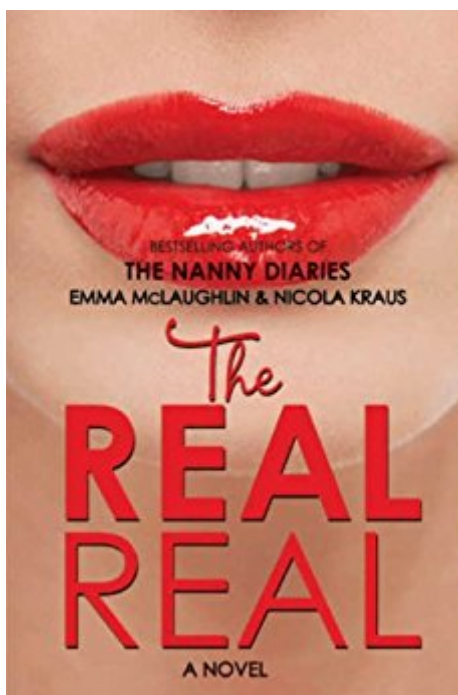


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# The Real Real



## Synopsis

The bestselling authors of *The Nanny Diaries* introduce a new heroine to root for: Jesse O'Rourke, coffee barista, high school senior, and unwitting reality TV star. Imagine there was never a Laguna Beach, a Newport Harbor, the shimmering Hills. Imagine that your hometown "your school" is the first place XTV descends to set up cameras. Now imagine they've trained them on you. When Jesse O'Rourke gets picked for a "documentary" being filmed at her school in the Hamptons she's tempted to turn down the offer. But there's a tuition check attached to being on the show, and Jesse needs the cash so she can be the first in her family to attend college. All she has to do is trade her best friend for the glam clique she's studiously avoided, her privacy for a 24/7 mike, and her sense of right and wrong for "what sells on camera." . . . At least there's one bright spot in the train wreck that is her suddenly public senior year: Jesse's crush has also made the cast. As the producers manipulate the lives of their "characters" to heighten the drama, and *Us Weekly* covers become a regular occurrence for Jesse, she must struggle to remember one thing: the difference between real and the real real.

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## Customer Reviews

Jesse is an unassuming high schooler, doing her best to keep up with school, her job and her friends. She needs to work on college acceptance and possible scholarships. She's good at keeping under the radar from some of the big drama at school. However, a documentary crew lands in her high school with lofty promises and even loftier realities. Jesse is plucked from one of the hundreds in her school, which hurts her best friend who was hoping to be on the show. But Jesse can't quit--once she completes the filming, she will have a \$40,000 college fund, which her family desperately needs. Suddenly thrust into the spotlight, Jesse starts realizing that all that glitters is NOT gold. She is having to choose between the things she thought defined her and the scholarship money. Soon she looks in the mirror and doesn't recognize her own reflection beneath the sponsored makeup and the borrowed clothing. Is the hope of her future enough to make her forget her past? Read *The Real Real* to find out for sure!

Who would read this: Fans of reality tv from Mtv's golden age (the hills, etc.)

Time to Read: 3 hours

Rating: 4/5

Funny Story: I'm fascinated by reality tv, if only so i can spot the obvious mishaps and plot points. the more ridiculous the better!

Final thoughts: I really enjoyed this a lot more than I thought I would. I would love to get a look at more of jesse's life.

I am going to tell you all a secret. I am addicted to a certain reality show that features men and women who keep the bronzer making people in business. *The Real Real* gives a peak into what the lives of these so called "reality TV" stars might be like. Jesse is a character who has her life turned upside down by the TV industry. Her and her parents are drawn in by the money that will allow her to go to college and they are basically "owned" by the TV station until her contract is up. During this time she makes questionable decisions, but she is a teen who is thrust into these manipulative situations. Through the authors' writing it was amazing to see how quickly and without provocation people who both know and don't know these teens turn on them. I really enjoyed this book and it made me at least, kind of feel sorry for people of celebrity. The only thing that I found questionable, or just thought didn't jive was the reaction of Jesse's best friend when she doesn't make the show and Jesse does. Maybe I hold people to a higher standard, but when your best friend in the world gets the chance to pay for college you don't hate them for their good fortune. The other thing is the lack of her parent's involvement. They seemed close at the beginning of the book, but they sort of drop off until the ...crap hits the fan. There is a letter/message that the mom writes to Jesse that I

just couldn't believe. I am a huge defendant of Jesse and felt so sorry for her. I absolutely loved this book.

It's slightly dated with references but it's a fun, fast paced read. If you love laguna beach or The Hills, this is your book .

I love this books as it gets inside the mind of today's teens. You won't be disappointed in its interesting story line.

This is one of the best books I have ever read. I hope the authors come out with a sequel. It really looks into what reality television IS and IS NOT. It didn't take me long to read. I highly recommend!

Great idea, which reads like they wrote it in a hurry between movie offers. It deserved more of an effort. They were certainly capable of more than this.

There are certain cliches one comes to expect after reading YA novel after YA novel: the gay best friend, the designer labels, the outcasts and mean girls. The Real Real takes a topic that is perhaps too ripe for satire (and is now getting play in real life with NYC Prep) and lends it an edge, humor and heart that makes it worth picking up and taking to the beach, Hamptons or not. There are, of course, some things I've seen before (the autistic brother, the housecleaner mother), but there's plenty here that makes The Real Real deliciously dishy. Jesse is one of six high school seniors cast for XTV's The Real Hamptons Beach. She is not exactly classic reality TV material (she's not part of the It crowd, she has a boring part-time job at a muffin shop, she doesn't wear the latest designer gear), and had never expected to be chosen, but her and Drew are the non-wealthy cast members, lured in by the \$40,000 scholarship being dangled before them. She's thrilled to have the chance to be alone with her crush, but not so thrilled when her best friend Caitlyn doesn't get cast and she quickly finds that she's signed over a lot more than the right to film her. Instead, "reality" becomes a carefully scripted fiction that McLaughlin and Kraus coyly nail, especially the sleazy, over-the-top producer, Fletch and his beleaguered assistant, Kara. The XTV overlords give these high school students the star treatment, including luxury meals and trips and glamour, but it all comes to a head on their big pre-spring break spring break. Yes, some of the characters here are little more than caricatures of high school types, like Jase, the annoying frat boy, and Trisha, the overly plastic surgieried young starlet, but they are so fun to hate that the authors are forgiven. The twists and

turns of friendship, not to mention the lengths XTV will go to make their show a hit, or the lengths Jesse will go to win back her reputation, make this a winner that manages to indulge a bit in the flashy materialism of Gossip Girl and its ilk but also stand above it. The ending is especially divine, and offered one of my favorite lines, with Nico, who starts out a spoiled brat but winds up being more than just a pretty, label-clad clone, exudes her charm. "'Oh, look!' she says, pointing at the poster like it was a kitten wrapped in puppies sprinkled with ducklings." These kinds of witticisms, mostly aimed at skewering the supposed glamour and hype of reality TV, make The Real Real a cut above the average teen chick lit. I hope there are more YA novels in McLaughlin and Kraus's future.

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