

'The One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot'

A novel about humor, heartache and friendship

By Lisa Britton

Go! Magazine

I've read a few books more than once, and usually separated by years, if not decades.

This was not the case with "The One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot" by Marianne Cronin.

I saw the book mentioned somewhere, and requested it through our library. The premise fascinated me: A 17-year-old and 83-year-old meet in a hospital and realize that, between the two of them, they've lived 100 years. They begin a project to tell a story for each year, accompanied by a painting.

I immediately fell in love with this book. So much that I listened to the audiobook almost immediately after I'd finished the last page.

I was curious about the audio version because Lenni is Swedish and Margot is Scottish, and I do love listening to narrators who have accents.

Lenni's backstory comes slowly, through the tales she tells Margot.



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But we do know, from the very beginning, that she is in the hospital with a terminal illness. Curiously, the 17-year-old is never visited by family or friends, so the hospital staff and patients are her entire world.

Lenni's fiery personality contrasts her

failing body, and her interactions with people made me laugh out loud, especially her conversations with Father Arthur, the hospital chaplain.

(This book also made me cry but, as you know if you've read some of my reviews, this isn't surprising.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

"The One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot" is the debut novel of Marianne Cronin, who was born in 1990 and grew up in Warwickshire, England. She says, in her author profile on HarperCollins.com, that it took her seven years to write this book. Published in June 2021, it is available in hardcover and paperback.

Margot is a great match for Lenni — she is a feisty 83-year-old who has seen much joy and heartache in her life.

When these two connect in the hospital's art room, their relationship is one that reinforces the goodness in humanity.

We have essentially three story lines: the current one in the hospital, Lenni's life, and Margot's life.

The reader never gets the full story, though. The life of each woman is told through vignettes that, though short, reveal their most impactful experiences that shaped who they are today.

This book weaves humor with heartache but it is the unlikely friendships that I found most wonderful.

Between them, Lenni and Margot have lived 100 years but as friends, they are equals.

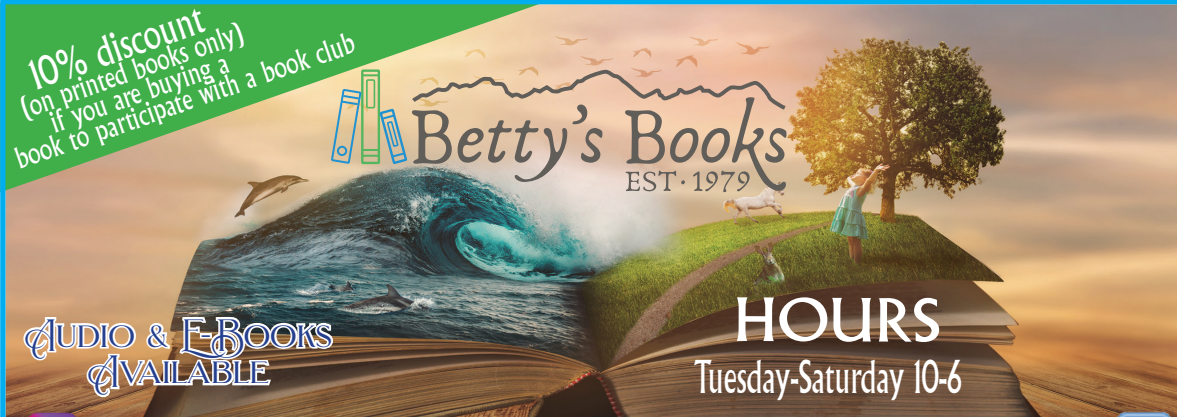


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