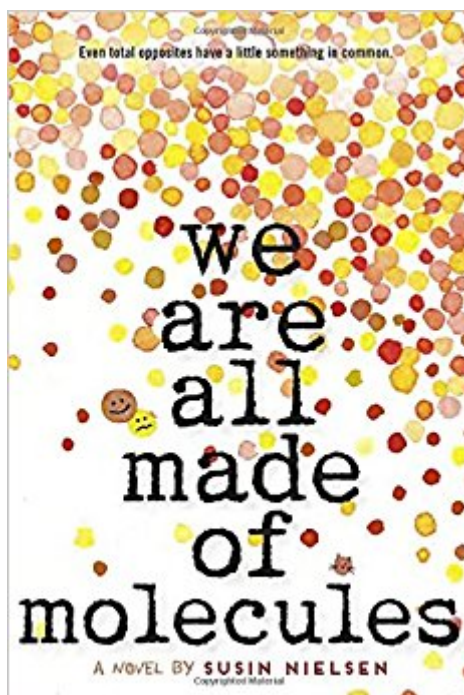


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# We Are All Made Of Molecules



## Synopsis

"This savvy, insightful take on the modern family makes for nearly nonstop laughs." Kirkus Reviews, ★ Starred Stewart, 13: Socially clueless genius. Ashley, 14: Popular with everyone but her teachers Ashley's and Stewart's worlds collide when Stewart and his dad move in with Ashley and her mom. The Brady Bunch it isn't. Stewart is trying to be 89.9 percent happy about it--he's always wanted a sister. But Ashley is 110 percent horrified. She already has to hide the real reason her dad moved out; Spewart could further threaten her position at the top of the social ladder. They're complete opposites, but they have one thing in common: they "like everyone else" are made of molecules. In this hilarious and deeply moving story, award-winning author Susin Nielsen has created two narrators who will steal your heart and make you laugh out loud. Praise NCSS-CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People Nominated for the George Peach Book Award for Teen Readers Nominated to the Pacific Northwest Young Reader's Choice Award "A laugh-out-loud story of two teens learning to adjust to unusual family life that neither expected...Everyone from teenagers to adults will enjoy this story of ups and downs, laughter and tears, and the healing power of love." --VOYA "Drama, humour, poignancy, and suspense are rarely found in such perfect proportions...some truly funny writing...stellar, top notch stuff." Quill & Quire, ★ Starred What Other Authors Are Saying "Susin Nielsen is one of the best writers working today. In *We Are All Made of Molecules*, her astonishing ability to combine insight, tenderness, poignancy, and uproarious humor is in full flower. Susin Nielsen is a genius, and kids and adults alike will adore this book." "Susan Juby, author of *The Truth Commission* "What a skilled, gifted writer Susin is! There's so much to love about this story . . . but what grabbed me the most is the humor." "Christopher Paul Curtis, Newbery Medal "winning author of *Bud, Not Buddy* and *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* "1963

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 7-10 "Thirteen-year-old Stewart and 14-year-old Ashley could not be more different. Stewart is a quirky, gifted intellectual who is coping with the loss of his mother, while Ashley is a popular fashionista still reeling from her parents' divorce brought about by her father's announcement that he is gay. When a serious relationship develops between Stewart's father and Ashley's mother, the two teens find themselves living under the same roof. By turns humorous and heartbreaking, the story is told in alternating chapters narrated by both protagonists. In comparison to Stewart, Ashley is somewhat underdeveloped, but the contrast between the two characters makes for a compelling read, particularly as they begin to challenge and influence each other. Their overlapping journeys will leave readers with much to think about, as Nielsen unflinchingly tackles issues such as bullying, bigotry, and tolerance; the true nature of friendship; and what it means to be a family. The book will appeal to fans of R.J. Palacio's *Wonder* (Random, 2012) and Jo Knowles's *See You at Harry's* (Candlewick, 2012). VERDICT This work of realistic fiction should find a place in most libraries serving teens." --Lauren Strohecker, McKinley Elementary School, Abington School District, PA --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"This savvy, insightful take on the modern family makes for nearly nonstop laughs." --Kirkus Reviews's starred review

