scarier monster, true, but the very thing that makes him more dangerous, his ability to blend in, is the same thing that makes him easier to accept.

Their frames were too bulky and broad, their arms too long, but it was their faces that churned my stomach. The almost human quality to their features. Their eyes darting fervently under hair that was shaggy and unkempt. Their heavy jaws and bulging leonine teeth.

Ever since The Farm's US release, I've been dutifully reading reviews and I've noticed that people tend to point one (or all) of three things: their surprise over the originality of Ticks, their love for all things Carter-related, and their disappointment with Lily's character. I agree with the first, tentatively agree with the second, but I absolutely can't agree with the third. As someone who is extremely socially awkward, but also fiercely protective of those few people I consider my own, I found it very easy to sympathize with Lily and her willingness to do anything to save her autistic sister. Yes, there were times when she seemed almost prejudiced, but there's no way to know how any of us

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would react after six months on a Farm, being used as a cow. Lily understood herself very well and she was willing to change when circumstances required it, or when she realized she was being unfair. Some of my favorite heroines started out as mildly unlikeable only to become fascinating and admirable later on, and I have a feeling Lily will find her place among them soon enough.

Including a few short chapters from Mel's point of view was a risky move, and one that didn't pan out in my opinion. We can't possibly know what goes on in an autistic mind, and while McKay approached it in an original way, there were still a few problems; the most important being that her narrative was barely understandable. Mel's thoughts made very little sense, and while I appreciated both the original attempt and the fact that they were supposed to be messy, I still didn't see the point of those chapters at all.

Another thing that stood out was a pretty big plot hole someone should have noticed and pointed out in time. Carter came on the Farm looking for Lily specifically, because he thought she was an abductura, a powerful individual able to influence the emotions of others. I didn't like his reasons, and I thought the entire thing was incredibly insulting to Lily, but I understood him to a point. What I didn't understand was how he was able to convince others with such a weak argument, especially a four thousand year old vampire who should have demanded more proof. Whether Carter was right or wrong isn't really important, you'll have to read the book to find out. All I'm trying to point out is that a lot of people followed him in a pretty wide search, risking their lives daily, all because he couldn't believe his attraction to Lily was natural.

Despite a few problems, I'd recommend The Farm to all those who enjoy reading about vampires, but not the romanticized kind. I am very much looking forward to the next book.

...more

The Farmer's Dog

I really liked The Farm... until I didn't. I guess this is another case of me getting the wrong impression from the description; that's happened a lot to me lately, but, most of the time, it's the teaser giving away too much. In this case, just the opposite, because the minute I got to what Carter's secret was, my enthusiasm for this book instantly went to zero. Let's just say it's not a good sign when your own characters are making fun of how stupid the plot twists are.

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From the description, I'm thinking this is going to be a book about humans being farmed for food to feed vampires and two sisters having to escape from 'The Farm'. And it is, at least at first. A bit predictable, but one of the sisters, Mel, is mentally handicapped and her point of view is rather good - I have to hand it to Emily McKay, she did a really good job making sure Mel's story comes across despite how she's telling it. I didn't like Lily as much, she's really on edge and her frustration with her sister even frustrated me, but it's easy to tell her heart's in the right place nonetheless. So Lily and Mel go about describing their predicament and making plans to escape, and then, as promised, new kid Carter comes into the picture with a hidden agenda and the girls' plans go straight to hell. So far so good, right?

Not really, because that's exactly when the problems started popping up left and right for me. First of all, Carter obviously knows exactly what's going on, so it's kind of weird that McKay would write from his point of view at all when the first few chapters hinge on the girls and the reader being in the dark about his secret. Even worse, she writes his point of view as 'I know what's going on, I feel real guilty about not telling Lily, but I'm gonna keep the whole thing to myself'. Wow, what a useless point of view that tells me nothing, especially with how ambiguous his reasons for not telling Lily are. But as it turns out, Carter should've kept his secret a secret, because knowing that secret ruined the rest of the book for me.

Why? It turns what was a plot about escaping a facility where kids are farmed for their blood to feed mutant vampire like creatures called Ticks into a plot about vampire (real ones, not Ticks) conspiracies and people with mass mind control powers. WTF?!! McKay obviously recognized how unbelievable this is because Lily calls Carter out on it every time he opens his mouth and says something even more ridiculous than the previous 'bombshell' he drops. (Actual line from Lily: I don't need to think about it to know that this is the stupidest, most ridiculous fantasy I've ever heard. My reaction: I don't need to think about it to know that this is the stupidest, most ridiculous fantasy I've ever read.) And it's not like these plot twists are even necessary to the story, the only thing they do is turn Lily from an average if annoyingly stubborn character who may not always know what's good for her into a lame savior type with a massive hero complex. Oh, and the massive number of inconsistencies that result:

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the Ticks are nocturnal, nope they attack during the day, the Ticks can't enter consecrated ground (loool), nope they attack a church because it doesn't look like a church even though Lily and Co. hid in another church that didn't look like a church a few chapters earlier, the Ticks are dumb brutes, nope they implanted Lily's tracking chip (I'm sure this last one is just an author slipup, but it all goes to show the premise is just convoluted).

I'm not saying the book stops making sense once Lily, Mel, and Carter (plus their friends Joe and McKenna) escape the Farm. Most of the time, the gang's fending off Ticks or trying to avoid recapture and I'm actually having a good time reading about it, Mel and McKenna as the stereotypical cheerleader turned tough survivor in particular, although Lily and Carter are so generic I couldn't remember their names while writing this review and had to leave them blank before going back to look in the book and filling them in mad lib style. But, somebody (usually Carter) always has to bring up the stupid premise this book doesn't even need and the only thing it's good for is a lame Twilight Vampire Diaries reference before I'm reminded that even the most well conceived books can go bad on the way to crazyville.

