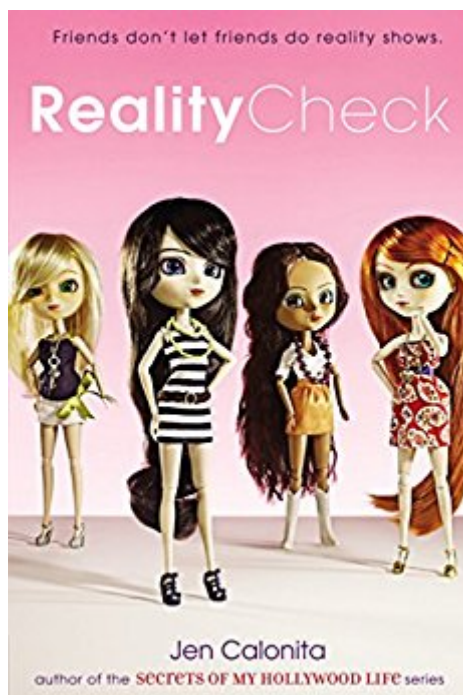


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Reality Check



Synopsis

Sixteen-year-olds Charlie, Keiran, Brooke, and Hallie have just been signed up for their own reality television show. They can't even believe it. "You'll be The Hills meets The Secret Life of the American Teenager," the Armani-suited executive tells them, "and the hottest thing on our network." How could they say no? But soon enough, cameras following them everywhere and interfering producers surreptitiously scripting their lives start to affect the four best friends' relationship. Brooke seems to want all the screen time. Keiran is abruptly written out of the show-and consequently the group's friendship-when she doesn't rate well. As soon as Charlie realizes what's going on, she figures out the perfect way to give the studio and her home audience a much-needed reality check. Because friends don't let friends do reality shows.

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Customer Reviews

Being a reality TV star sounds like a sweet gig. The money, exposure, and fame are all great pros to doing a reality show. At least they are for Charlotte "Charlie" Reed and her three best friends:

Brooke, Hallie, and Keiran. What could go wrong, right? Well, these Long Island girls are about to find out the truth of Reality TV. At first, Charlie is flattered by the offer, but hesitates because she tries to understand how a TV show could really change her life. In the end, Charlie caves because her friends all really want to do the show. In fact, Brooke is the most enthusiastic. Charlie and her friends learn that not all that glitters is gold and that TV really does change people. I enjoyed "Reality Check" overall. Charlie is an endearing character and the reader can sympathize as she gets frustrated, undermined, and confused. She loses friendships and relationships while struggling to hold on to her own identity with the whole country watching. Ms. Calontia does a good job of showing how fame and the trappings of TV can change people for the better or for the worse. "Reality Check" is a fast read with a realistic ending. I liked that fact that the story focused on the fact that substance is mostly better than hype. The story also shows how TV can help along all the frailties of human nature to become exposed in horrible ways. If you are looking for a realistic take on TV, Hollywood, and fame, then this is a book to put on your reading list.

The book is good itself, so I'm going to give it 5 stars. Now I'm going to say a spoiler so beware. In the ending, Brooke was not friends with the group of girls anymore which made me really upset. It's usually supposed to be a happy ending and Brooke had to be a brat and ruin the whole thing. The idea of any kind of spin-off for the two is totally ridiculous. Good book, upsetting ending.

My twelve year old daughter read this and loved it!!!

This is a 5 star book, because its perfect for preteens/teens, and is a very dramatic story. (In a good way!)

I loved the book because it shows how getting caught up in things can ruin friendships and how not all friendships can be broken

Being a fan of Jen Calonita's, I purchased Reality Check, only to be horribly disappointed. It isn't that the story or writing is bad, it's just that Reality Check is practically an exact copy of the book The Real Real by Nicola Kraus. Both books are centered on a group of high school students who live in a town no one really cares about and are not all that rich. They are all offered college tuition, which the characters of both books are all happy to take. The producers of the reality shows are deceiving and liars, and they both have unwilling assistants in charge of production. Each book

has a friend who is deemed "too boring" and taken off the show. Both the main characters of the books have problems with their love interests because of the TV show, and in both books, the characters all want off the show in the end and do so by one upping the producer of the show. These books are exactly the same in almost every aspect, which makes me wonder whether Ms. Calonita ripped off *The Real Real*. There are far too many coincidences; I suggest that if you choose to read one of the books, read *The Real Real*, which is more sophisticated and well written.

Spoilers. Who wouldn't want \$10,000 an episode to hang out with their friends, shop, talk about boys and be themselves? That's why friends Charlie, Brooke, Kieran and Hallie sign up to be on *The Cliffs*, set in their small beach town. Even though the reader can immediately tell trouble is impending, watching it unfold in Calonita's hands is entertaining. Charlotte "Charlie" Reed soon finds Brooke's jealousy over her starring role unbearable, while her big crush doesn't want fame and the show soon interferes with their budding relationship. We see how easily one stray line or tiny crack in a friendship can be escalated and highlighted, and Calonita gets at each girl's Achilles heel. Reality TV is pretty easy to skewer and some of the plotlines are things the reader can't help but wonder why the girls don't see, but as the show premieres and they do become the celebrities gossiped about in *US Weekly* they've wanted to be, and are threatened with breach of contract if they don't live up to the promised drama, the best writing comes out. In many ways, the mean girl steals the show, and while you're rooting for Charlie, the machinations of those who want fame above all else are highly entertaining. A perfect example of "Be careful what you wish for."

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