



Plus One

Elizabeth Fama

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A dying wish. A family divided. A love that defies the law.

Sol Le Coeur is a Smudge--a night dweller in an America rigidly divided between people who wake, live, and work during the hours of darkness and those known as Rays, who live and work during daylight. Impulsive, passionate, and brave, Sol concocts a plan to kidnap her newborn niece--a Ray--in order to bring the baby to visit her dying grandfather. Sol's violation of the day/night curfew is already a serious crime, but when her kidnap attempt goes awry, she stumbles on a government conspiracy to manipulate the Smudge population. Sol escapes the authorities with an unexpected ally: a Ray who gets in her way, a boy she might have hated if fate hadn't forced them on the run together--a boy the world now tells her she can't love.

Set in a vivid alternate reality and peopled with complex, deeply human characters on both sides of the day/night divide, Elizabeth Fama's *Plus One* is a brilliantly imagined drama of individual liberty and civil rights, and a fast-paced romantic adventure story.

Plus One Details

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Author : Elizabeth Fama

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From Reader Review Plus One for online ebook

Giselle says

I had high expectations for Plus One, especially with how much I enjoyed Monstrous Beauty last year, but unfortunately I didn't click with this one. I won't fault the writing itself, Fama still has a way with words. My problems mostly lay with the plot and world building.

While the setting itself is interesting in many ways - involving a society divided by night and day, characterized with social divides and discrimination - I found its raison d'être quite flaky. The idea of a whole epidemic being stopped by a simple night and day solution feels improbable, and many questions about the overall workings of this world still remains. The brief explanations we do get require some suspension of disbelief that a world like this could successfully establish itself. There are tons of gray areas we must ignore. Like the mentions of social cues between night and day people (Sol says they don't say hello, they just nod etc), but no explanations on how they even distinguish each other. Or how Sol doesn't know what she looks like in sunlight, yet doesn't appear to live in a place with no windows... Small things individually, maybe, but it's details like these that add up and break the realism of this world.

The plot is also shaky and left me feeling either bored or frustrated. The novel begins with Sol's crazy plan to steal a baby so that her grandfather can hold her before he dies. A freaking baby! Firstly, I've had a baby, and I thought it was all kinds of foolish to not only devise a plan like this, but to not think about its implications. A newborn has to feed every 2 hours, for one, which Sol only seemed to consider after seeing her chart that says she was just fed (convenient!), not to mention how much danger she was going to put her in - I mean at one time she was running with the baby in her shirt! Anyways, many readers may be able to ignore some of this, but I found this plan of hers completely absurd and selfish - even if she had good intentions. Soon afterwards, I realized with dismay that this baby stealing scheme was the set up of the whole plot which involved several baby switches, ransoms, political conspiracies, altogether with helpful conveniences that insured a mostly trouble free storyline. Sure there were a few dramatic what-ifs, but these are quickly taken care of for the most part, often by random side characters.

The characters themselves I didn't dislike per se. Sol was sarcastic, feisty, and good-hearted - even if I didn't always agree with her decisions. I also liked D'Arcy's well enough. He introduced a romance that was well paced and well balanced with the plot. But ultimately I feel like the characters were simply molded to fit the plot. They never became more than words on a page for me. The flashbacks could have been a good way to give them dimension, which was likely the intention, but instead they were more like info dumps that fell short emotionally.

I still consider myself a fan of this author for how much I enjoyed her past work. The writing itself is not at fault as it has a beautiful prose. It seems this plot and me were just not meant to be.

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An advance copy was provided by the publisher for review.

For more of my reviews, visit my blog at [Xpresso Reads](#)

Bonnie says

My rating: 3.5 of 5 stars

I received this book free from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

In an alternate reality following the 1918 flu pandemic, Soleil Le Coeur concocts a desperate plan to kidnap her newborn niece so that her grandfather is able to hold her one last time before he dies. Her plan goes foul when she finds herself embroiled in a political feud between opposing Night and Day groups.

When the 1918 flu epidemic began wreaking havoc on the population, the President divided the medical teams into day and night to keep up with the work required. The results were so positive that this divide between day and night was applied to the rest of society. Because the amount of people awake during the day were cut in half, public transportation was less crowded and ended up decelerating the spread of the disease. The divide continued even after the flu epidemic had been dealt with. I really loved the setting of this world because while it was simple it was explained well and felt incredibly realistic.

Plus One is told from the point of view of Soleil, a fantastic character that I loved from the very first page. She's impulsive and snarky and will do anything for her Poppu, the only family she has left. It's commendable, even with the ridiculous scheme she comes up with. We're given flashback scenes throughout the novel that tells the tale of her past and how she's come to be alone with her grandfather and that makes her actions all the more poignant.

“I didn't mind going straight to nothing a few days earlier, so that Poppu could hold his great-granddaughter before he died.”

I understood her intentions, but I felt the kidnapping of the baby was completely nonsensical. It was also too flimsy of a storyline to be the entirety of the plot. Her ability to steal the baby initially and her continued evasion of the government was pretty implausible as well. This ended up being much more of a political drama/soap-opera than I anticipated and was very disappointed by this.

It's kind of funny but I find myself typically complaining about the romances in stories and how they seem to overtake the plot. With Plus One it happens to be the complete opposite where I'm complaining about the lack of romance/swoons but I think this is because I went into this story expecting a 'star-crossed' love, plus just look at the cover I mean come on. Soleil and D'Arcy dislike each other at first and use nicknames to identify one another (She is Plus One and he is Day Boy) which quickly became tiresome. It's a case of opposites attract but the actual romance doesn't happen until very late in the book. The two possess a connection (that isn't realized until later) which prevents their romance from veering too far into insta-love territory but that connection still failed to generate the swoons I was looking for. Their relationship does get serious fairly quickly though and there were a few lines that caused much consternation.

‘D'Arcy was like a planet to my meteor. The gravitational pull was similar to a hurtling sensation. My body needed to collide with his. And, the universe be praised, this planet welcomed the impact.’

‘He drank from it and handed it back. I rested my lips on the rim of the bottle before I drank, trying to differentiate between the warm wetness of the water and the warm wetness of his mouth, disappointed that I couldn't.’

