



The Decoding of Lana Morris

By Laura McNeal, Tom McNeal

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A *Kirkus Reviews* Best Young Adult Book of the Year
A New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age

Sixteen-year-old Lana Morris wishes her life were different: her Ice Queen of a foster mother won't leave her alone, and she has no friends but the other foster kids she takes care of.

Then she stumbles into a mysterious antique shop and trades her most valued possession for a single box of drawing paper: thirteen thick, blank pages, like thirteen wishes waiting to be made. Suddenly, impossibly, it seems Lana might actually have the power to change things. But wishing isn't always as harmless as it seems...

From the Hardcover edition.

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The Decoding of Lana Morris By Laura McNeal, Tom McNeal Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 8 Up—Lana Morris, 16, is the only non-"Snick" in a Nebraska foster home. "Snicks" are her neglectful foster mother's term for special-needs kids (SNKs). Lana is enormously lonely; kids in town are downright cruel to her, her foster mother is jealous and inattentive, and her foster father is too attentive (he and Lana share an attraction and, at one point, a kiss). Her only support comes from the mildly kind boy next door. Lana is often left in charge of the other children and has to cope as best she can with rough, complicated situations. She buys a drawing kit in an antique store and finds that anything she sketches comes to be. This is powerful stuff, and Lana learns quickly that you have to be careful what you wish for. She tries to do right, and things point to a happy ending, but the road there is very twisty. The McNeals have interesting turns of phrase and their language can be very evocative, but sometimes their characters have wisdom well beyond their years. The novel has too many issues piled on top of one another—the lives of foster children, coming of age, forbidden love, magic, self-reliance, first love, trusting others. Still, the writing is lovely and the characters are real people who elicit genuine feelings from readers. Give this story to your more mature readers who want some heft to their magical realism stories.—*Geri Diorio, The Ridgefield Library, CT*

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From [Booklist](#)

In this suburban Cinderella story, a wicked foster mother named Veronica rules 16-year-old Lana Morris' life. Lana spends her time carrying out Veronica's endless orders, basking in her handsome stepfather Whit's inappropriate yet flattering attention, or caring for four special needs kids, or "Snicks," as Veronica callously calls them. Lana's salvation arrives in the form of a thrift store drawing kit. Whatever she draws on the old paper seems to materialize; likewise, whatever she erases disappears. But Lana can't always control the drawings' outcomes, and soon she is in a terrible bind as she tries to save herself and the Snicks from the results of wishes gone awry. The authors of *Crooked* (1999), *Zipped* (2002), and *Crushed* (2005) offer up yet another complex and richly characterized story. What is different here is the shining thread of magical realism woven throughout, illuminating the authors' familiar yet well-wrought themes of betrayal, disillusionment, and hope. *Jennifer Hubert*

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Review

"The McNeals have created an enchanting heroine whom teens will root for as she struggles in a world made both familiar and extraordinary--a blend of the Midwest and Oz." --The Chicago Sun-Times

"Fully realized characters, teen and adult, make this book a captivating read. In distinct and thoughtfully crafted voices, characters reveal adolescent longings, adult treachery, and youthful belief that wrongs should be righted." --VOYA

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Betty Richey:

The book The Decoding of Lana Morris make you feel enjoy for your spare time. You can utilize to make

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Thomas Evans:

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Lori Gonzales:

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Megan Kelly:

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