I think Emily McKay should've quit while she was ahead. The book's fine as it is without the need for the ridiculous backstory slash explanation for the Ticks, all it does is add a dose of crazy to a perfectly good book that didn't need it. Maybe she's doing it to set up a sequel, but I don't think I'll be back. ...more

Wow! Just wow! This book grabbed me from the first page and didn't let go. The story is told in multiple POV. Lily dominates the story, but Carter and Mel both have some chapters along the way. While I gravitated toward Lily and her protective nature, always worrying more about her sister, Mel, than anything else, I really loved the chapters told by Mel. She's autistic and boy does the girl have an interesting mind. She really adds depth to the story.

Lily is only concerned about Mel and her own safety. Wow! Just wow! This book grabbed me from the first page and didn't let go. The story is told in multiple POV. Lily dominates the story, but Carter and Mel both have some chapters along the way. While I gravitated toward Lily and her protective nature, always worrying more about her sister, Mel, than anything else, I really loved the chapters told by Mel. She's autistic and boy does the girl have an interesting mind. She really adds depth to the story.

Lily is only concerned about Mel and her own safety, which means getting off of the Farm before they turn 18. 18 is the age they are supposedly released, but Lily thinks it's really the age they are fed to the Ticks. So Lily devises a plan, but everything gets derailed when Carter, a sort-of-friend and major crush from the Before, shows up. He's not at all what he seems, but Lily must trust him in order to go through with her plan to escape.

Carter has lots of secrets and I won't spoil any of them for you, but let me tell you that nothing is as it seems in this story. McKay has tons of twists and keeps you guessing. And be ready to experience every emotion in the book. There were scenes that had me cringing and grossed out. Other scenes made me

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want to cry. And the tension is high just about all the time. You're in for a crazy good ride with this story. It's easily on my lists of favorite books this year. ...more

The Farm Riverdale

This is the second book that's been recommended to me because it supposedly has something in common with my book that I should learn from, and it's the second book that's made me want to shoot myself if this is how I'm supposed to write.

Fortunately, it was an eminently skimmable book, and that's how I read it, by skimming large chunks at a time.

So, generic somber-hued-ethereal-girl YA cover. Vampire apocalypse. Ninth grade crush shows up to rescue her. Yeaaaaah. The one single bright spot (or at least, point of interest) was the main character's autistic sister.

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So, generic somber-hued-ethereal-girl YA cover. Vampire apocalypse. Ninth grade crush shows up to rescue her. Yeaaaaah. The one single bright spot (or at least, point of interest) was the main character's autistic sister.

The main problem with *The Farm*, besides its elementary prose with vocabulary and sentence structures pitched at a sixth grade level, predictable plot with predictable Hot Boy and cartoonish vampires, and dead-dumb setting, is that McKay stuffs three or four major elements into a novel that can only handle one.

Flesh-eating monsters known as "Ticks" have mostly wiped out mankind, except for those few who remain in enclaves called Farms, which are actually more like concentration camps whose inhabitants are almost entirely teenagers. Teenagers are extra-tasty to the Ticks because of their hormones. Yeah, I'm not even sure what metaphor Emily McKay was going for there. They are separated into castes: "Greens," "Breeders," and "Collabs."

Lily, the main character, has an autistic twin sister named Mel. She and Mel are plotting to escape their Farm. Then her high school crush, Carter, shows up. The book then annoyingly alternates between first-person Lily chapters and third-person Carter chapters. Mel gets a few POV chapters as well. They escape from the Farm and find out that there are also real vampires. The suave, immortal, master-vampire with Dracula powers kind of vampire. Carter has teamed up with a vamp named Sebastian, and they're apparently part of some rebellion against the master vampire who's responsible for the Tick apocalypse. And they are looking for abductura, who are humans with a rare gene that gives them mind control powers, and they think Lily is one.

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Are you going "Whaaaat?" at this point? Because I sure was.

Lily loves-hates Carter and they spend the book on the run or occasionally fighting Ticks, while Lily learns six impossible things before breakfast (vampires, abductura, Carter the super-hot popular boy has been in love with Lily the geeky nobody since ninth grade), and the book ends with a pretty predictable twist since this is of course the first book in a trilogy.

It's not horribly written, but it's written for the comprehension and attention-span engagement of the average, and I mean average, YA reader, meaning, it's pretty dumb. Frankly, I think it would have been a better book if McKay had dispensed with the vampires altogether. Justin Cronin already wrote this book and it was much better.

Mel was one of the few things I did like about The Farm. That said, I don't know how believable Mel is. Mel was interesting, but this is how her internal monologues go:

This rabbit hole feels cozy and we're not trapped even though Carter's still acting like Bugs. Uncle Rodney understands about music even if he worships a dead god.

...

I can try. I have all night to find the music. The pink gum helps.

The shark is gone "out tocking after Ticks. Finding food before it finds us. But part of me misses his watery silence. Who will pilot us, if we're not pilot fish to his shark?

Her stream-of-consciousness internal monologues were interesting, but made me think that McKay was modeling Mel after the Cylon Hybrids from Battlestar Galactica.

McKay also tries too hard by half to be clever:

Carter and I had gone to school together back in the Before. Despite what teen novels everywhere would have you believe, sitting beside a hot guy in ninth-grade biology is not the basis for eternal love "at least, not the requited kind. And yeah, I admit it, in my more romantic moments, I imagined that I alone saw through his tough, bad-boy exterior to the wounded soul inside. Carter had been the kind of guy who ran hot and cold. One day he'd be all charming smiles, the next brooding glares. Some days he'd flirt with me, others he'd ignore me completely. What can I say, that charming, bad-boy thing he had going was like catnip to a geeky girl like me. And yeah, my predictability disgusted even me. I'd

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spend the first two periods of every day reminding myself not to be an idiot "because a guy like Carter didn't even exist in the same social universe as I did" and I'd show up to class ready to banish my crush forever, only to have him flash me one of those crooked smiles that made me melt inside.