There was one particularly violent scene that had me completely flummoxed as to it's reason for being a part of the story. I suppose violence doesn't always have to possess a meaning but it felt out of place and gratuitous in regards to the rest of the story. Overall this was a very mature YA read and I was shocked yet impressed to see sex portrayed so openly.

Admittedly, the cover is the sole reason I read this. That gorgeous cover promised swoons and all the feels

yet the book itself never lived up to it. The ending is left open-ended but possesses an impressive and unexpected resolution that was my favorite aspect of the novel. Plus One was an enjoyable read for the most part but I was definitely expecting more.

Jessica ❁ ⇒ Silverbow ⇒ ❁ Rabid Reads-no-more says

Reviewed by: Rabid Reads

LOTS of dystopians flooding the YA market these days.

That doesn't particularly bother me, but as is true when a market is flooded with anything, I've had to become more selective in deciding which dystopians to actually read. I needed to create a method of separating the wheat from the chaff, the silver from the dross, the smart and fresh and original dystopians from the bored and stale and copycat dystopians.

It hasn't been easy or even 100% accurate, but I have saved myself a multitude of tears and recriminations by following these three simple rules:

1. Avoid dystopians with direct and obvious comparisons to *The Hunger Games*.
2. If it's part of a series, wait for book 2's reviews before committing.
3. Dystopians featuring supernatural or SFF elements are typically safer choices (for me anyway) than straight-up dystopians or post-apocalyptic dystopians (I don't have a survivalist bone in my body).

So when I heard speculation that Elizabeth Fama's *Plus One* was loosely based on a retelling of George MacDonald's *The Day Boy and the Night Girl*, I jumped on it. It's no secret that I love fairy tales and retellings of fairy tales, and the fact that *Plus One* was potentially based on such an obscure fairy tale only further sold it b/c I like obscure.

BUT . . . as it turns out, some ideas don't work very well for dystopians, so whether or not *Plus One* is based on a fairy tale or an entirely new endeavor becomes irrelevant b/c it just doesn't make sense.

What doesn't make sense?

Lots of things. The idea that people could feasibly be separated into two groups that were subjected to curfews based on whether they were "smudges" who were supposed to be active during night hours, or "rays" who were supposed to be active during day hours. And this was a totally arbitrary separation that was perpetuated by any new offspring being automatically assigned the same designation as the parents.

Not genetics. Not abilities.

Just because.

And yes, about 30% in you were given a reason for the original separation, and I guess I could sort of make sense of it, HOWEVER there was absolutely no legitimate reason to continue the policy after the situation resolved itself. Which it did around 80 years ago.

ALSO—by "night" hours and "day" hours I mean two, equal twelve-hour shifts. But according to the book

smudges lived in darkness and rays lived in sunlight and never the twain shall meet . . .

Except days are longer in the summer, and nights are longer in the winter . . .

AND the equality of the original separation made it difficult to believe that over such a short period of time, the smudges became so persecuted by the rays. The wacky separation thing started as one whole, divided equally into halves. But less than 100 years later, one half of the population completely subjugated the other? When the subjugated half was, for nebulous reasons, more numerous?

Sorry. Don't buy it.

And seriously . . . what was with all the baby-snatching? It was kind of silly.

BUT despite the holes in the world-building and traveshamockery of Soleil's "plan," there were immensely enjoyable parts to *Plus One*. Just b/c I knew immediately where Fama was going with the "desk buddies" part of the plot, doesn't change the fact that it was lovely when Soleil and D'arcy finally figured it out. And as impulsive and adolescent as Soleil could be, I still found her to be both wildly entertaining and lovable. And D'arcy was just wonderful. The characters and their relationships were the clear strengths of this novel and they made this a somewhat enjoyable read all on their own.

It all felt kind of rushed though. With the seemingly unfixable holes in the world-building, I'm not sorry this was a standalone, but the ending was somewhat unresolved—the kind of ending where you're left with all the possibilities, and it's up to you to decide what happens after that last page. Sometimes that can feel hopeful, but Soleil was such a resolutely pessimistic character that it was hard to do that here. You know what you *want* to happen, but it seems highly unlikely that it will.

So if you're the kind of reader who is more about connecting with the characters so that you *feel* something, and you like a slow-build before getting to the action, you'll probably love *Plus One*. But if you're a hardcore lover of pristine, noncontradictory worlds, I'd pass. As much as I loved Soleil and D'arcy, and a few other characters besides, I ultimately couldn't get past my own lack of belief in their situations. But as I've said before, every reader is different, and my imagination isn't what it used to be. You might have no trouble at all accepting the world of smudges and rays. If it sounds interesting to you, try it out and tell me what you think. Maybe if you're convincing enough, I'll believe in it too *wink*

Farrah says

A thrilling, romantic, fast-paced read, *Plus One* was a wonderful YA book. I really enjoyed reading it. It didn't have the best start, but it turned out to be a fantastic read.

Sol was a wonderful heroine. She was strong and very determined to get what she wanted, even though her plans weren't always rational. She was clever and definitely held her own in a world of secrets and betrayals. My only issue with her was that she was a tad too impulsive, getting herself into ridiculous situations, and prickly, seeing insults and enemies when there weren't any. Otherwise, I really liked her.

D'Arcy was the love interest and he was wonderful. He was very sweet and very intelligent. He was just wonderful. I loved how determined he was to help Sol, just because, at first, he thought it was the right thing to do. I absolutely adored him.

The romance was lovely. Despite their rocky start, Sol and D'Arcy were very sweet together and one hell of a

bad ass team. I loved the twist of how far their relationship actually stretched. And, I loved how they were willing to go through so much for each other and, ultimately, willing to wait for each other when it seemed things weren't going to go their way. I thought they were a wonderful couple.

The pace was the weak point in this book. It started off slow. The first half dragged a bit, but something kept me interesting, so I kept reading. And, I'm glad I did because, about halfway through, the plot picked up and I got totally hooked. There were tons of thrills, surprises, secrets, and betrayals and it all kept me on the edge of my seat. I really enjoyed the story and the ending had me excited to see what happens next.

