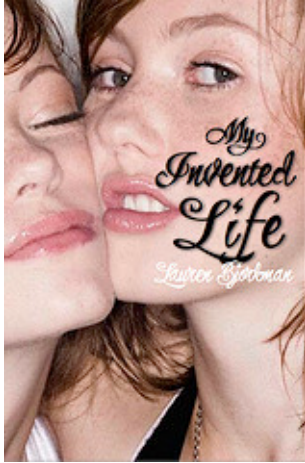


## MY INVENTED LIFE by Lauren Bjorkman



Roz and Eva are sisters, close friends, and fierce rivals. Roz fantasizes about snagging the lead in the school play and landing sexy skate god Bryan as her boyfriend. Sadly, a few obstacles stand between her and her dreams. For one, Eva is the more talented actress. And Bryan happens to be Eva's boyfriend. But is Eva having a secret love affair with a girl? Inquiring minds need to know.

Roz prides herself on random acts of insanity. In one such act, she invents a girlfriend of her own to encourage Eva to open up. The plan backfires, and Roz finds herself neck deep in her invented life. When Roz meets a mercurial boy with a big problem, she begins to understand the complex feelings beneath the labels. And she gets a second chance to earn Eva's trust.

*My Invented Life* is a comedy of errors with mistaken identities, ambiguous sexuality, skate gods, stage geeks, and true love.

### Reviews and Blurbs

Roz's voice is witty and genuine as she moves through the ups and downs of coming out (and eventually coming clean). Evocative of *Boy Meets Boy* and *Dramarama*, this makes for fun, thought-provoking reading.

*Publisher's Weekly*

Bjorkman's depiction of the drama-club crowd is absolutely spot-on...

*School Library Journal*

Roz's narrative is humorous and heartfelt as it intimately explores issues from sibling relationships to sexual identity.

*Booklist*

Lauren Bjorkman's *My Invented Life* is a hilarious, thoughtful, and engaging novel about the power of perception. *My Invented Life* ... is ultimately an uplifting story that offers insight and hope with a nice dash of humor. **Highly recommended.**

*Heather Aimee O'Neill, AfterEllen.com*

My favorite gay YA read of the year. Highly recommended.

*Daisy Porter, Queer YA: Fiction for LGBTQ Teens*

Shakespeare would be proud to be included in this smart, funny, cheeky book.

*Ellen Wittlinger, author of HARD LOVE*

I knew I was going to like this book the second the main character asked a ouija board if her sister was a lesbian. *My Invented Life* does a great job of capturing the confusing alternate reality of teenage sexuality, and with a refreshingly authentic and honest teen voice.

*Brent Hartinger, author of GEOGRAPHY CLUB*

*My Invented Life* is a fantastic look at sisterhood, drama geeks, and the far-from-simple subject of sexual identity. Funny with depth = my idea of pure reading delight.

*Shelf Elf*

The best thing about this novel is definitely quirky, sarcastic Roz and her wild antics. I fell in love with her character right from the get go, enjoying her random moments in "her invented life" where she twisted reality to her liking. You never really knew when what she was saying was actually happening and it made for a great novel.

*Flip the Page! Book Reviews*

*My Invented Life* is a smart, honest novel that is not only refreshing in it's depiction of teens coming to terms with their true selves, but it's also really fun!

*The Book Butterfly*

## About Lauren Bjorkman



Lauren Bjorkman grew up on a sailboat, sharing the forecandle with her sister and the sail bags. She enjoys making things up, chocolate in large quantities, and anything that makes her laugh. She lives in Taos, NM with her husband, two sons, and a couple of strange but loveable cats.

### **What inspired you to write this book?**

Hearing my classmate's stories at my high school reunion made me want to write on the topic. Most of my LGBT classmates concealed their true selves back then. I'm intrigued by the idea of secrets, and how they affect the people that keep them.

The main theme of *My Invented Life* can be summed up by the Shakespearean quote, "To thine ownself be true." This is so important, yet so hard to achieve! And not just for teens.

### **In the book, you write about the relationship between sisters. Do you have a sister? If so, are you like Roz and Eva?**

I have a sister, Jody. She used to say she was three and a half years older than me. In fact, the difference in our age is a mere three years, three months, and 27 days. We are still close. Like Roz and Eva, we grew apart during our teen years, but for different reasons. I'm shy (very shy) and short (very short) compared to Roz. And I prefer one-on-one interactions to being on stage. Roz and I share a self-deprecating sense of humor, and I definitely envied Jody's amazing skills and seeming perfection.

**My Invented Life takes place during rehearsals for *As You Like It*. Is it your favorite Shakespeare play?**

I have a hard time choosing a favorite anything. I like variety. It suits my ever-changing moods—serious one day and frivolous the next. With Shakespeare, there are too many excellent plays to choose from. I couldn't even say whether I prefer his tragedies to his comedies. I used *As You Like It* in my novel because the deceptions and shenanigans mirror those in story.

**Share a few phrases or sentences one might find in your book.**

Shakespeare said, “Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under’t. Translation? A devious mind is a terrible thing to waste.

The ouija web page cues me to begin.

I could slay the heart of Zeus himself. And Juno's, too.

**What was the ONE book you read that made you want to become a writer?**

*Martin Eden* by Jack London—a semi-autobiographical novel about a man who writes novels against all odds, becomes successful, and then kills himself. Ah, the passion. I was fifteen at the time, so that partially explains it. My mood in high school veered more often toward the serious than the frivolous. I enjoyed lighter books in college. When I finally started writing my own novels, I aimed to be more like Judy Blume than Jack London.

**Tell a little bit about your path to publication.**

I majored in International Agricultural Development, and worked on Oahu as a soil conservationist for almost ten years. After my first son was born, I started writing. The process—from the first idea through the tenth revision—thrills me. I (endlessly) submitted my first novel to editors. The second time around I targeted agents. My lucky break came when an instructor at a novel writing workshop referred me to his agent.

### **What advice do you have for aspiring authors?**

- 1) Read piles, stacks, and mountains of books in and outside your genre.
- 2) Join a critique group. Or find a critique partner who understands your work.
- 3) Revise, revise, and then revise some more.
- 4) Never give up. And finally...
- 5) To thine ownself be true.

### **What was life like growing up on a sailboat and exploring the world?**

The answer could (and will someday) fill a novel. I am terrified of the ocean, which added to the excitement. But I liked my cozy bunk in the forecabin, the free time (school work took about two hours a day), hanging out with my sister, and the fascinating people we met at each port. We traveled mainly in Central and South America, the Caribbean, and across the Atlantic to the Azores and the Canaries.

The trans-Atlantic crossing from the Canary Islands to Rio de Janeiro was the scariest (and best) leg of our voyage. My dad fired our crewman, so we set out on our own—my dad, Jody (13), and me (10). Jody and I took night watches together, steering and watching for large ships. We invented funny song lyrics (in poor taste) to help us stay awake. Vicious lightning storms in the doldrums nearly took us out. Once we fell asleep on watch, and my dad totally freaked because of the shoals nearby. Luckily, we survived to tell the tale.

### **What are you working on now?**

I'm working on a new teen novel about an advice blog gone awry, friendship, Mini Coopers, fake IDs, unplanned pregnancies, and fortune cookies.

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