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Everything I Know About You

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[Valerie Coghlan](#) [3]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Five years after the death of her mother, Lizzie, her seven-year-old brother and their Dad have evolved a reasonable way of life, to a large extent with the aid of their Australian au pair, Bex. It hasn't been easy ? Lizzie was seven when their Mum died and Eric only two ? and many child-minders and au pairs came and went, most of them unsatisfactory. Now, things are going along nicely, so it upsets everything when Eric suddenly announces that during a school tour he has seen his Mum serving in the shop at the Natural History Museum in London.

Lizzie's investigations, with the aid of Bex, into who Eric really saw is the story around which Hollyer's exploration of a family tragically bereaved but slowly working itself through the attendant trauma is the core of the novel. Narrated in the first person by Lizzie, readers are privileged with insights into her speculation about whether their father has deceived them in some way about their mother's death, and if she is alive, the implications of this. Lizzie, as a way of coping with her loss, has become used to feeling that her mother is watching over her, but how would the appearance of a living mother affect this accommodation that she has made?

The eventual denouement is rather overdramatic; the person Eric saw is his mother's sister who with all of her family is estranged from Lizzie's father and she is eventually tracked down in a chase around the South Bank. Nevertheless, this is a sensitive and insightful consideration of a situation that is the nightmare of many children; it is narrated with verve and a refreshing honesty in a book that can be enjoyed for its own sake.

Running Order:

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