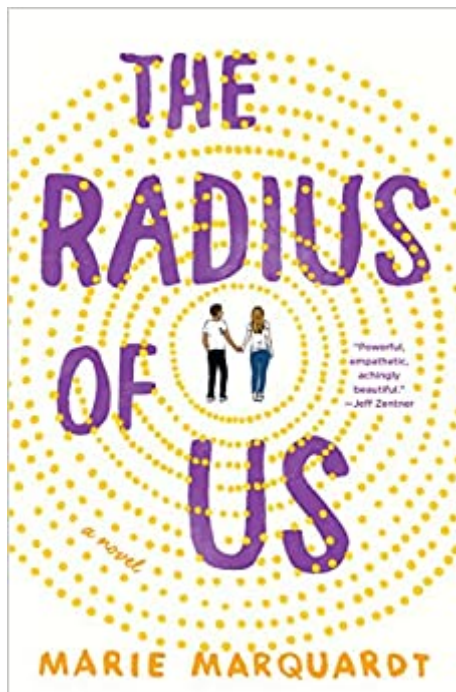


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# The Radius Of Us: A Novel



## Synopsis

What happens when you fall in love with someone everyone seems determined to fear? Ninety seconds can change a life — not just daily routine, but who you are as a person. Gretchen Asher knows this, because that's how long a stranger held her body to the ground. When a car sped toward them and Gretchen's attacker told her to run, she recognized a surprising terror in his eyes. And now she doesn't even recognize herself. Ninety seconds can change a life — not just the place you live, but the person others think you are. Phoenix Flores Flores knows this, because months after setting off toward the U.S. / Mexico border in search of safety for his brother, he finally walked out of detention. But Phoenix didn't just trade a perilous barrio in El Salvador for a leafy suburb in Atlanta. He became that person — the one his new neighbors crossed the street to avoid. Ninety seconds can change a life — so how will the ninety seconds of Gretchen and Phoenix's first encounter change theirs? Told in alternating first person points of view, *The Radius of Us* is a story of love, sacrifice, and the journey from victim to survivor. It offers an intimate glimpse into the causes and devastating impact of Latino gang violence, both in the U.S. and in Central America, and explores the risks that victims take when they try to start over. Most importantly, Marie Marquardt's *The Radius of Us* shows how people struggling to overcome trauma can find healing in love.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up — Seventeen-year-old Gretchen Asher's life has not been the same since she was

mugged in a parking lot one night. The traumatic incident propelled her into a state of panic, and she is unable to go to school, socialize, or interact deeply with her boyfriend, Adam. Months later, while babysitting her niece and nephew in a neighborhood park, Gretchen spots a boy who looks nearly identical to her attacker. She is thrust back into the heart of fear, unaware that the boy, Phoenix, is in the midst of his own struggles. An 18-year-old immigrant from El Salvador, he has just spent four months escorting his brother to the United States to flee gang violence and is in danger of being deported. When circumstances cause Gretchen and Phoenix to continue meeting, they form an unexpected bond. While facing court trials, identity issues, and racial stereotyping, the teens bolster each other's courage. With the looming possibility of their permanent separation, the two must decide what is most important to them and what sacrifices are worth making. Tackling the issues of gang violence, immigration, mental health, and cultural bias, this is a compelling story that delivers profound messages through engaging, accessible prose. Both a page-turning romance and a comprehensive view of a young immigrant's experience, this novel is sure to encourage empathy and perspective among high school students. VERDICT A must-have for all YA collections. —Karin Greenberg, Queens College, NY

"...this is a compelling story that delivers profound messages through engaging, accessible prose. Both a page-turning romance and a comprehensive view of a young immigrant's experience, this novel is sure to encourage empathy and perspective... VERDICT A must-have for all YA collections." -School Library Journal (Starred Review)"[An] eye-opening story." -Kirkus Review"For anyone who feels trapped or constrained by borders or barriers, Marie Marquardt's *The Radius of Us* is a bold, brilliant, and decidedly timely novel that reminds us that love can still transcend it all." -Brendan Kiely, New York Times Bestselling author of *All American Boys* and *The Last True Love Story*"The Radius of Us takes the worlds-colliding poignancy and rich characterization of Eleanor & Park and tackles the human workings of immigration. A powerful, empathetic, achingly beautiful and real story of yearning for a better life and the love that comes with it." -Jeff Zentner, author of *The Serpent King*"Marie Marquardt's *The Radius of Us* is a straightforward love-story with underpinnings that are anything but. This beautiful novel doesn't sugar-coat the real horrors that the world can so carelessly and randomly inflict, and at the same time never wavers in the assurance that love is bigger than hate, that compassionate connection is not just possible, but essential, and that while we may be marked by the past--the past does not define us. We save each other, person by person, and slowly the world begins to brighten. A novel that shines in every sense of the word." -Alison Umminger, author of *American Girls*"*Dream Things True* is a satisfying and rich debut novel

about love and the importance of following dreams." -AmÃfÂ©ricas Award Committee on Dream Things True

I'm a grown-up, and I usually read grown-up books but I somehow ended up with this one. I loved it. I read it in two days. It's the kind of book that I wish I'd read as a teen. I plan on buying copies for teens in my life. It portrays a healthy model of relationships, but also deals with some heavy subjects that will make a teen think beyond him/herself and learn to be a compassionate member of society.