Plus One was a fantastic YA romance. It was thrilling, romantic, and full of deeply hidden secrets. I really enjoyed reading this wonderful book. Romance lovers, this is definitely a book not to be missed.

*I received a free copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review

Debbie Narh says

3.5 Interesting Clouds!

I am so sick of romance in Young Adult novels. It's all insta-love or something close to it. Romances more often than not take over the story but in Plus One there's barely any romance until about 70%! I'm not kidding! It's flipping amazing! The build-up, the relationship, perfection! Okay, except that D'Arcy totally insta-loved Sol at the beginning, but it didn't bother me. My biggest problem with this has to do with the world building and the flashbacks. The whole night and day thing is awesome but flawed. I also hated that the flashbacks felt more like ways dump info on readers. But as a whole, Plus One is awesome and just what I needed! And yeah, the ending is cheesy and shit but whatever.

Despite how much I really liked Plus One, there are a lot of holes and weak spots in it. One of the weak spots is the world building. Not much of this is explained which is sad because I really enjoyed the aspect of the whole Day/Night divide, all there is on it is that the division started sometime during the Spanish flu. There's some talk about a rebellion but it's so small that it feels like it's put in there just to end ties with some things. I also didn't like the flashbacks because, although they're a nice way for readers to know more about the characters, there's just too much info in those few pages that it feels more like an info-dump than anything else.

I've never read a book with such a slow burn romance but now that I have, I want to read more of them! They're just so realistic in this aspect and they actually focus on the plot! It shows that the plot doesn't need a romance to get stuff done. Although it's obvious that D'Arcy is in love with Sol almost instantly because he's constantly risking his life for her, I enjoyed that Fama doesn't let Sol take too much advantage of this nor does she let Sol get her feelings for him in the way of her mission. The characters are really strong and well done. They're all mysterious and I loved reading about them, especially Sol and Jean because they're both flawed but really do try their best. Another thing that I loved is the French, it's amazing. It's not too much that people who don't understand French will get confused and well done that the French feels right to be woven into the story and I enjoyed that Fama told the meaning of the words/phrases in English so that readers could fully understand it.

Overall, Plus One is a fun novel that has great characters, tons of actions, and a bit of romance. Even though

the world building is flippy-floppy and close to nothing about the division is explained, I liked it a lot. I recommend this one to anyone who's also sick of all that insta-love/too much romance stuff that seems to be taking over YA books now.

Giovanna says

3.75

Not sure whether I'm going to round it up or not. It was enjoyable, but I expected it to be *more*.

Plus one is a good book. After seeing all that criticism about the ending I was worried, but in the end I appreciated it. I liked the concept, I liked the characters and for once I even enjoyed the romance although I admit it was rather predictable.

Sol is a Smudge. A Smudge is someone who lives their life at night: in Sol's world America is rigidly divided between people who live their lives during the night and those, known as Rays, who live during daylight. Sol's unremarkable life is turned upside down when she plans to kidnap her niece, a Ray, in order to let her dying grandfather see her. It's not only her violation of the curfew that makes a criminal though, but also her stumbling on a conspiracy that brings her much more trouble than expected...

Overall I'm satisfied with the book. I mean, on one hand I'm a bit disappointed in a way, on the other hand I'm relieved because I liked it in spite of its flaws. I admit that with that stunning concept and the whole "starcrossed lovers" vibe I expected something more...poetic. Something like *The night circus* or *The weight of feathers* for example.

This little issue aside, I really liked the book as a whole, even though I had some problems with some of its elements. I liked the characters and the romance was indeed quite sweet, but the plot was a bit confusing sometimes. If you want to write about conspiracies you have to pay attention to the details, which is something that Fama did, but you also have to have a clear picture in the end. If the reader is confused rather than amazed it means you haven't done everything in the best way possible.

The controversial ending...I kind of liked it. I've heard that the author is considering the possibility of writing something else about these characters, which would make me happy, because I'm both happy and unhappy when it comes to the ending. It felt like the characters' life continued after the book and I understood that and its message, but at the same time I have this voice inside my head that says "WTH WHY?". Mixed feelings are the way.

Giselle says

In an alternate reality where the Spanish flu has wiped out 50 million people, the United States adopted day and night workers to handle the care of treatment of the sick. Having worked so well that the pandemic was over, it turned into the regular way of life. Sol is a Smudge, only living her life at school, home and work during the evening. When she encounters D'Arcy, a Day, she realizes he may be her way to save her dying grandfather from kidnappers? What they find instead is something that can change the fate of her world as she knows it.

Told in past and present tenses, Sol's voice is loud and unique. We find ourselves immersed in her life before her brother was arrested, to the present where things are chaotic and she has gotten herself into trouble with the law.

I love the fact that Sol and D'Arcy know French and speak it loud and clear. I love that they dislike each other so much. There is no instant love here whatsoever. And before we even see the two being together, we get an inside look at who they really are. Elizabeth gets into their minds and we see a much clearer picture of their characters. Their attraction is real though, and you know they'll turn their hate into love soon enough. The anticipation is what killed me. I just wanted them together already. Sol's last thoughts were very wise and mature considering the outcome..I found her to be extremely refreshing.

Lovely dystopian story.. Thank god the romance was super slow.. They didn't even like each other in the beginning. And the way they knew each other was just too darn cute. I also loved the fact that the ending wasn't predictable. If you're looking for an instant romance, there is none! If you're looking for a unique twist to the dystopian genre, grab this one. Sol's voice is true and very wise which made her one of my favourite likable characters this year.

Keertana says

Rating: 4.5 Stars

From the moment I cracked open the spine of *Plus One*, it felt as if Elizabeth Fama had written her sophomore novel just for me.

For the past year and a half, practically, I've been dutifully rejecting every dystopian novel that has come my way, from the older *Maze Runner* to the newer *The 5th Wave* and the unreleased *Salvage*. In other words, I have been mentally and not-so-mentally raging about the dystopian genre; at its lack of originality, its failure to draw forth complex characters, and at its blatant efforts to tone down political and sexual themes for a teenage audience. Needless to say, when *Plus One* fell into my lap, I had reached the end of my patience, determined to give up on the genre as a whole if Fama's sophomore novel - which had already received wide acclaim - failed me as well. *Plus One*, however, proved to be not only the novel I needed to read, but the novel I didn't even realize I wanted to read. If you've ever experienced a similar emotion - of becoming immersed inside a novel your imagination couldn't even have conjured up - then you'll know that that isn't an experience you're likely to forget. Ever.

