

Watch Over Me

By Nina LaCour

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Blurb:

Eighteen-year-old Mila has been in the foster system since her mother abandoned her. Now that she's graduating high school she has nothing to do and nowhere to call home. When she gets an offer to work as an intern on the Farm she readily accepts.

Her main job is to take care of eight-year old Lee. At first the Farm seems like an idyllic paradise, a remote place on the cliffs with view of the sea far below. But Mila soon realises there's something more sinister going on. Lee's recent trauma causes Mila's own frightening memories to bubble to the surface. Then there's Billy and Liz. What is it they want from her? How much is she willing to give?

Whispered secrets. Sideways glances. A dangerous undertow of violence, complicity, desire, and fear.



Lamont Review:

Our main character Mila has had a very tough life. Even before her Mum abandoned her into foster care for the last three years, her life wasn't great.

Now that Mila is turning eighteen she needs something to do and somewhere to go. She heads off to the farm where they teach kids from 8 - 12. For most of the story, Mila's main charge is eight-year-old Lee.

The farm is run by a couple who have fostered dozens of kids over the years, with many of their former foster kids returning, often for major events. They were one huge family.

But everything is not as it would seem on the surface. The residents of the farm must face their ghosts, before they can be released from their hold. And the residents all have ghosts they need to face...

The author has a knack of creating atmosphere and depicting loneliness. You really feel for the characters, especially Mila and her student, Lee, and you will feel like you know them by the end of the book.

With themes of loneliness, resilience, trauma, acceptance and healing with help, this will be best suited to readers in Year 9 and up.

Reviewed by Rob