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My Second Life

Lisa Packard

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Book Review

**Title:** My Second Life  
**Author:** Faye Bird  
**Reviewer:** Lisa Packard  
**Publisher:** Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers  
**Publication Year:** 2016  
**ISBN:** 9780374348861  
**Number of Pages:** 258  
**Interest Level:** Intermediate, Young Adult  
**Rating:** Excellent

**Review**

Ana Ross is fifteen years old. Surrounded by friends, family, and her boyfriend, you would think she has a normal teenage life. But she also has a deep dark secret she hasn’t told anyone, and doesn’t plan to ever tell: she remembers being alive before—in a different life, but not as Ana Ross. She was Emma Trees. She remembers her mom and dad and that she loved them very much. One day while she’s visiting her grandma in the hospital, she sees Frances. Frances was a neighbor of Emma’s and she had a daughter named Catherine who had drowned. Ana starts to remember more and more about her life as Emma, but can’t seem to remember a particular horrible event that happened. Even though she doesn’t know what it is, she is determined to find out. As she meets with Frances, she gets closer to the truth. She meets Emma’s parents and learns that she didn’t kill Catherine, she killed herself. Emma’s parents tell her to live out her life as Ana Ross and forget about her life before, so Ana does. She can live a normal life as a teenage girl—happy and at peace.

Faye Bird tells a story of a girl lost in memories. As you read more about Ana’s life and what she’s feeling, you get sucked into her emotions. Ana is a typical teenage girl who gets butterflies when she’s around the boy she likes. You can’t help feeling that same way, bringing you back to when you felt that same way for the first time. When she feels angry and upset at the adults around her, you can feel that anger with her. As the story progresses, Ana starts to grow up and realize that not everything you are told is the truth. When Ana gets flash-backs as Emma, you can form your own opinions of Frances and how she treats people. It turns out Frances wasn’t everything you thought she was and you become afraid and even angry at her for what she has done to Ana/Emma. Like any teenager, Ana does get a bit disrespectful with her mom, deliberately calling her by her first name. Ana does start to get a little whiny as well and feeling sorry for herself, which distracts from her overall development. Bird brings to light how hurtful suicide is to the people who know and love you. This book may be a good resource to help explain what suicide is and how damaging it is to the people around you.

*Contains mild violence and sexual content.*