In 1918, when the flu pandemic destroyed much of human life, our government decided to segregate humans into two groups: Night and Day. With strict curfews put in place, alongside rules, regulations, and a different type of lifestyle entirely, our society worked tirelessly to prevent the spread of the pandemic, believing that this method of split civilization would work to contain the disease. Following its success, however, the segregation remained, Smudges and Rays staying apart, yet another twisted form of the classic "separate but equal" which, as history sadly informs us, is only separate, not equal. *Plus One* begins with Sol, our protagonist, planning to break into a hospital in broad daylight with the intention of showing her dying grandfather the face of his great-granddaughter before he passes away. For Sol and Poppu, her grandfather, going outside during the day is a criminal offense. Ever since Sol's brother, Ciel, was switched to a Day schedule, however, Sol has seen little of her brother and even less of his family. It is Poppu's dying wish, though, that forces Sol to break the rigid rules of her society, daring into the sunlight and into the hospital where her newborn niece lies sleeping. Only, D'Arcy, a Ray apprentice whose perceptive nature immediately finds Sol suspicious, quickly derails her best-laid plans. But there are plans in motion that neither Sol nor D'Arcy can anticipate and before either of them quite know it, their lives become about so much more than a

dying wish, societal rules, or even a sleeping baby.

From the beginning itself, Fama's sophomore novel stand out due to its impeccable world-building. Fama unveils the details of this world slowly, gradually, and timely. It's an extremely detailed set-up and I appreciated that Fama never skipped over the political repercussions of her world. If anything, the political motivations, gains, and corruption of Fama's society are just as palpable and integral in her world as they are in ours. While this isn't a dystopian novel (*strictly* speaking since it isn't futuristic, merely an alternate type of society), we do come to know of many imperfections within this society - imperfections spurred by both political drive and human nature. As a stand-alone, *Plus One* avoids the icky set-up of a classic dystopian trilogy in which the "big reveal" behind an imperfect society is hyped up to such an extent that by the time we discover its secrets, we are no longer impressed. Instead, Fama times her clues perfectly, dropping hints but never ruining the ultimate surprise for readers, which proves to be satisfying in a clever manner, drawing together threads from much earlier on in the novel to tie up the story as a whole. Another plus point is that the class inequalities are explored carefully, proving to be multiple shades of gray instead of the black-and-white Sol may originally think it is.

Nevertheless, those technical issues aside, the plot of *Plus One* is driven by Sol's love for her grandfather, Poppu. In an effort to ensure he holds his great-granddaughter before he dies, she sets out to break the law. While Fama does use sparing flashbacks to build the strength of the bond that Sol feels for her grandfather and older brother, the love within this family is palpable and ever-present, more a feeling than a combination of words, which I loved. Additionally, these flashbacks never took away from the novel, only adding to it due to the fact that they were sparse and concise. All too often it is easy to become embroiled in the past, not the present, but Fama never wanders down that path. Furthermore, *Plus One* continues to win points from me due to its ending. It is ever-so-slightly open, the way I like it, and I hope Fama writes a companion novel set in this same world because I'd love to know more about the political machinations of this society. (Admittedly, we are given quite a lot, but, as always, I just want MOAR.)

When it comes to the romance, however, (which its cover promises is far more prominent than it really is), *Plus One* faltered, ever-so-slightly. While I loved D'Arcy, the romantic interest of this novel, and found him to be a million shades of swoon, I wasn't wholly sold on the romance. Granted, there is a hefty amount of development and Sol and D'Arcy, though enticing characters on their own right, are even more explosive together. Yet, their relationship jumps very quickly from like to love once they realize a mini-plot twist. Admittedly, I could understand their excitement at this revelation, but I couldn't emotionally get behind it as I didn't feel as if their relationship exuded that level of affection. Fama writes it on the page flawlessly but as for my heart? It just couldn't take in the magnitude of feeling that Fama claimed lay between them. I also felt as if the word "love" was thrown around a little too casually here. Sol's time is short, from page one itself, because she takes it upon herself to break the law. We know she'll be serving time in jail and I feel as if the relationship between D'Arcy and Sol was rushed into love as a consequence despite the fact that it didn't feel as natural. Moreover, while I am *all* for sex in YA, the short sex scene in *Plus One* didn't serve a purpose. Once again, it felt as if D'Arcy and Sol rushed into this because their time was so limited and while I am able to understand that sentiment, I wish that their experience had some meaning. I wish it gave strength or courage or at least comfort. Instead, it felt very much like bucket-list sex. Like "I might die soon so let's just get it on now while we can" kind of sex which I wasn't a fan of.

I was fortunate enough to have Elizabeth Fama reach out to be about my issues with her portrayal of the romance in this novel and I'd like to share with you what she said:

I just wanted to say that I was happy to see you mention the "bucket-list" sex that bothered you. For me, you hit the nail on the head when you said "The relationship between D'Arcy and Sol was rushed into love" and "D'Arcy and Sol rushed into [sex] because their time was so limited."

Your discomfort is appropriate, in my opinion. The sex scene is in there for a very serious reason, and I think of it as crucial to the more meaningful theme of the book: the loss of liberty and civil rights. I wanted Sol and D'Arcy to bring a human face to the injustice, by making the reader care about them. Here are two young people who should have the simple right to get to know each other and be together, who can't be together for an arbitrary reason imposed on them by the government. And now you--the reader--have gotten to know and love them and you want them to be together, at whatever pace is comfortable for them, and doesn't it stink that this system interferes with that? Doesn't that mean we should all protect our liberties? (This sentiment that I hoped readers would feel is stated explicitly by Grady Hastings, who is quoting Clarence Darrow in his speech when he says "You can only be free if I am free.") Sol's determination to have sex with D'Arcy while she can is symbolically the crux of the book for me. Her urgency is directly related to the loss of control she feels, knowing they'll be torn apart. I think Sol and D'Arcy are the kind of kids who would have had a longer courtship if their world and their circumstance had been different. But given their situation, they didn't feel they had the luxury to choose.