There's got to be a trope to describe trying so hard to subvert the thing you are mocking that your subversion turns into outright imitation. And yeah, elsewhere in the book, there's an explicit "Vampires don't sparkle" line. Also, because Lily learned archery in Girl Scouts, she picks up a bow to start shooting vampires with. Uh huh.

Lily is mostly annoying. She's your standard issue feisty-girl YA protagonist, with an extra side of thick-as-a-brick-stubborn-as-a-wall, because I lost count of how many times she'd stop Carter or someone else in the middle of a life-and-death flight from the bad guys to demand that they give her answers! Right! Now! Or she's Not Going Anywhere!

She does have a few genuine moments of self-awareness and character development. For example, when she works out that Carter may have fallen in love with her because she has mind control powers, she is freaked out and refuses to pursue their relationship further. (For a few chapters.) She also, with a little help from their vampire friend:

"Has it occurred to you, Lily," he continued "either unaware of my bone-deep revulsion or unconcerned with it" "that Mel is as much her own person as you are. Perhaps it is not anyone's fault but her own."

realizes that she's been pretty horrible to her sister.

All those months on the Farm, I had treated her like she was a burden. I had acted like some sort of saint for taking care of her. God, that must have irritated her. Suddenly I thought about how her speech patterns changed on the Farm. I had assumed it was stress, but maybe it wasn't. After all, she'd started talking again when Carter showed up. Carter, who'd always treated her like an equal. Maybe I really was the problem. Why had I always treated her like she was a burden, when we were really in this together the whole time?

So, I will give this book two stars for the small bits of redeeming value I gleaned from it. But it makes me die a little inside reading other reviews saying it was "So scary! And gory!" or "exciting" or "original" or had a "really interesting plot" since these are obviously readers who don't read much of anything outside of lowest common denominator YA pulp and have nothing really scary, gory, exciting, original, or interesting to compare it with. ...more

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Spoilers

For some reason or another I had really high expectations for this (I think it was the cover), sadly I wasn't impressed. The premise sounded interesting enough even though it was pretty similar to a bunch of other YA/dystopian/vampire type books.

In *The Farm*, vampires have taken over the world (is it weird that I want that to happen in the real world? IDK, it just seems like fun), anyway all the teenagers are rounded up into farms because their blood is extra sexy and oh so tasty. Two of

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In *The Farm*, vampires have taken over the world (is it weird that I want that to happen in the real world? IDK, it just seems like fun), anyway all the teenagers are rounded up into farms because their blood is extra sexy and oh so tasty. Two of those teenagers are Lily and her autistic twin sister, Mel. Lily and Mel plan to escape but when Lily's former crush, Carter, turns up things get complicated and also somewhat sexy as Lily and Carter give into their wuv and passion and general lustiness.

Lily and Carter were kind of boring, they were the same old flat cookie cutter characters that can be found in any YA book. Lily was the usual boring, insecure, whiny heroine and Carter was the typical beautiful, strong, mysterious, douche hero. Mel was a decent character although she came across as more intriguing in Carter/Lily's POV rather than her own.

I hated Carter - he was a dick. There was nothing swoon-worthy or attractive about him. All he did was constantly lie to Lily and then berate her when she did something he didn't like. The loser didn't realise that if he was honest with her from the start then Lily wouldn't have done any of the crazy and risky things she did - everything she did was in order to escape and survive, how was she supposed to know Carter had his own plans for them to escape?! What pissed me off most about him was how he thought that the only reason he could fall for Lily was because she was an 'abductura' and had compelled him to have feelings for her - it was arrogant and insulting and it showed how little he thought of her because he believed that the only way someone like him could fall for someone like her was because he was forced to...Real nice. I also wasn't impressed when Carter beat Lily up, threatened and tranquilized her - I suppose I should get over all these heroes physically abusing the heroines since it's what they all do nowadays - apparently if a hero doesn't abuse a heroine, it's not real love!

Lily's feelings for Carter were pathetic - she could have been an okay character if she had told him to fuck off but instead she let him treat her like shit. Then again you're not a real heroine if you don't let the hero abuse you and treat you like dirt.

I did like Mel and Lily's relationship - it was the best thing in the book.

Overall, this was well rubbish. The first half was slow and the second half was predictable, the world building was unimaginative and most of the characters were cardboard cutouts. ...more

The Farmhouse Inn

2.5 stars. **There are some minor spoilers in this review.

The Farm started out great. It might have stayed that way if it would have just been what it sounded like it would be. In the beginning Lily and her autistic sister Mel are trying to escape a "farm" where their blood is being harvested to feed vicious vampire-like creatures called ticks. The Farm is a place where teens are taken until they are 18. There is a lot of mystery about what happens after everyone at the farm turns 18. They disa

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Unfortunately the story takes an unexpected turn. Once we find out why Carter is really there I thought it veered off in the wrong direction. I mean did we really need another book with the girl who is special trope? I also felt like there was no good reason for Carter to have hidden things from Lily in the beginning. Why couldn't he have been upfront with her about what he was doing there, at least about the helping her get out part? And he was so convinced that she was what he thought she was, but the reasoning behind it seemed pretty flimsy to me.

