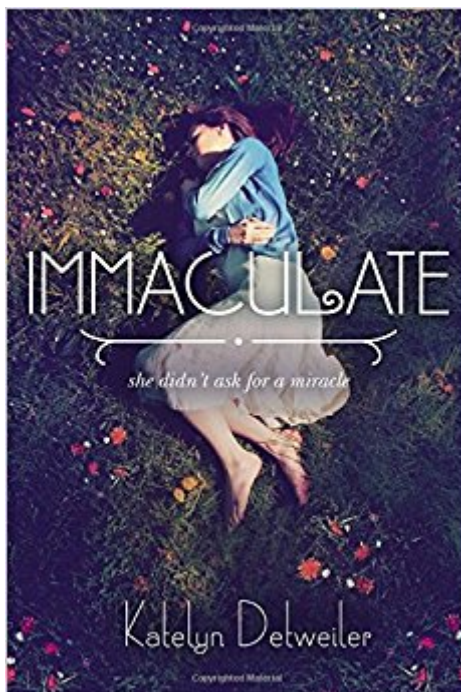


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Immaculate



Synopsis

Mina is seventeen. A virgin. And pregnant. Mina is top of her class, girlfriend to the most ambitious guy in school, able to reason and study her way through anything. But when she suddenly finds herself pregnant—despite having never had sex—her orderly world collapses. Almost nobody believes Mina's claims of virginity. Her father assumes that her boyfriend is responsible; her boyfriend believes she must have cheated on him. As news of Mina's story spreads, there are those who brand her a liar. There are those who brand her a heretic. And there are those who believe that miracles are possible—and that Mina's unborn child could be the greatest miracle of all.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up—Seventeen-year-old Mina is in a serious but not sexually active relationship with her popular boyfriend Nate. After a strange encounter with a mysterious woman, Mina discovers she is pregnant. Maintaining that she's a virgin and the baby's conception is a miracle, Mina cannot explain her divine situation. Her incredible story earns judgement and exclusion from family and friends and eventually lands her in the center of a terrible media storm. Obsessed with protecting her child, Mina maintains her faith in its miraculous nature. The dynamic characters move the action forward, relatable in their various reactions to Mina's story. The unusual premise compels readers to want to know how it all ends, but the drama feels tidied up quickly, and the ending is anticlimactic. More questions than answers are provided about the nature of the pregnancy and the fate of the

child, but the narrative is inclusive of multiple types of explanations; Mina explores stories of miraculous conceptions in various religions, and her message is more about faith in general than a specific set of beliefs. VERDICT A unique page-turner mixing humor and heart, this is a thought-provoking take on miracles and motherhood. — Whitney LeBlanc, Staten Island Academy, NY

Praise for *Immaculate* "A sincere, romantic, and secular story of birth, young motherhood, and new love." — Publishers Weekly "Detweiler's smart writing moves quickly and entertains, particularly with Mina's appealingly bright voice. Even as the story probes its mystical underpinnings, the focus remains firmly on Mina right through to the end. Detweiler's ambitious debut takes an intriguing premise and executes it well." — Kirkus Reviews "Immaculate" is a bewitching and thought-provoking story about the strength and faith required to face a contemporary miracle. This one begs for a sequel." — National Book Award Finalist Deb Caletti "Katelyn Detweiler has accomplished something exceptional" — a poignant novel that balances delicate issues of religious heresy and bullying with heartwarming moments of faith, love, and personal strength. With a protagonist who is smart, honest, and surprisingly relatable given her circumstances, Mina's story will guide readers down a path of introspection and force us to consider how we, too, might react to a modern-day miracle." — Marissa Meyer, The New York Times bestselling author of the Lunar Chronicles "Katelyn Detweiler's *Immaculate* is a vividly-imagined story about magic, faith, and family. Her heroine's wildly unlikely teenage pregnancy leads to more than just a brutal break-up and national scandal; it allows for an exploration of essential questions about sex, identity, and what belief means to human beings. In a lovely and uplifting twist, *Immaculate* gives us girls who believe in themselves and each other, girls who move forward — in spite of extremely difficult circumstances — to create joy, love, and new life." — Rachel DeWoskin, author of *Blind* and *Big Girl Small* "[The] message is more about faith in general than a specific set of beliefs. A unique page-turner mixing humor and heart, this is a thought-provoking take on miracles and motherhood." — School Library Journal

This review originally appeared on herestohappyendings.com I read this book ages ago, so why haven't I reviewed it yet? It kind of got lost in my "to-review" pile, and I just kept pushing back a review for it. But I realized that I need to get those reviews finished up, so here goes! Mina has a great life, and she's incredibly happy with the way things are going for her. For starters, she has