A riveting read and thoughtful portrayal of two teenagers bearing more trauma than anyone should be asked to bear and finding the strength to fight back from the challenges they face together. This novel explores the plight of asylum seekers, victims of trauma and suffers of PTSD with sensitivity and nuance. The Atlanta setting is beautifully rendered, introducing the reader to the locations both through the eyes of the hometown heroine and the new-two-town her. And - best of all - it offers an entrancing romance and mouth-watering descriptions of pupusas that made me want to run out and find the nearest restaurant selling them!ARC received from author; forever copy purchased for myself, since I know I'll be revisiting this one!

What a great book! A beautiful love story that educates about the issues of immigration in our country.I will pass it on to my teenage son for sure.

A great story that helps you understand the effects gang violence can have, and a look into what some endure to make it to America, and the struggles some can face once across the border. A sweet romance as well, with self discovery and healing.

This book is a must-read for anyone who wishes to understand immigration issues on a personal level. But most of all, it is a compelling love story.

Amazing story!

One of the things I love about the YA genre is that, as of recently, YA authors tackle themes of difference and marginalization far better than authors of general and literary fiction.

ÃfÂÃ â -Ã â„çThe Radius of UsÃfÂÃ â -Ã â„ç is part of this burgeoning group of social

justice oriented YA literature. The novel follows Gretchen, a young white American woman who is battling the trauma of a recent attack, and Phoenix, a Salvadoran immigrant seeking asylum in the U.S. after entering the country from Mexico. The author takes on so many themes here: sexual violence, trauma, mental health, Central American gang violence, and refugee migration to name a few. While the storyline is indeed intriguing, I found that the character development, dialogue, and narrative exposition all fell flat. I wanted Gretchen and Phoenix to be more complex; I was hoping that the dialogue would pull me in; I wished that the narration had captured my attention and made me deeply invested in the story. I wanted to be wholly engaged in the novel, but I simply wasn't. That's not to say that it isn't a solid read; it is. I just think that it could have had more layers, more dimension. I received an e-galley of this novel from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

4.5 touching stars An ARC has been kindly provided by St Martin's Press, via NetGalley.com, in exchange for an honest review. This story is like an onion, it has many layers. You can choose to see it as just a very cute romance between two touching main characters coming from different worlds: the poor migrant and the cute middle class white girl. Gretchen and Phoenix were perfectly assorted. Phoenix helped Gretchen to live fully and fearlessly again. He was solid, reliable. Gretchen made Phoenix feel welcome and worthy, she fought for him. You can also focus on the journey Gretchen had to follow to feel whole and safe again. How she was riddled with panic attacks after THE EVENT, could not go to school anymore, could not drive or go outside without angst. It took a foreign boy's understanding to make her live again. His presence was reassuring. Gretchen decided to help him build a garden, find some pupusas, play tourist in Atlanta. She forgot her fears to support Phoenix and he was her safe heaven. Or you can choose to think about Phoenix's fight to protect his little brother Ari. I had never heard of Marie Marquardt before reading this book. How would she write? Would I like the story? Would I regret asking St Martin's Press for this book? Now I can honestly say that I loved this book as it broached a very sensitive and contemporary topic with great care and respect. Choosing to portray a young migrant fighting to protect his young brother the author morphed impersonal statistics into individual heartbreaking cases. This is the story of Phoenix 18 years old migrant from El Salvador. He fled his country with his little brother Ari to escape from the dangerous gangs ruling their little town. Orphaned, they travelled for months on foot or hanging from a train to reach the US border where they've been arrested and sent to detention camp. They witnessed so much violence on their trip that Ari isn't speaking

anymore. Now Phoenix is living with two old ladies waiting to know without much hope if he could stay in the US. Phoenix did some bad things in El Salvador under the gang's pressure. They threatened his family and he did not really have a choice. Now he lives in guilt for what he's done and does not think he deserves the kindness people can show, especially Gretchen's. This book may be YA romance with young main characters but reading it was thought provoking. We take so many things for granted that we don't even see we're very lucky, spoiled even. We pay a fortune to have cut fruits at the grocery store while whole fruits cost just a penny. Phoenix was grateful just to be alive and in a safe surrounding without bullets flying or gang members taking your dearest possession. He was grateful for everything he's been given, second hand clothes, a bed, a roof upon his head. His American dream was not to become rich or successful. He just wanted to have a little house, to walk freely and fearlessly in the countryside and maybe have a beer with a friend. This made me realize I was lucky. Reading about Phoenix and Ari's life in El Salvador, about their traumatizing journey and about their hope to be safe, to live made me truly see these migrant's utter despair. Most don't leave their country on a whim but out of sheer necessity. When they reach a border, they're contained in camps and begin the long wait to see if their hope will come true or be crushed again. To witness Phoenix and Ari having to prove they're worthy was heartbreaking. They had to be cleaned and judged and deemed worthy. How many succeed? How many are rebuked? What do they become once they've been sent back? Phoenix knew the statistics and how very few got permission to stay in the US. The refugees crisis is a complex topic dividing peoples across the world, some seeing migrant as a threat to their work, their safety while other wish to help these people so desperate they left everything and everyone behind in the hope of a better, safer future. Marie Marquardt made me think about all these people. I had to face my prejudice and live Phoenix's life. She made me see there are good and bad people everywhere refugees or native. This may sound cliché but it's true nonetheless and is so important when we are confronted with the fear of the other, the foreigner. Now I know that I'll never listen to/watch immigration problem in the same way. You won your bet Mrs Marquardt, you made me care and THINK.

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