Since it's a vampire apocalypse type story, I was expecting a lot of creepiness, maybe something a lot more like *The Hallowed Ones* by Laura Bickle. Now that was a creepy YA book! Unfortunately the creatures in this book weren't creepy at all. They even sounded like Sasquatches the way they were described, which I thought was weird. Also the whole reason for the ticks existing didn't work for me either. A regular vampire decides he wants to rule the world so he ends up creating some sort of virus with his venom in a lab that turns people into these vicious, mindless vampire-like creatures. I would have liked it much better if the regular vampires had been left out and the monstrous vampire-like creatures had been the only ones.

Honestly though, all of those issues were small compared to my main problem with this book. And that is I have a real problem with a book that breaks its own rules, and that's exactly what *The Farm* does repeatedly. If an author is going to set up rules to their book mythology it's a good idea to stick with them, otherwise why bother with making the rules in the first place? We have the ticks in this book that are supposed to only be active at night, only to suddenly find out they are out in the daytime now too. They are supposed to avoid churches or holy ground, only to find out that there is an exception to that rule as well. And they are supposed to be afraid of fire, but surround an entire burning building! At the

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end of the book (and yes I did see that little twist concerning the sisters coming a mile away) I already know which rule will probably be broken in the sequel.

Even with all of the problems I had with the book I still found myself kind of wanting to find out what happens next, mainly with Mel, but in the end I decided to just look up spoilers instead of read the next book.

Review also posted at Writings of a Reader

...more

Things I liked:

â€¢Mel's chapters. While I don't know how autistic people tend to act, the poetry of her pages lured me in and I quite enjoyed them.

â€¢the plot was interesting, even if the plot twist was predictable. WAYYYY too many plot twist clues.

â€¢the characters. I could see them all as different people and liked little pieces of each of them so that's nice.

What I didn't like:

â€¢the insta-like. Not working for me.

â€¢the plot twist was good, but as I said before, there were too many clues for one plot

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The Farm Movie

The other day, while I was surrounded by hordes of rabid book fans, I was asked a question. A question that was rather elementary when it came right down to it, but still incredibly intriguing. One that (if I'm being honest) I'm surprised is being asked now; 3 years into my reviewing journey. It was:

“What are you tired of?”

My first thought (naturally) was laundry. I have no idea how my children manage to wear everything they own in a single week, but alas! they do, therefore I'm up to my elbows in The other day, while I was surrounded by hordes of rabid book fans, I was asked a question. A question that was rather elementary when it came right down to it, but still incredibly intriguing. One that (if I'm being honest) I'm surprised is being asked now; 3 years into my reviewing journey. It was:

“What are you tired of?”

My first thought (naturally) was laundry. I have no idea how my children manage to wear everything they own in a single week, but alas! they do, therefore I'm up to my elbows in dirty boy socks on a daily basis.

Of course this is not what she meant. So I dug down deep. (Ok! not that deep. I'm way too superficial for that.) And pondered the question.

My answer: Vampires.

Don't get me wrong. There was a day (not so very long ago) where vampires in literature were my pathetic stay-at-home mommy version of crack. But the more I read, the more I wanted to punch them (and their always perfect abs and flowing glossy hair) in the face. (Which of course would then get me killed. So! I'm going to go ahead and retract that statement.)

It's not that I'm entirely “tired” of vampires. They have their perks. What I'm tired of are “nice” vampires! Give me blood and guts. Give me vampires that are drunk on bloodlust and have absolutely no moral judgment.

“A squirrel? You want me to eat a squirrel? Hell no! I want that blonde over there trying desperately to order the world's most complicated cup of coffee! She looks like a tasty caffeinated treat!”

In short, I want my fanged foes to be exactly that! FOES.

So to you, Ms. Emily McKay, I thank you for being slightly demented and wildly unforgiving in regards to your vampires (that read a lot like zombies! which, I'll never get tired of.)

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Life was different in the Before: before vampires began devouring humans in a swarm across America; before the surviving young people were rounded up and quarantined. These days, we know what those quarantines are—holding pens where human blood is turned into more food for the undead monsters, known as Ticks. Surrounded by electrical fences, most kids try to survive the Farms by turning on each other;

And when trust is a thing of the past, escape is nearly impossible.

Lily and her twin sister Mel have a plan. Though Mel can barely communicate, her autism helps her notice things no one else notices—like the portion of electrical fence that gets turned off every night. Getting across won't be easy, but as Lily gathers what they need to escape, a familiar face appears out of nowhere, offering to help;

Carter was a schoolmate of Lily's in the Before. Managing to evade capture until now, he has valuable knowledge of the outside world. But like everyone on the Farm, Carter has his own agenda, and he knows that behind the Ticks is an even more dangerous threat to the human race;

The most intriguing aspect of The Farm is that the reader has absolutely zero idea who to trust. Not in a traditional mystery novel way were several people could be the killer, but something much more dramatic. Without giving too much away (because I hate spoilers) There is a specific trait to one of McKay's characters that makes him/her difficult to read. (How's that for vague.) This trait is not sad, or inappropriate or even (in layman's terms) bad. Instead it is incredibly influential. And because of its influence it makes every aspect of the book (intentions, emotions etc.) questionable. You'll find yourself agreeing with sentiments, only to find out they weren't at all what you believed them to be. You will fall in love with characters only to second guess them pages later. NOT KNOWING is the driving force of this book. It weaves its way into every plot turn, every self actualization and heart-felt monologue found inside.

That said, without expertly written characters there would be no story.

Lily and her twin sister are about to turn 18. For most people this would be exciting. But for a prisoner of the Farm, turning 18 is paramount to getting the death penalty You are considered no longer useful and put out to pasture. Literally. Outside the walls of the farm live Ticks. Genetically modified vampires that drink blood and ravage cities (much like a zombie plague) Lily and Mel's only hope of survival is to make a run for it. The only problem is that Mel is autistic. In the Before her autism was manageable In the After it becomes a bit of a burden. This burden is where McKay's writing ability really shines.

