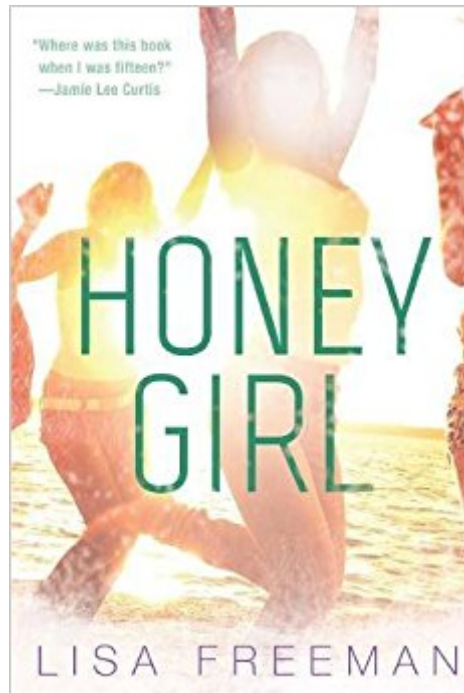




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Honey Girl



Synopsis

They call the heart attack that killed fifteen-year-old Nani's surfer father 'the widow-maker'; when it struck, it killed him instantly. Almost as quickly, it turned Nani's mother from the half-owner of Honolulu's most famous bar to a hopeless alcoholic seeking a fresh start in California, and Nani into a fish out of water on Santa Monica State Beach. It's 1972, and as the new girl on one of the country's most famous beaches, Nani's only hope for acceptance and survival is following 'The Rules,' an unspoken list of dos and don'ts that made her queen of the beach in Hawaii. After a series of harrowing initiations she manages to get in with the locals, even gaining the attention of surf god Nigel McBride. But maintaining stardom is harder than achieving it, and Nani is harboring three secrets that could instantly destroy everything she's worked to achieve. #1: She stole her dad's ashes, hid them from her mom, and plans to spread them in the ocean he loved. #2: In order to get in with the lineup, she spied on them and now she knows more than they'll ever let her get away with. And deadliest of all, #3: she might just be in love with Rox, the queen supreme of State Beach.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up • It's the summer of 1972, and Nani has relocated from Hawaii to Santa Monica, and she has more than her fair share of secrets: she's stolen her father's ashes, she loves to surf, and she likes girls. Following the innumerable rules required to fit in with the surfer girls who rule State Beach and keeping her secrets may be more than she can handle on her own. While prose styling

is not often a big deal in young adult titles, the writing in this book is stultifying. Overly detailed descriptions of characters read like enumerated lists of facts rather than providing readers insight into the characters. Cultural references alienate readers instead of adding authenticity. Nani's motivations throughout are opaque, and her actions will be bewildering to contemporary teens. It's never clear why Nani wants to join this exclusionary society of surfers and hangers-on, and without that understanding, readers will also be unclear about the characters' interactions. The protagonist's ability to learn the secrets of the surfer girls is unrealistic, particularly for a book that appears to pride itself on its verity. VERDICT Although it provides some insight into a subculture that is no longer extant, this disjointed book has very little of interest to teens. —L. Lee Butler, Hart Middle School, Washington, DC --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Where was this book when I was fifteen? Honey Girl is a daring debut. A fierce story of female friendship, earned acceptance, and following the unwritten rules of Southern California beach boy and girl culture in the '70s." —Jamie Lee Curtis "Teens will marvel at this retro journey into vintage beach culture...[and] ache with Nani's pain and the challenge of being 15 and trying to find one's way." —Booklist "This funny yet gripping page-turner, the first novel by the daughter of Hawaii Five-O creator Leonard Freeman, captivates the reader through Nani's honest, confessional, sassy, and utterly engaging voice." —Packed with action, attitude, and empathy, Honey Girl should become a YA classic." —Honolulu Star-Advertiser "Lisa Freeman's debut YA novel is one of those delicious books you want to drink down in one sitting; she creates a world rich with detail and description, dropping you into the complicated social structure of elite surfers and the girls who want them." —B&N Teen Blog "Very Mean Girls. It conveys the nerves and delicate balance of trying to find your place in a new friendship group, all in a very refreshing and unique way." —LGBT YA reviews "Historical fiction in YA often means gowns, or at the very least flapper dresses, but Freeman's surfer chick novel travels them back to the early '70s, just long enough to detach her characters from texts and e-mails but still have them bombarded with familiar bits of pop culture." —After Ellen.com "In this emotionally-compelling, relatable new novel, Nani fights to earn her place in the group, but also to understand and come to terms with who she is." —Girls Life Magazine "A time machine that zipped me straight back into Southern California in 1972!" —Lisa Freeman tells an authentic, funny, poignant, and touching story with a delicate but subversive feminist touch. Paddle out and hang ten with this gnarly read!" —Mimi Pond, author of Over Easy "If Jane Austen had been a fifteen-year-old Southern California beach girl living in the 1970s, this is very possibly the novel she would have written. Lisa Freeman catches it

