

*We are Okay*, by Nina LaCour

Student Reviewer: Sara Nachura

*“If only I had something to take the edge off the loneliness. If only lonely were a more accurate word. It should sound much less pretty.”*

While *We Are Okay* is a story about loneliness with a quiet tone and deep themes of sadness and loss. But it's also about about dealing with your grief and learning to move on to a place of happiness.

Marin's mother died in a surfing accident when she was three years old, but she always looked for ways to be positive. Her grandfather took amazing care of her, she had great friends and a good life at home. This was before she decided to flee her home and move to New York.

Now, Marin is an eighteen-year-old girl who has just left behind everything she knew back in California. She refuses to talk to anyone from her old life, shutting herself in her college dorm room. Despite all of her friends going home for winter break, she just can't bring herself to. That is, until Mabel - her former best friend, former partner in crime, and maybe someone who could have been something more – pays her a visit.

Because of a past event, that influences Marin's desire to leave home, she ends up pushing Mabel away. So, when Mabel visits her in New York, Marin doesn't know what to do with the memories. She desperately wants Mabel to break down her walls, but she continues to build them around herself. Marin *wants* to rekindle her friendship with Mabel, *wants* to try again, *wants* to talk to her but their history is too loud, and she just can't.

The narration is non-linear and switches between past and present, which adds to the ongoing intrigue, while also allowing us to see two sides of Marin: the loving, well-adjusted, and easily excited side, as well as the distrustful, anxious, and empty side. We may not see Marin's full story at first, but we understand her. We understand the sadness, the loneliness and the grief – that make us feel like we're being swallowed up by a huge hole and falling endlessly into it.

The beauty of *We are Okay* is that it shows us that while life may take us on difficult roads, we will be fine. The sadness we feel now, won't last forever. Marin's story is wrapped up in a way that makes us feel, finally, okay. I deeply recommend this book to anyone who is feeling lost, lonely, cheated, or angry. Hopefully, it will be as impactful to you as it was to me.