Showcasing any illness can be difficult. The balance must be exact. Too far to the left: you appear insensitive. Too far to the right: you are drowning your reader in a pity pool. Both can be detrimental to a body of work. But in the case of Mel? She was not her sickness, or a barrier between her sister and the

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freedom they both so desperately sought. Mel was quite, but attentive. Nervous, but brave. She saw what was beneath EVERY surface, not just the ones directly in her line of sight. She was, without pretense, beautiful.

So, Misty, what about these vampires you claim to loath so much?

Well, like I said before (with the exception of one) they were less like vampires, more like zombies. Which made this book play out more like an Apocalypse than a stroll down Vamp Lane. Much to my end of the world loving pleasure.

Overall?

There was a heavy dose of action. Plenty of heart, and enough shock and awe to keep any reader on the edge of their seats. And it being the 18th of December, I can safely say this will make my top 10 of 2012. I cannot wait to dive into the next chapter of this incredibly engaging story, and see what renowned ROMANCE (yes, I said romance) writer McKay has up her evil side sleeve in the future.

Happy reading my fellow Kindle-ites and remember: never give up on the predictable, sometimes it will surprise you. ...more

I liked that this book was on the border of YA and Adult, it dealt with the age range of Young Adult, but at the same time, it didn't skirt around issues that teenagers face normally. I've noticed that most YA won't curse or really address the issue of sex, but this book managed to cover what it really was like for teenagers before their world exploded and then what it was like after.

I really liked that this book could double as a YA for more mature readers within the genre. While there isn't sex all over this book it is a topic that comes up a few times when talking about Lily and Carter. There is also the constant mention of "Breeders", young women who chose to have babies and therefore are used like tissues by the Collabs, jock like young boys who choose to work with the Dean of The Farm.

I really liked that this book could double as a YA for more mature readers within the genre. While there isn't sex all over this book it is a topic that comes up a few times when talking about Lily and Carter. There is also the constant mention of "Breeders", young women who chose to have babies and therefore are used like tissues by the Collabs, jock like young boys who choose to work with the Dean of The Farm.

All of these terms are a little confusing when trying to explain it to you right now. I thought it was interesting that all of these Farms (yes, human Farms) were set up on college campuses. It reminded me a little bit of The Loners, the way that the jocks and sporty guys joined the collaborators and the girls (its insinuated the ones that have looser ethics) join the breeders which means that Collabs can sleep with

The Farm

them whenever.

I loved the devotion that Lily and Mel had to each other and how Carter pushed to help them both even though it was for his own reasons. I liked that Carter didn't talk to Mel like she was autistic, but rather like she was a normal person. When you look at how they got from point A to point B, its really shocking to realize that this book only took place during a span of 4 days or so.

Of Note: I saw Jenn from Crazy For Books with it on the first day of BEA. I asked her what it was about and her response was "I'm not sure, something about ticks and bugs." which being the girly girl that I am, made me go, 'ick.' When I saw that my mom has snagged a copy, I asked her to read it and let me know if it was a good read, and when my mom handed it to me and was like "OMG. This book was great!" I knew I had to read it even though the publication wasn't until December and I read it in June.

So if you're unsure about this book because the description mentions Ticks, know that its about vampires and their twisted monster cousins and not the bugs, because if it were killer bugs, there would be no surviving. Anyway, give this book a chance if you're looking to explore outside of YA, but you're not sure where to go. There was no love triangle which was great, and you get a little bit more maturity.
...more

The Farm

The Farm Napa

Warning: This contains spoilers, so read at your own risk.

Book, I am very disappointed in you.
The blurb made you sound so amazing!
But... no. No, book. NO.

I honestly had a love-hate relationship throughout reading this. Some parts were amazing, and then the book would drop so low that it would make me want to run headfirst into my mirror.

Some of the big problems I have?

#1: Lily.

I want to punch Lily in her fucking face.
Not because she's capable but gets held down; that isn't her fault (i.e I'll co Warning: This contains spoilers, so read at your own risk.

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#1: Lily.

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Not because she's capable but gets held down; that isn't her fault (i.e I'll complain about that later on).
Nope, it's that SHE IS SO GODDAMNED ARGUMENTATIVE.
Many of the conversations she has with Carter are him trying to talk some sense into her, and her being a motherfucking brick wall of stubborn bullshit and sarcastic quips.

The sad part?

She starts out so well!

I mean, she sounds like Katniss Everdeen; a teenage girl living in a shitty place, her main priority being protecting her sister.

The Farm

Lily has another priority, though: getting the hell off the Farm, which is quite literally a school that has been converted into a place for food and breeding. The kids there are livestock, many donating blood once a week to feed the Ticks.

But then Carter walks in, and she becomes a bitchy brat who can't even listen to anyone but herself. At first her distrust is understandable, but it gets SO. FUCKING. ANNOYING.

You know those hostages that get outraged by the people trying to save them "siding" with their captors? Even though they should KNOW it's a negotiation?

Yeah; when Carter shows up as a bad guy, SHE CAN'T EVEN CONSIDER HE'S TRYING TO HELP HER.

Nope, all of a sudden, he's a collab that's out to get her.

Then, when he's trying to explain himself, she tries to get away like three fucking times, and won't even listen to him. He has to TRANQUILIZE HER. And even then, this just pisses her off more and she tries to escape again!

He has to pin her to a fucking wall.

Then as he tried to explain, guess what?

ARGUMENTS.

About half the conversations she has with Carter are arguments, and 100% of those are Carter TRYING TO TELL HER AS IT IS.

Fuck you Lily, if I could I would conjure you out of the book just so I could punch you in your fucking mouth.

#2: The Plot

Was this book not fine on it's own?

Did it REALLY need spicing up?