all: the baby oil for tanning, the abalone bracelets, the taste of salt on skin. Honey Girl is a bildungsroman and book of etiquette rolled into one, and its subject is one of my favorite cultures: the brother (and sister) hood of surfing." —Jim Krusoe, author of Parsifal --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This book is an absolute treasure. It combines a well drawn period piece (early 1970's) with loss, alienation and new love. It doesn't miss a step. I am the exact age of the players in this book so it is a period I know very well. I was the wrong coast but I did spend many months in Hawaii in the early 70's. Every detail here is genuine and the play of emotions exactly the mindset of a 15 year old girl. There is not a false note in this entire book. Freeman does a lovely job creating the rigid, absolute, life or death culture of adolescence. She then puts it into a historical context that throws a veneer of simplicity over the whole thing. I completely bought the relationships of the characters, the sexual exploration and the friendship bonds. It is a fast, joyous read. Younger readers may not understand the strictures of female culture of the time but I can assure you, it is a very accurate depiction. Great work, I hope to see more from this author.

Do gods and goddesses still walk the earth? From the point of view of Nani, a green-eyed fifteen year old hapa haole girl, they do. You can still see them, if you look hard enough, sitting on the shoreline watching the surfer gods waiting in the drop zone. Nani's hyper-active, all-seeing eye brings you into their world, a world that is sometimes "red in tooth and claw" and sometimes as beautifully sensual as Collette's "perfumed jungle." Honey Girl is a book about making it in that world, but more than that, it's about the pain of growing up and about loss, the loss of a beloved father, the loss of an island home, the loss of a mother who never was and the loss of childish illusions. It's also about knowing who you are and what you want, about the attainment of self-knowledge. Read it! You'll love Nani, and you will certainly never forget Rox.

What I liked about Honey Girl is that its main character, Nani, is that she doesn't fall into the "Not Like the Other Girls" trope she is a total sheep, and I loved it. Her internal narration is sharp and tangible; it's what makes her endearing and likeable. Nani is incredibly relatable and funny; she's hell bent on following the Beach Girl rules and not always doing the best job of it, yet at the same time still very much retaining an individual identity. It's just kind of refreshing to find a novel where the

main character is this unapologetic follower who's presented in an amusing, easygoing way.

This was an intriguing story as it portrayed a snapshot of life from the seventies that I had never considered before. I liked the characters and writing.

I couldn't grasp the main character's intentions and thoughts, valley girl wanna-be thinking wasn't something I could wrap my head around.

I loved this book. Fun Summer read while at the beach or anywhere else if you're not near the coast! Not much to say here, read the book for yourself and enjoy being transported back to 1972 in Santa Monica!

Very entertaining. Read the book before I visited Santa Monica and it was nice to see and visit many of the places mentioned. Great Book!!

Honey Girl is not at all what I expected. Nani and her mother have just moved to California from Hawaii after her father dies. It's a hard move for Nani, but she's determined to make a fresh start. She's going to join the most popular girls and rule State beach, and then spread her father's ashes in the ocean. It's not so simple as walking up to the girls and introducing herself. There's many rules that Nani must follow to get in with the locals or else be shunned and alone. There are some things that I think Honey Girl did very well, but for the most part it was a disappointment. I loved that Nani was biracial and that it was acknowledged in non-superficial ways. I could totally relate to her not immediately fitting in and people being confused by her appearance. I also liked how Nani was confident, almost bordering on cocky. She knows she looks good and she's not going to hide it. The time period was also a nice change from the usual contemporary or Historical settings. I can't think of any other books that were set in the 1970s: weed and bellbottoms! The other thing that I thought Honey Girl did well was present Nani's sexuality. She never explicitly states being bisexual, but she does say that she likes guys and girls. And one of her secrets that she reveals to the readers is that she likes Playboy magazine. It's not made into a huge deal, and there's no coming out story, she just is what she is. However, the description promises more romance between her and Rox than actually happens. She is in no way, even remotely, "in love with Rox." They have one makeout scene before Rox runs back to her on and off again boyfriend. In fact, Nani spends more time

reluctantly making out with Nigel and at the end admits to actually liking him, despite giving no indication that she was into him other than for the status it brought her. Basically all the romantic elements failed miserably. However, what truly kept me from getting into Honey Girl was this focus on the rules. Nani follows all of these unwritten beach rules and after the first few chapters it became a bit much. There's way too many of them, and she follows them exactly, no matter what. It's like her life depends on them. Every single situation has some rule attached. It's like I was constantly reading "There's a rule for that!" and not much else. This left no room for any interesting development on Nani's part. She just follows the rules to get what she wants rather than reinventing herself like she said she was doing. Honey Girl was just not the story for me. It's not much like how it's described, which was a let down. But it's also just not an interesting story. It's just one girl following some made up rules and then the end.

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