This is probably more of a 3.5 star review than a 4 star review, but the book is definitely better than just "okay". Susin Nielsen wrote for a recent iteration of Canada's flagship teen drama export, "Degrassi: The Next Generation," and the Canadian family drama "Heartland". Good TV writing requires a disciplined sense of pacing, well-defined characters and effective and naturalistic dialog. All of those strengths are present here. I read the book in a single sitting, whizzing through the sharp, clear prose. The book alternates between two first-person narrators: smart, sensitive but socially inept Stewart and self-absorbed, angry but popular Ashley. The two voices were distinct and consistent, and I found myself invested in both of them. The different memories and customs and physical things that spoke to each of their lives before the great upheavals were often achingly poignant. The structure of the book never feels like a gimmick; when events are revisited from the

other POV, it always feels organic without straining to present artificial contrasts. But while Stewart starts likable and really comes of age over the course of the book, Ashley's journey is a lot more stunted. I would have liked Stewart and Ashley to have had more of an impact on each other earlier in the novel. And I wish Ashley's perspective had broadened more as the story went on. Only at the very end does she begin to grasp the things that Stewart knew at the beginning. I wanted Ashley's half of the book to dig deeper, to make her more three-dimensional at the beginning when she's quite unlikable, and more three-dimensional still as she begins to soften. The ending also felt like something from an after school special. I would have rather had another hundred pages or so dealing with the aftermath of the climax in a more interesting and nuanced way than the rather pat resolution the novel provides.

It's been a while since I read a young adult novel that I'd give a 5-star rating, so I was delighted to find *WE ARE ALL MADE OF MOLECULES* lives up to its reviews. Thirteen-year-old Stewart is "89.9% excited" that he and his dad are moving in with his dad's girlfriend and her fourteen-year-old daughter Ashley. Stewart has always wanted a sister, and he's had two difficult years since his mother died from ovarian cancer. However, Ashley hates the idea of having an almost brother, especially one as nerdy as Stewart. She's certain he will undermine her social status and embarrass her in front of her friends. Ashley also has a secret to guard: her parents divorced because her dad is gay--and his "new" house is in their backyard. Stewart cleverly dodges bullies at school--most of the time. Although he's in Ashley's high school class, he can't count on her for support. She even initiates some of the name-calling until Stewart finds a way to give her something she wants. This book is funny, sweet, and touching. Ashley's shallow snarkiness is the perfect counterbalance to Stewart's sensitivity. Stewart longs for his mother and openly grieves for her. Ashley is furious at her dad even as she misses him. The relationships among the teens and adults are complex and sometimes painful, but the pain is balanced with humor and love. A fantastic read!

I read and adored Susin Nielsen's other books -- *Word Nerd*; *Dear George Clooney, Will You Please Marry My Mom*; and *The Reluctant Journal of Henry Larsen*. So, I was very excited to read this new book. It was funny, moving, honest and page-turning. I would recommend any and all of her books to kids in middle and high school -- or their parents! However, I should say that of her books, this one would be my least favorite -- but it is still a very good book. (I think because I just never really liked the character Ashley enough . . . but she was written in a way that is very real -- just not my kind of person, I think. For me, the magic of her books is falling in love with her

characters, who are so diverse and yet come together to make each other lives better.) In this story when nerdy Stewart and his dad, a widower, move in with stuck-up Ashley and her mom (who had an amicable divorce with Ashley's dad, who is gay -- and their neighbor!) they struggle to create a new family. Ashley is struggling with accepting her parents divorce and her dad in general as well as with staying on top of the popularity ladder at school. She also has her sights set on the cute new boy at school, who may not be all that he seems. Stewart still struggles with grief and adjusting to so many changes in his life in a short period of time but meets some lovely new people (who fans will recognize from other books) and some not so lovely ones. Once again, Nielsen has created a world that is modern, deep, honest and beautiful -- and always entertaining. These books should be in every middle school and high school library!

*We Are All Made Of Molecules* is a heartwarming book about a popular girl named Ashley and a genius named Stewart. It seems these two would have nothing in common, and they don't...until their parents move in together. Ashley wants nothing to do with Stewart, neither at home or at school. But through a wild incident, they seem to gain some more common ground, and maybe Stewart will finally get the sister he's always wanted.

This book was chosen by USBY as one of the Outstanding International Books of 2016. Set in Canada, it relates the story of a blended family. American readers might not notice differences in culture as it's set in Vancouver and very North American. It was a touch too neat for me. But I'm sure the 7-9 th grade reader will enjoy it.

An honest look at some of the dynamics of a blended family, as well as day-to-day middle school life. The shift between the two voices is absolutely spot-on and adds to an already compelling storyline. I am recommending this book to teachers, parents, and, of course, the readers for which it was intended. One of my top favorite books of those I've read in the past year.

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