I think two sisters, one of them autistic, trying to fight their way through bloodsucking monsters and make it to safety in the North sounds like an incredible read!

Fuck Sebastian, fuck Roberto's plan, fuck Carter and the other rebels.

I WOULD HAVE LOVED THIS BOOK IF IT HAD JUST BEEN ABOUT LILY AND MEL.

But naw, it had to have real vampires. Not the ones created by a virus, but honest-to-god creatures of the night that want to take over the world.

Mmmhmm, yeah. *backspaces everything back to the beginning*

START OVER EMILY, BECAUSE YOU FUCKED UP.

Not to mention the overall silliness of the whole thing.

A vampire named Roberto wanting to take over the world?

That's fucking HILARIOUS.

That would make Stephanie Meyer piss her panties with laughter, and her vampires fucking sparkle in the sunlight.

The Farm

Can we have a normal thing with the virus accidentally being released?

By humans?

Because vampires don't exist?

What the fuck Emily, were you afraid it would sound too much like The Hunger Games or The Mazerunner?

FUCKING HELL, EMILY MCKAY.

I shouldn't be surprised, because your author blurb sounds like a DeviantArt ID written in the third person, but FUCKING HELL. What a waste of a good idea!

#3: Aducturas.

I gave the fuck up at Uncle Rodney the Elvis fan; so please inform me of the point.

WHY DOES LILY NEED TO HAVE POWERS?!

Katniss didn't need powers!

Tris didn't need powers!

Fuck, most dystopian heroines just need to be badass!

Not Lily.

Nope, Lily has fucking mind control powers.

La-de-fucking-da.

What purpose do they serve? I don't know, please tell me!

Are they explained? Pff, I don't know!

Not to mention, why isn't MEL the abductura?

Seriously, that would make much more sense, in my opinion.

#4: Lily being tough but never getting to show it.

Why? Why is this?

If you're going to write a badass female character, THEN LET HER BE A BADASS FEMALE CHARACTER. Lily obviously knows what the fuck she's doing, she wants to protect Mel and get to Canada. Let her fight the Ticks, let her get in the middle of things, let her move a heavy piece of wood off a fucking cellar door.

SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE TOUGH, DAMMIT.

LET HER DO SOMETHING BESIDES SIT THERE AND BITCH ABOUT THINGS.

This seriously upset me, because the one YA heroine I get that's not a Mary Sue is pushed the fuck back by the other characters. The coolest thing she was allowed to do was make explosives, that's it.

THAT'S IT.

Please rewrite this novel, Emily.

The Farm

Nitpicks:

- Sebastian, what the fuck do you look like? All I know about you that you're European and have funky pupils.
- What happened to Carter being an asshole? I thought he was supposed to be an asshole.
- Carter shouldn't even be in this book.
- Nor should Sebastian.
- Slut shaming. This book reeks of it when Lily is describing the Breeders, let alone McKenna. PEOPLE GETTING PREGGERS?! ON PURPOSE?! OH NOES, DATS WRONG AND MAKES YOU A BABY-KILLING SLAG!
- Lily refusing to give people sympathy for stupid-ass reasons.
- There's more pop culture references in this book than in one 15 minute episode of MAD.
- McKenna is popular, and thus is automatically an asshole.
- When the fuck did Stoner Joe do drugs?
- The bad guys are purposefully laced with shittiness to make them sound even more bad. Not only are collabs the dangerous security on the Farm; they're dirty, smelly, fat, lazy, used to be bullies at school, and like to rape people. Not only is the Dean running a place where children are used as livestock and fed to the Ticks when they misbehave, he's a total asshole pig who's too smug for his own good. Yep, the main points weren't a hint, you had to add rapey smugness.
- Lily gets first person POV in her chapters. Mel gets first person POV in her chapters. Carter doesn't get first person POV in his chapters. What the fuck, McKay?
- Uncle Rodney the Elvis fan.
- The action scenes are confusing as fuck.
- My mom's name was Lily. Great way to honor her.

Sure, this book has some good qualities, like Mel and the whole Farm concept, but the only way it could be redeemed is if Emily started the fuck over, got rid of the vampires, made it about two sisters escaping a Farm and fighting for survival an apocalypse of vampires, then maybe, in the second book, something with Carter and the rebels.

There ya go, Emily. I will sit here patiently while you clean up your mess. ...more

HELLS TO THE YEAH!!

drool

MUST HAZ!!

The Farm

The Farmer In The Dell

This was an interesting take on vampires, honestly, I didn't like it very much, but three stars for being original.

I probably would have liked it more if it wasn't for the makeout scenes, call me a baby, but they were too detailed and made me uncomfortable.

Also, props for a good autism rep!

Originally reviewed on A Reader of Fictions.

Like its cover, Emily McKay's *The Farm* is exceedingly dark and creepy, filled with the kinds of vampires that are never going to make swoon-inducing heroes. *The Farm* reminded me somewhat of *The Passage* and of *The Immortal Rules*, both in tone and vampire-ness.

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In *The Farm*, the world has been overrun by Ticks. No, not the bugs. Humans-turned-monsters that feed on human blood. As is the case in roughly 37% of post-apocalyptic fiction, scientific research intended to help humanity accidentally got loose and turned some of the population into man-eating monsters.

Oops! The road to hors d'oeuvres is paved with good intentions, right?

Like in *The Passage*, the humans have consolidated into walled communities, carefully defended from the monsters roaming the majority of the world. Thankfully, the Ticks are not as clever as the creatures in *The Passage*. The difference, though, is that the humans are not behind the walls united to fight against the monsters. The people under eighteen were rounded up and stuck into these Farms, ostensibly because young, hormonal people are the most delicious and thus the most endangered. They are fed up, fattened up, and required to go for regular blood draws, this and the crazy, out-of-control vamps outside the city reminded me heavily of *The Immortal Rules*.