For me, reading Elizabeth's words shed a LOT of light on this story. I chose to first share my original sentiments in this review because I can sense that other readers may feel this way about the love story as well - and that, as Fama has said, is a normal reaction. When forced to think beyond this bubble, though, beyond the scope of just that one sex scene or those few moments when the word "love" slipped out, I love that, in reality, this entire relationship is a statement about Fama's imaginary society. All too often, swoon is added into a novel in order to make it more appealing to audiences. For me, the fact that the romance in *Plus One* serves a greater purpose and does, in fact, both engage readers *and* hold a deeper meaning within the plot of this story, truly won me over regarding its growth arc. Often times, it takes stepping back to look beyond mere emotion to understand the magnitude of a scene, both in real-life and in literature, and I hope other readers will appreciate this aspect of *Plus One* as well. Needless to say, *Plus One* comes very highly recommended from me. If its cover hasn't already compelled you to pre-order it, then I certainly hope I will.

Once again, a huge thank you to Elizabeth Fama for taking the time to write to be about Plus One. Your words have enhanced my appreciation as a reader, thinker, and analyzer and for that, I cannot thank you enough.

You can read this review and more on my blog, Ivy Book Bindings.

Stuti (Turmeric isn't your friend. It will fly your ship says

WARNING: THERE BE DRAGONS!

First things first, let's decide on the rating because I love giving golden, little stars to books.

In terms of writing, characters, plot, blah di dah all mushed together and judged together, I'd like to give *Plus One* three intact stars. On the other hand, when I consider my feels, or lack thereof, and enjoyment, or lack thereof again, I can come up with nothing better than 2.5.

SO I decided, if I'm going to break them, I might as well go in completely, AND compromised between my critical heart and generous mind: 2 and 3/4 stars. It's in sequence.

Plus One incited in me reactions from a very small range. There were times during which being in my vicinity would have transported you to a dimension where dragons breathe not fire, but fire-colored liquid(OJ), through not their mouth, but their nose.

I am a ferocious beast in pink!

It was a miracle we didn't get hit. It was like the videos I had seen of traffic in India...

DO you see what comes after what? I swear, had it not been for the book, I'd have fallen for Ms Fama right there and then.

I rested my lips on the rim of the bottle before I drank, trying to differentiate between the warm wetness of the water and the warm wetness of his mouth...

HAHA! But alas-ewwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww!

...and brushed his great nose...

My HOUSE IS ON LIQUID-FIRE!

More of my reactions included:
boredom, because while lots of things happened, they really didn't.

confusion, when they say

"This is what I've wanted since the prairie."

"The same night that..." He couldn't finish the sentence. "The same night that Poppu died."

Heh? She was just talking with her Poppu, like she just returned from his room. The prairie was around two days ago.

disappointment, because nothing in the book satiated me

creeped out, the singular time:

I looked closer. His lashes were as pale as his eyebrow.

This is a poor kid she's just met, who's walking with them in uncomfortable silence, going "Um...." As

someone who herself suffers through that, I find it creepy. But that's my pet peeve, don't you be bothered and all!

Plus One has a very interesting premise, a world that was unfolded in multiple chapters at a varying pace. Days and Nights are not, as one might guess, races; they're classes of people bifurcated based on their assignment in either day or night. At first, I was really impressed with the background and attitudes and traits of people-Rays and Smudges; Rays walked and talked openly while Smudges learned to sneak and skulk around early on. The difference in their perceptions is something I'd have liked to see more of, but sadly the book lacked in that department. I also thought that their lives would be more hurried seeing that each class had around twelve hours assigned to them, but they almost seemed languid. There were things that I questioned about the working of the world, the simplest things because I am goddamn genius(not), and I'm glad to admit that they really were no problems, and I was simply pretending at being precocious.

The theme playing at the book's core is love. Love for family starts the roller-coaster(not), and ends with true love. (True love ain't for me but I believe in tru wuv.) Sol Le Coeur decides to kidnap her new-born niece by deliberately mutilating her hand, so her grandfather, Poppu, gets to hold her before his last breath. Various misdeeds, mistaken identity, good people, chances et cetra ensue, and a story is written.

Sol is a badass MC who will be loved, admired, aspired, sung ballads in taverns about by one and many; she doesn't always kick ass, she has her moments of vulnerability and stupidity, and if I weren't me, I would say she's a marvellous and unique character with lots of juice to be squeezed out. However, by some probability and a few too many rounds of moonshine with dices in hand, ended up with me being me. And being me, I say that Sol didn't leave any kind of impression on me as a person, nor could I connect with her in any way. This lack of connection contributed the most towards my mild feelings about *Plus One*.

The romantic interest, D'Arcy, I think, could have been a great character. But he didn't give me any swoons and I couldn't even begin to try and look at him beyond his niceness. In the beginning, he had great potential to be a mulch-layered character, and he continued to be so, until a little ways forward from the mid of the story. That is when I felt it all going down the drain- the potential realized, and the unrealized. However, at the end of the second day, I refute my aforesaid statement because he really was a fleshed out character, and made more of an impact on me than Sol did. No swoons, though. No goddamn swoons.

Another character I'd like to discuss is Gigi. From what little we see of her, she comes off as a bitch, broken and used. I liked her and I felt for her. She is being treated like shit from both sides, yet she has her attitude and yet she helps them. At least there was one character whose story I'd like to read, and see where she goes.

This is a minor spoiler, so skip if you want.

Gigi is Sol's brother, Ciel's ex. He broke her heart. He's married and has a child. YET he forces her to negotiate with him, when other people were up for it, and she absolutely doesn't want to. He has his reasons, but I thought this was a downright asshole thing to do.