an awesome boyfriend with whom she is in love (a great guy who gets great grades and makes her all kinds of happy), plus she manages to get good grades and studies so that she can get into college. She gets close with her family, especially her father, and everything seems to be going well for her. She even has two best friends to share everything with. One night, after a weird encounter with an old woman at the pizza place where she works, Mina is troubled, but moves on with her life, just chalking it up to the old woman being lonely and not really sure what she is talking about. However, a few weeks later, when Mina starts throwing up and feeling off, her friends ask her the question: is she pregnant? Mina, of course, says no. After all, she hasn't had sex with her boyfriend, so how could she possibly be pregnant? Although she does find this concerning, because she has plenty of symptoms that point to that being the problem. Desperate to make her friends realize that there is no way she could be pregnant, she takes a test. And then another. And much to her surprise, the tests all come up positive. Mina is, indeed pregnant. But how? Explaining things to her friends and family (and especially her boyfriend, who her father forces her to tell), no one believes her. Except her mother and one of her friends. As time goes on, Mina realizes that the odd encounter she had a few months ago at the pizza place might not have been so crazy after all. In fact, maybe the old woman knew exactly what she was talking about. "Faith, I was learning, wasn't easy. But then again, I was carrying around the proof of a miracle, every minute of every day for these nine months?" Immaculate follows Mina through 9 months of pregnancy, self-discovery, and coming to terms with a new life. Through everything, even the most devastating moments, Mina must find her faith and realize that there must be a reason that she has been chosen for this. It is painful, as friends desert her, the media picks her apart, and those closest to her, such as her father, turn their backs on her and leave her to figure out her life on her own. As Mina makes new friends and comes to term with her life, and the life she will soon be bringing in to the world, she makes discoveries about herself and those around her that shake up her world even more. "Maybe hope isn't always about the perfect ending. Hope is making the journey easier." This book had been on my list for quite some time, and I went into it with high hopes, because the plot sounded like something I wouldn't be able to get enough of. I did manage to have that feeling throughout the entire book, too. But the one thing that got me was how unbelievable some of this book was. I mean, I know we're dealing with an immaculate conception here, but what bothered me in this book was the way that when Mina's classmates were pretty much torturing

her, she just kept going back to school and dealing with it. I understand that most kids don't have the ability to get home schooled or something, but you'd think in her special case, her parents would have insisted upon it. I seriously found myself wondering what was up with that several times throughout the book. It just didn't know. Kind of bothered me a bit, I guess. Mina's boyfriend also seemed like the cookie cutter boyfriend to me. He lacked personality that would have made his character otherwise a little more substantial to the story. I didn't even much care for him in the beginning of the book, before Mina was even forced to tell him she was pregnant. And speaking of being forced to tell him she was pregnant, her father really should have handled that situation better. I know he was upset and I understand that, but he forced her into a situation that she herself didn't even understand yet, and pretty much showed that he had no trust in his daughter. Mina's mother believed her, but her father didn't, and it was kind of hard to witness. Especially when Mina has been a good girl pretty much her entire life. Enough ranting about those issues, though, because this was a really good book and I don't want to throw out the idea that maybe I didn't actually enjoy it. The plot and story were different (from all other YA I've read), and for the most part, the characters in this one were really interesting. Aside from the few problems that I've already picked apart, I think this was a great read. I'll probably pick it up again in the future to reread, too.

The blurb for this book really played on my ideas about religion and I was very excited to read it. I have a love/hate relationship with organized religion and knew this book could either be in line with my questioning nature or could be a religious gag fest. I was highly impressed and absolutely loved this book. There were a few cons which I'll go into later. Mina is a high performing student, has a great All American boyfriend, and two of the best friends a girl could ask for. She led basically the perfect American dream high school life. Even before the weird stuff started happening Mina did not come off as annoying or high and mighty like she could have. She always had a realness to her that I liked and was drawn to. Not very long into the story a strange woman appears and tells Mina that she is going to be a mother and that she is going to do what she can to protect her. She doesn't think anything more about it than she is a nutty old woman. A few months later she starts having strange symptoms and lo and behold she is pregnant despite being a virgin still. The rest of the book describes the tumultuous relationships between Mina and her family and friends. It lays out the

conflicts of both being a pregnant teenager and a center of a media controversy. It is especially bad as we all know religion is a hot topic and creates monsters and demons on both sides of the spectrum. Mina struggles internally with what she believes and she researches multiple religions and time periods to get a feel for what is going on with her. She doesn't immediately accept she is the next Mary and in fact never accepts that at all. She is always just Mina and her baby. Now what I didn't like. There is no closure. The book ends on what could have been a cliffhanger but wrapped up with a few little sentences to indicate that was all we were getting. I wished we would have at least got an epilogue a little into the future to see how Mina, Jesse, her friends, and of course her baby are doing. It was all too abrupt. We also never got any sort of answer about who Iris was and who she was working with that she kept referencing. I would have left her out all together if she wasn't going to be fully developed as she was only really used as a tool for Mina to believe something was happening to her.

this book was kind of disappointing. I went into it with the mindset that it was a religious book, but it really wasn't. God was only mentioned probably less than 5 percent of the time. I didn't really like any of the characters. They felt distant, and I couldn't really relate. Even the love interest (Jessie) I wasn't the biggest fan of, he wasn't developed enough. I only rated it 3 stars because of the time that the author put into this, which I can appreciate all the way, along with the growth in the character. Although, I feel like the growth wasn't developed enough, one chapter she was an A plus student, the next she was slacking a little, and cared about her personal life

Creative story line that was well written. This easily could have become a caricature of society, social media, and high school life, but Katelyn did a wonderful job creating real, raw characters while conveying a message without being preachy. I was absorbed in this and quickly connected with Mina and her friends. Very impressive debut as an author!

A very well written YA book (for this 28 year old mom). The idea was fresh and original and unlike other books of the genre. I personally felt connected to the main character and it definitely had me wondering 'what if'. I was completely engrossed and recommend this book to all of my fellow readers. Detweiler's narrative is honest and descriptive. I am really looking forward to what she does next.

I loved this book. It was immediately totally emotionally involving and engrossing, with a teen

protagonist that I think anyone of any age could relate to and character who feel like you've always known them. Very heartfelt, very steady, with twists that you don't see coming, and yet I truly felt like this was real life - a real story about a real girl. Love. Highly recommend.

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