Lily and her twin sister Mel are about to turn eighteen. Unconvinced that what will happen on their birthday will be at all pleasant (nobody knows what becomes of the people who 'graduate' from the Farms), Lily determines that they will escape. She prepares to trade for the final items necessary to complete their withdrawal from the camp. Everything's planned; she can keep Mel safe.

The Farm

Lily lives her life for Mel, her mother's last words having been an invocation to protect her sister. Mel has autism, which has not been improved by the collapse of the world as it once was. In high school, Mel was relatively high-functioning, but, now, she can no longer speak in anything but nursery rhymes, something she did as a child. Lily's love and care for Mel is powerful and touching, definitely the most powerful aspect of the book for me.

Just when they're about ready to escape, enter the love interest, Carter, the only crush Lily has ever had. He was the typical bad boy and Lily's lab partner. He now seems like he could be their deliverance, if only she could trust him, which she can't do, since he obviously wants something. Though this won't make sense if you haven't read it, I have to state that I'm really not a fan of the abductura angle of the story, especially if this book is a standalone.

McKay uses three perspectives to tell the story: Lily, Carter and Mel. The bulk of the narration is Lily's in first person. She has a powerful voice, and is one of those heroines that manages to be likable but not all that nice. Her sections really worked. Mel's sections, also in first person, were perhaps my favorites and I really wish that they had been longer. Mel has a unique way of perceiving the world that I found utterly beautiful. Unfortunately, she receives only about ten pages. None of her sections are above two pages.

Where things go wonky are Carter's bits. For some reason I cannot even begin to fathom, Carter's sections are told in third person. This threw me out of the story every single time, because everything else was in first person and I expect that to continue. Choose one! As a result, I also didn't have as strong of a sense of Carter's character. Actually, I don't really think it was entirely necessary to have him as a POV. I think *The Farm* would have worked better as all Lily's narration or a more-balanced narration with just the two sisters.

If you enjoy post-apocalyptic horror novels, *The Farm* will not disappoint. From what I can tell (aka Goodreads), *The Farm* is a standalone, but I wouldn't be at all surprised to learn that more books are coming. It could really go either way, I think, but there are subjects that have scarcely been touched on, such as the folks orchestrating the Farms (and what precisely happens there) or where all the adults are. I personally hope there's more. ...more

The Farm Book

The time of whiny, incompetent heroines really won't go away and I wish it would. The Farm is another young adult book, in a long line of young adult books, to throw up lead characters who are a terrible fit, yet somehow are inexplicably drawn to one another.

The concept is good (a post-apocalyptic world that is overrun with genetically modified, blood-sucking humans known as Ticks), but poorly executed (inconsistent with a habit of throwing more and more "twists" into the fray to keep the reader). The time of whiny, incompetent heroines really won't go away and I wish it would. The Farm is another young adult book, in a long line of young adult books, to throw up lead characters who are a terrible fit, yet somehow are inexplicably drawn to one another.

The concept is good (a post-apocalyptic world that is overrun with genetically modified, blood-sucking humans known as Ticks), but poorly executed (inconsistent with a habit of throwing more and more "twists" into the fray to keep the reader of their toes). Teenagers with their tasty hormone-laden blood are stashed away in Farms where they are expected to donate blood until their eighteenth birthday. After that, who knows, but our MC Lily isn't sticking around to find out.

So, here we have two twins, one of them with autism, who are planning to escape from their Farm. Sounds good, but wait, what is this? Poor characterisation. Oh yes.

Lily is obnoxious. She is contrary. She is argumentative. She can't help but hurtle herself head first into danger and although she says everything she does is for Mel, Mel hardly makes an appearance in this book. In fact, most of The Farm is focused on Lily and Carter at the cost of all other characters. Literally, The Farm spends most of its time following them around.

What is really terrible is how Mel is presented like extra baggage that Lily has to lug around. Throughout the whole of The Farm I got the overwhelming sense that Mel was treated like a dog. Sit here and stay. Don't go wandering off. Stay out of danger. She got given instruction after instruction, never got spoken to like an equal or human, never got to have a say in matters, especially ones concerning herself. Sure, create a character with autism if you think you can pull it off. Don't do it if you're going to make them come across as less than human.

So that irked me. So did Carter when he rocked up. Clearly had ulterior motives stamped all over him and was a controlling piece of work. I hate it when one character tries to assert themselves all over another character, regardless of gender, and somehow Carter thought he was better than everyone else and therefore had a right to tell them what to do, even go so far as to physically restrain them or beat the crap out of them. He makes my blood boil. And yet, despite his horrific behaviour, he is meant to be a love interest. Because that's a healthy relationship right there. Lily and Carter could never agree on anything and were constantly fighting each other verbally and physically.

The Farm

Now for the world. Boy was it bland. Bland and dull. Sure, there are Ticks running around outside, but that's about it. Everywhere is devoid of life, even the Farm seems to have a distinct lack of other people, except during parts meant to endanger Lily. I would have expected more of a system, more of a presence from those in charge, but no, Lily mostly walks around barely glimpsing or hearing from another soul.

It doesn't get better. The world is literally empty with the spotlight only shone on Lily and Carter. When they do escape, two new characters tag along but you would never know it because they never get any air time. At all. And why introduce new characters that far in, especially when they add nothing to the story. What are they even there for?

I could go on about how terrible The Farm was, but I've run out of energy. I might return when my anger is fired up again, but for now all I'll say is avoid this book. It isn't worth your time. ...more

MICHELLE'S REVIEW:

RATING: 5 BRILLIANT , INTENSE STARS!!

This is a most brilliant, intense read. I devoured this book. I am still hungry and want more.