The story isn't really very political; it involves more skipping about, hiding and having fun, thinking unwanted thoughts etc. It isn't very revolutionary either. There are some revelations made, and there might a revolution growing in the background, involved with characters completely unrelated with Sol, but that has very little to do with the story, until the very end. *Plus One* doesn't set out to make any statement; differences, injustices don't consume many words because foremost, it's a story about love.(And escaping.) Poppu, D'Arcy(for him, Jean, Helen), Ciel and in light of a declaration, Gigi.

One plus(o_O) is that I rrrrrreeeeeeeally like the cover.[See truwuv.]

I suppose lots of people are going to love this book-even with the misjudged set of expectations- but I spent my time making sounds of chains clanging as zombies zombie-shuffle wearing them as ornaments while I'm

actually gritting my teeth(my teeth are razor-sharp and the razor is made of steel).

For when bats steal your OJ.

Not my best review, but it's all I can manage. Drawing dragons wears me out, as does trying to imagine myself as dragons(I'm nothing if not authentic).

Thank you Macmillan Children's Publishing Group!

Ari says

4.5 stars.. And simply as beautiful as the cover – which actually takes my breath away!

Isn't it refreshing to read something that doesn't resemble anything (or 'everything') you've read before? To meet characters that seem new in many ways, but as close to you as your best friends; to witness action that keeps you on the edge of your seat the whole time; to savour sweet moments that melt you into a puddle of 'awww'?

The first time I saw this cover I fell in love. Madly in love, I knew I had to have this book (and I still need a paperback like breathing). Then the description was so alluring and I loved that it didn't tell me too much about the story, but enough to make me want to pick it up in a hurry.

And then I finally started reading it (when else if not after midnight, when I could barely keep my eyes open?) and continued on Valentine's day.. Yes, your first thought is right, I probably should have spent more time with my husband and less time with this story, but I simply couldn't stop until I reached the final page... and it's good that the next one was nowhere close to me, as I would have ruined romance forever, reading all day long.

This being said.. did I like this book? Hell yes. I loved it!

The world is intriguing with the Day/Night separation, with a history so different compared to ours (I would call this dystopia, only it is more like present day in some sort of a parallel reality if you wish). At first it didn't make sense – how in the world and why did they start that kind of division – but then it got explained and I did buy it, it actually made sense the trajectory it took.

On the other side, Sol's mission was heartwarming and full of adventure. I liked the reasons she had to do all the things she did, her commitment (despite all the pain and the amount of trouble she had to go through) and the way she tried to keep others out of her mess.. when possible.

I am usually scared when it comes to dystopian books (even though I eat up this genre for breakfast), as some times I am left confused or mistrusting. But in "Plus One" everything worked fine. So yes, this is a new recommendation from me. Keep an eye on it when it comes out in April.

Happy midnight reading!

* Find this and more at: ReadingAfterMidnight.com

** ARC received from the publisher for review. Thank you!

Blog (EN) | Facebook | Twitter | Tumblr | Bloglovin' | Blog (RO)

Kyla Harris (ourbookworlds) says

4/7/16 - 1.7 stars

This book is such a time waster.

I was so excited to start this book because it kept on showing up on bookstagram! (and that cover is hard to forget!) So I finally ended up buying it and once I got my hands on it I read about 2/3's of it in one setting. But after that the book just went down hill. The beginning wasn't impressive, but it wasn't horrible. Now after 2/3's of the book it just started becoming horribly boring and worthless. Nothing was happening and if something did there was no purpose to it really.

The book was completely useless! There was barely a real plot there throughout the whole book. It was seriously all just about babies. BABIES. Oookay. All the way up to about half way in the book the two main characters hate each other and treat each other like dirt then *boom* they're suddenly so in love with each other until the end of the book... wait what?!

So all in all, I'm very disappointed :(I would NOT recommend this book to you.

Bookaholic (reads every mortal thing) says

3.5

It's was ending that cinched it for me.

Some authors would take the easy road and give us a happily ever after, even if it's completely out of context and doesn't make any sense (IM LOOKING AT YOU JENNIFER L ARMENTROUT), but some authors do it the realistic way and **don't smother us with a bullshit ending that even a 3 year old can find problems with.**

And no, nobody *died*, and that's all I'm willing to say.

The writing is great, the characters are great and the setting is...great. *gets thesaurus thrown at face* Yeah, I needed that.

But seriously. **It was.** Sol was infuriating and sometimes stupid, but ya' know, good intentions and everything. You can't fault that. **But you know my favorite person in this whole book? D'Arcy.**

...my parents had their honeymoon in Arcy- sur- Cure, in Burgundy, in north- central France. The cave paintings there are the second oldest in the world."

*"D'Arcy," [Sol] said, understanding. "From Arcy."
"Did you think French scientists would name their son after the love interest of a nineteenth-century British novel?"*

Whatever. I'm still gonna picture a young Colin Firth as D'Arcy.

Carina Olsen says

I knew when I first heard of this book that I would read it and most likely love it, because I adore Elizabeth Fama, and I loved her other book, *Monstrous Beauty*. And then I was lucky enough to get an ARC of this a few days ago, and I could not wait to read it. The summary is awesome, but it kind of made me think that I would be confused a lot in this book. Not true at all.

I'm not used to reading books that have no fantasy, but I can honestly say that I did not mind that one bit in this book. Because the writing is stunning. I loved the writing a whole lot. The words are gorgeous. And oh, the characters are written so well and the story is so good and the book is just very exciting.

There is not a cover yet for Plus One, so I'm using the cover from my ARC. Think it looks pretty good, but I cannot wait to see the official cover for this gorgeous book :D I will not be including spoilers in my review, because I don't want to spoil anything for you. This book is amazing to read without knowing anything. But I will be talking about how amazing it is and how much I adored the characters :) Because I really loved this book. It has everything I want in a book. Good writing, exciting story, amazing characters. No love triangle. Amazing and epic romance. And the romance is so good; more than there usually is in books. Love. I just have a lot of love for this book.

