

# **Side Effects May Vary**

By Julie Murphy



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For fans of John Green and Rainbow Rowell comes this powerful novel about a girl with cancer who creates a take-no-prisoners bucket list that sets off a war at school—only to discover she's gone into remission.

When sixteen-year-old Alice is diagnosed with leukemia, she vows to spend her final months righting wrongs. So she convinces her best friend, Harvey, to help her with a crazy bucket list that's as much about revenge as it is about hope. But just when Alice's scores are settled, she goes into remission, and now she must face the consequences of all she's said and done. Contemporary realistic-fiction readers who love romantic stories featuring strong heroines will find much to sayor in this standout debut.



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### Side Effects May Vary By Julie Murphy Bibliography

Sales Rank: #86575 in eBooks
Published on: 2014-03-18
Released on: 2014-03-18
Format: Kindle eBook

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#### **Editorial Review**

### From School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up—Sixteen-year-old Alice is in the final stages of leukemia. While her body is being decimated by chemo, she reconnects with her longtime childhood friend, Harvey, and enlists him to help her complete a Dying-To-Do List. Revenge on her ex-boyfriend who cheated on her? Check. Revenge on the girl he cheated with? Check. Visiting the memory-laden but run-down amusement park of her childhood? Check. Ready to die, Alice is completely shocked when her cancer suddenly goes into remission. Faced with life, she now has to deal with the kind of person she has become (not the nicest) and the kind of person she wants to be. On top of everything, how will she handle the complicated love she feels for Harvey? Caring for him feels impossible because she doesn't trust the reprieve from cancer that she's been given. Growing up is hard, but growing up with the threat of a recurrence of cancer is even harder. The narrative demands that close attention be paid, as chapters alternate between the points of view of both Alice and Harvey, as well as between Then (when Alice had cancer) and Now (when she is cancer-free). Honest and unflinching, this is a compelling story of one teen's struggle with cancer, love, and living. A worthwhile addition.—Ragan O'Malley, Saint Ann's School, Brooklyn, NY

### From **Booklist**

Sixteen-year-old Alice is diagnosed with leukemia, but following a year of grueling chemo, she decides to end the unsuccessful treatment. Everyone is waiting for her to die: her parents; loyal Harvey, the boy who has loved her since childhood; and Alice most of all. But she has made her peace, having ticked items off her bucket list, most of which involve mean-spirited revenge pranks on those who wronged her (including her ex-boyfriend, Luke). But then, miraculously, she goes into remission. Now what? Debut author Murphy switches points of view between Harvey and Alice, and between Then and Now; all this back and forth gives readers much-needed insight into the complexity of Alice and Harvey's relationship. In the now, Alice's greatest fear in life has become expectations, and she pushes patient, long-suffering Harvey away. What's interesting—and refreshing—about this book is that, yes, Alice has cancer, but she is not a likable girl, and readers' emotions will be all over the map even as they continue to root for her ultimate act of redemption. Alice and Harvey's relationship is raw, honest, moving, and unapologetic in its depiction of their individual, and collective, pain. Grades 9-12. --Ann Kelley

#### Review

"Honest and unflinching, this is a compelling story of one teen's struggle with cancer, love, and living. A worthwhile addition." (School Library Journal)

"Readers will turn the last page wanting to know where the next chapter leads." (Kirkus Reviews)

"Alice and Harvey's relationship is raw, honest, moving, and unapologetic in its depiction of their individual, and collective, pain." (Booklist)

"Julie Murphy weaves together a tender and funny tale of love, friendship, heartache, and redemption. SIDE EFFECTS MAY VARY explodes with brutal honesty, brilliant wit, and unflinching heart." (John Corey Whaley, winner of the Michael L. Printz Award for WHERE THINGS COME BACK)

"Julie Murphy's SIDE EFFECTS MAY VARY is a funny, heartfelt, honest look at the beauty and the risk of getting a second chance. An inspiring novel about all the things worth living for. I adored this debut!" (Siobhan Vivian, author of The List)

"A funny and touching novel about a strong-willed heroine who finds facing death simple, but facing life heart-wrenchingly complicated. A real original." (Jennifer Echols, author of GOING TOO FAR)

"A tale of unlikely romance, impossible obstacles, and mortality, this book is a must-read." (Teen Vogue)

"It's equal parts fun, cringe-worthy, and totally fearless!" (Seventeen Magazine)

"An unexpected twist on the typical cancer story." (Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA))

### **Users Review**

#### From reader reviews:

#### Jesse Williams:

As people who live in the actual modest era should be change about what going on or details even knowledge to make these people keep up with the era that is always change and progress. Some of you maybe will probably update themselves by reading through books. It is a good choice to suit your needs but the problems coming to anyone is you don't know what kind you should start with. This Side Effects May Vary is our recommendation to cause you to keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and want in this era.

#### Wendell Nadeau:

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