Throw this on your TBR pile and shoot it up near the top. Emily has a unique take on her blood thirsty â€˜Ticksâ€™™. It works very, very, well. I am not left with a head full of questions.

The world that is built is alarmingly real and frightening.

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The world that is built is alarmingly real and frightening.

6 months approximately, since the Tick virus, yes, there are vampires in this story, but it is not another vampire story..... far from it.

This book will take you to many places, throw you about and take you to more places. The plot thickens the deeper you read.

The Farm

Whahhhhhhh!!!!!!

Mel and Lily are 17yr old twins. They live/survive on The Farm, which was once a college campus. Lily keeps herself and Mel to themselves, getting scanned four times a day for 1st meal, 2nd meal, 3rd meal and 4th meal.

There is no menu.

This campus and the children that occupy it are made up of Collabs, who work for the Dean, human. Greens are the "cows" so to speak, and the Breeders.... they would be the girls who choose to get pregnant.

You will notice things.

Lily and Mel are Greens.

You don't even want to get to your 18th birthday.

Mel is autistic and WOW! WOW! WOW! What Emily has done with Mel's character. This book is written from three pov's. When you are in Mel's head, it is amazing. Mel talks in nursery rhymes. It helps to know your nursery rhymes if you want Mel to respond quick.

"Jack be nimble, Jack be quick." This translates to , ' Mel, hurry!!'

Mel and her slinky , Sllluunk, Sllluunk, Sllluunk.....Mel needs her familiar items.

Trust is a massive issue for Lily as Mel is her all. She feels responsible and will not let anything hurt Mel.

Survival is key, living in an 8 x 12 storage closet, in a Lab, away from everybody else, every minute living in fear of Mel attracting the Dean's attention and being drugged and staked to be left out for the Ticks.

Enter Carter, who could ruin everything. He is an awesome guy lead.

Does the boy have secrets!!

The chemistry between Carter and Lily "feels" real. I loved reading Carter and Lily and I loved reading Lily and Mel.

The more you read , the more the twists, and the intense need to grip your book will overcome you. Paperbacks are necessary for gripping comfort.

The Farm

Sebastian, I really like him , but sadly I don't know what basket to put him in. Do I trust him ? I know I have to , I have no choice at this stage.

The sub characters, Stoner Joe to name one, are all important to the story.

I really felt like I was along for the ride and trying to survive. This book is a 3D experience and it will shake you up in all kinds of way. You may even start sweating and holding your breath.

This book is just the tip of where Emily is going to take us. I can't wait for more. There is so much I want to say, but then I would be spoiling this awesome read.

Tick Tock. Tick Tock. Tick Tock. Tock. Tock. Tock.

FAVE QUOTES:

It's not like I took Blowin' Shit Up 101 last year as an elective.

Silly Lily. How can she resist someone who brings gum and sounds like math.

I didn't give her a chance to answer. I was one "Mary had a little lamb" away from losing it.

Michelle ...more

The Farmhouse

You will find that this story does have teenage characters, a possible love interest and vampires not all in the same context and is told successfully and proved to be an enjoyable read for me.

It starts with the narratives of two sisters told in different chapters in a dystopia setting, there is a need to survive, a care and love for each for other, a possible plan to break free, a journey out of to freedom from The Farm.

The story grabs you from the start you have a feeling of the moment and the You will find that this story does have teenage characters, a possible love interest and vampires not all in the same context and is told successfully and proved to be an enjoyable read for me.

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The story grabs you from the start you have a feeling of the moment and the dilemma of the twin sisters, from then on the author has you and keeps you successfully in the story in a visceral fashion at times emotional and others thrilling.

Delivered with a well paced momentum in different narratives, first person p.o.v mostly three mainly Lily and her twin sister Mel and Carter the male character who tries to aid and has possible love for one. I found Mel a very interesting character to read of there is only very short narratives from Mel poetic at times shes talks in unconventional ways, she communicates with nursery rhymes and expresses feelings with certain sounds and music.

This novel leaves you with something at the end and definitely wanting more and I feel sheâ€™s careful left a lot more to come in the continuation in the next book.

"Four times a day, all the Greens shuffled out from their various hiding places and ambled over to the dining hall, where we were scanned, prodded, and fed. Yeah, we were treated like cows, except cows lived in the blissful oblivion of not knowing their future. We Greens couldn't escape the reminders of what was to come. Not when Collabs took weekly "donations" at the mobile blood bank. Calling it that was their way of making it seem voluntary. It wasn't. And every time we donated blood, they tested it to see how "clean" it was, whether or not it would make good food for the Ticks or if it had too many of the hormones the Ticks seemed to crave. On the Farm, we weren't raising food; we were the food."

Mel

"Places have music, too.

Home always sounded like Beethoven's Ninth. School, like skate punk.

Only holy ground is quiet. "

Also review @ <http://more2read.com/review/the-farm-by-emily-mckay/> ...more

This is a decent vampire story that gets some extra points for originality. The two main characters are identical twin sisters, Lily and Mel, but Mel is a mid-level functioning autistic. The girls have been living in

The Farm

what is essentially an internment camp called The Farm for six months, ever since the outbreak of a virus that turned a large proportion of the human population into savage, feral versions called Ticks, who kill and feed on human blood.

Lily believes that once she and her sister turn 18, they will no longer be safe at The Farm and so wants nothing more than to escape. When former classmate Carter appears, it seems that he might be the key to their escape, but she isn't sure she can trust him.

While there is a lot of the standard breakout and escape into danger storyline going on here, the thing that made this book interesting for me was the fact that the author made a real effort to integrate a character with autism into the story. The writing was a bit choppy in parts, because the author for some reason decided to change from first person to third person with different POV characters, but even so, there's enough interesting stuff going on that I'm planning to read the next book. ...more