Plus One is told from the point of view of Sol. The names in this book are unusual, and I adored them all. Sol is an amazing character and I couldn't help but falling in love with her. She loves her grandfather, Poppu. She lives alone with him, and oh, he's sick. Blind and full of cancer. He doesn't have long to live. And my heart broke for that. Because Sol had to take care of him all on her own; her parents are dead and her older brother, Ciel, abandoned them. Which is an awesome story. That I am not sharing :D

We learn a lot about Sol. Which I loved. But oh, she's skinny and a bit frail. I felt so sorry for her. She has no one, except for her Poppu. But she's still strong and kind and loving. And fiercely protective of her grandfather. I loved reading about the times she get to eat what she wants in this book. She eats so much and it was kind of adorable. Really loved her. Anyway. Sol is a Smudge; a part of half the population living only by night. By being forbidden to leave her house in the day. Weird, but awesome.

We just learn so much in this book and I loved reading about it all. Why some people are Rays and some are Smudges. It was amazing to read about and I kind of wanted to know even more. Then there is the plot. Sol is going to kidnap her newborn niece, to let her grandpa hold her once before dying. It was the best reason ever, though maybe not the best plan at all. Not saying more than that. Just that I loved reading about it, the things she did, because it was amazing. It was exciting and so interesting.

There is so much to love in Plus One. The story is just incredible. I was hooked from the first page. And I could not stop reading at all. I just had to finish it right away. There isn't a single thing I disliked about this book. Not one thing. Well, I might have wanted it to be longer, because the ending is kind of bittersweet and I have this need to know what happens next. I really need to know that. But anyway. I may be hoping for a sequel. <3 Because I think there should be. So much that could still be told :)

One of my favorite characters in this book was D'Arcy. Well, he might have been my favorite of them all :D But my god, he is amazing. He's just perfect. I loved reading about him. He isn't very kind at first, but I did not blame him for that at all. But then we get to know him. Know about his family and oh. That was heartbreaking. I felt so sorry for him too. But anyway. The romance between them is the sweetest thing ever. It's slow enough but not too slow. It has passion. It's amazing. D'Arcy is an amazing person.

Most of the book is told from Sol's point of view, present tense. I think it's called that. But then there are a few chapters where we get to see things from her past. And that was something I loved like crazy. We got to see her in school, and that was just the sweetest thing. I loved reading about it so much. Sigh. But oh, Sol also has some really heartbreaking things to talk about. But they just made me love her more. Because she's so strong and kind and gah. I adored her so much. I adored them all so much.

Anyway. I think that is all I'm going to say about this book. There is just too much. Plus One is amazing and I cannot wait to read it again. You all need to read it. There are many awesome characters in this book. I grew to like Gigi. Though I wasn't always too sure about her. She did this one thing that broke my heart. Sniffs. But she too is strong. I didn't really like Ciel. Grrr. But he was interesting to read about :D Anyway. I adored Plus One. So happy that I read it. <3 It was all kinds of perfect. Loved it so much.

Thank you so much to Macmillan Kids and Ksenia for the review copy of Plus One. <3 Meant so much to me. And I'm so happy that I got to read this book early! It isn't coming out until April, but oh, you all need to read it when it does. Because it's amazing. So perfect. And I cannot wait to read it again.

Hannah (fullybookedreviews) says

Yeah, no.

Casual rape threats and using the term as an insult? Sure. /sarcasm

"What's your name?" I asked.

"What's it to you?"

I shrugged. "I just like to know who's raping me."

"Well, isn't that just a coincidence," the girl said. "When I'm raping someone I like to whisper my name in their ear."

"It's Gigi, and after I rape you I think I'll do your boyfriend. "

And then there's this charming gem:

"I can't wait until I track down your wife and fist-rape her."

Seriously? What in the name of fuck?

And also, why the hell have I not seen any other reviews pointing this out? Are we all just okay with rape being used as a threat? Yes, it may happen too often in real life, but the whole point is to not fucking perpetuate it in our literature, especially YOUNG ADULT literature -y'know, that stuff marketed towards teens which should probably portray less rape culture? You couldn't think up anything else to use as an insult or threat? It had to be rape, really?

I am not okay with this.

Quite apart from that, there is insta love - after, wait for it - 3 whole days. Yup.

"I love you," I said, and it came out defiantly. "I love you more than I've ever loved anyone. There are times when the amount I love you hurts so much, I have to sit down."

Then there's the ridiculous worldbuilding - after a plague thing back in the early 1900s, the world is split into night and day shifts for greater efficiency, and now suddenly people are classed as nights or days ("Smudges" or "Rays") and it just makes no sense whatsoever. Why? I like my oppressed societies to at least HAVE A PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION.

Finally, you have descriptions like this gem:

"He looked so much like a boy to me now, I wondered why I hadn't seen it before."

The narrator, in this instance, is talking about a newborn baby. She's looking at his face. APPARENTLY NEWBORNS JUST HAPPEN TO 'LOOK' LIKE BOYS OR GIRLS? Call me crazy, but unless they're naked, babies all look pretty much the same.

But this one has to take the cake:

Thousands of years of this running water must have carved the cave, with a serene patience that only nature and cancer victims had."

PATIENT CANCER VICTIMS? REALLY?

I give up.

Jen (The Starry-Eyed Revue) says

That was beyond beautiful. I am unbelievably enamored with Elizabeth Fama's gorgeous prose and stunning articulation.

He went on. "You admitted you were throwing your life away so that Poppu could hold Fleur just once, and it was like the floor of your apartment opened under me. You had the balls to condense the whole screwed-up world into this one pure thing, this crazy act of love. Everything I was working for collapsed through that hole with me, and I went into a free fall. And then you kissed me on the prairie and I wanted it all -- I selfishly wanted what Poppu had."

I've been writing this review in my head for days, since I first finished *Plus One*, and yet I still don't think I can sufficiently portray just how much this book means to me, but that quote comes close to expressing everything I felt for Sol and her situation. I loved *Monstrous Beauty* when I read it last year, and I've been not-so-patiently awaiting Elizabeth Fama's next novel, so I was elated to see it pop up on ATW ARC tours. I purposely skimmed the summary for this book because I wanted to be as surprised with it as I was with *Monstrous Beauty*, but *Plus One* exceeded any and all expectations I might have had.

"The sun was as high as a Midwestern sun can get in late September, which D'Arcy informed me was not very high, so that as we approached the Natural Bridge the light was hitting it somewhat from the side, highlighting the red ferns and lichens and moss that grew on it and throwing extravagant shadows on the rough surface of the stone."

Despite the ugliness of Sol's plan and the world she lives in, I found so much unbridled beauty in this book, from the comparisons and contrasts of day and night life, to the desk drawings, to the gorgeous prose used to depict the Maquoketa Caves State Park...I felt like I was living and breathing Sol and D'Arcy's experiences through this book. This world is not far off from our own, just shy of what life could be like for us now, had things gone differently in the past. And not even *vastly* different...I mean, things in the past that were supposed to be temporary because of war, etc., have long since been made permanent: taxes, daylight savings time, among other things. Having one sector of the population temporarily switch to night in order to circumvent the effects of a devastating epidemic seems somewhat reasonable. But whenever the government intervenes like this, there are sure to be those who object.

So, yeah, this sounds like a dystopian novel, in that the government has made this society undesirable for some. But I don't want that to scare you away because this story definitely doesn't read like the typical dystopian novel. Far from it. Sol isn't trying to change the world...she's just trying to grant a dying man's wish. And I'm not positive, but from what I can tell this is actually sort of a retelling of *The Day Boy and the Night Girl* by George MacDonald. I haven't read the whole story, but it was referenced a ton in the *Razorland Trilogy* by Ann Aguirre, which I have also read and loved.

I also love the irony of Sol's parents naming her Soleil, which is French for "sun". Although when we meet Sol, her disposition is anything but sunny, we soon discover that this is an exterior shell she projects. Inside, she's still the young girl she was when her brother Ciel -- French for "sky" -- all but abandoned her and Poppu to live as a Ray, those who live in the daylight hours. Because of that betrayal, Sol doesn't get close to anyone and doesn't *let* anyone close. Poppu is all she has left, and now she's losing him, so it's understandable that Sol would want to give him the last thing on this earth that he wishes for, even if it means her own incarceration and the end of everything she knows.

"In the end I had actually worked up some wetness in my eyes. A drop spilled onto my cheek, and just like in the movies I left it there. I hate the way actresses do that, because when you *really* cry you want your tears gone -- it's all about wiping them away as fast as you can."

What I loved best about Sol, aside from her devotion to her family, was how genuine she was. From her bluntness and non sequiturs to her never-ending diatribes, I really felt like I'd come to know this girl.

Usually, I find that I need to relate to a character in some fashion or another in order to fully enjoy a story, but that wasn't the case with *Plus One*. I could never be as strong or as capable or as self-sacrificing as Sol. Not once did I question her decisions, think that she was making the wrong choice, but neither could I have ever done the same as she did in her circumstances. Sol knows her lot in life, and she's relinquished herself to always living in the dark, but once her heart is set upon its task, she will stop at nothing to see it through. Normally, I'd question the foolhardiness of such a plan, but with Sol, it was unbelievably easy to get on board with such a harebrained scheme.

And that's where D'Arcy comes in. He may not have been named after a character in a famous nineteenth-century novel, but he might as well have been. *sigh* I don't know how to adequately express how much I love the coincidences that brought Sol and D'Arcy together. There is nothing remotely similar about these two characters, but from the onset of their time together, it was clear to me that they were "meant to be". Maybe neither of the pair has actively rebelled against the system until now, but it's obvious that neither accepts it without question. And the fact that D'Arcy just went with his gut when it came to Sol...I think that just speaks volumes about his character and it speaks to Sol's unflappable willingness to see her promise through to the end.

"Eventually he turned his back to me, with his arms crossed on his chest, and sometime later his body jerked with a hypnagogic twitch, and then utter stillness told me he was asleep. I sat up, holding my breath, the Mylar making the sound of a hundred candy wrappers as I lifted the blanket away."

I also love that this book made me feel smarter while I was reading it. I just *knew* there had to be a real word for that moment when you jerk yourself awake right before you fall into a deep sleep, and now I know there is. => I love young adult novels; I think that much is obvious. But I love them even more when they're intellectually stimulating and really force me to question morally ambiguous issues, like the ones the characters face in *Plus One*. Other things that instantly captured my attention: Gigi and the Noma, the murmuration and how it's described, the use of French and how prevalent it is in this novel despite the fact that the setting is in Chicago, and the use of flashbacks to illustrate life for Sol prior to Ciel's absence. I'd love to go into more detail about these things, but I don't want to divulge too much about the story. Also, for brevity's sake, I need to end this review soon, or else it will end up as long as the novel...I really could go on and on about it ad nauseum, that's how much I enjoyed this book.

"We're going to steal food," I said. "Is that what you're telling me?"

He grinned. "I know, right? I *am* a miscreant now. And it's your fault."

My stomach grumbled, like the muffled creak of an old hinge. "They probably only just got settled in," I whispered. "They may not be asleep yet."

"Then we'll have to be as sneaky as..." he stopped.

"As sneaky as Smudges," I finished the pejorative saying for him.

"Sorry."

"Not at all. I'm actually worried you can't pull this off, with your galumphing about and booming voice. Maybe I should do it alone."

His eyebrows knit together, and I allowed myself a tiny smile, no bigger than the Mona Lisa's.

"Touché." He laughed under his breath.

Sol and D'Arcy, as different as night and day and yet so perfectly matched. *Plus One* is a love story when all is said and done, but it's also a story of sacrifice and loss and hope. There are moments of unbelievable gut-wrenching pain that brought me to tears, there are chase scenes that could have come straight from your favorite action movie, and there are brief moments of levity that left this reader unexpectedly hopeful, despite the dire circumstances the characters were facing. Suffice it to say, this book is the real deal, the full package...everything I'd hoped it would be and more. I wasn't ready to say goodbye yet, but oh my goodness, did I *loooooove* that ending! I think Gilda says it best:

*It may have taken me two hours to write this review, but I promise no babies (or Premie Gorts) were hurt in the process.

**All quotes were taken from an advanced copy and may not appear in the final book.

Thank you to Farrar, Straus, & Giroux/Macmillan and ATW ARC Tours for providing a copy for review!

This review will be posted at The Starry-Eyed Revue closer to release date.
