

**Reviewer Username:** Anonymous

**School:** Valencia High School  
Grade)

**Grade:** Sophomore (10<sup>th</sup>

**Book Title:** Paper Butterflies

**Book Author:** Lisa Heathfield

**Rate 1-5 (1-Lowest to 5-Highest) – 4.5**

Paper Butterflies follows a girl named June, who suffers through intense psychological abuse from her stepmother and stepsister, Kathleen and Megan. Her father is unaware of what is happening in his own house and June cannot find the courage to tell someone what her stepfamily is doing to her. She finds comfort in her friend, Blister, and his family. The book consists of “before” and “after” chapters, one where the events of her childhood are described and the other where she is reflecting on them with a Reverend Shaw.

Paper Butterflies was a stunning novel. The author wove together a beautiful narrative, taking us through the highs of June’s experiences and the depths of her despair. In the first few chapters, it was both heartbreaking and rather uncomfortable to see how June was treated by her stepfamily and her peers. There were elements of what happened to June that were relatable, especially the parts where she was in school. The author used those elements to her advantage and magnified them, making us feel June’s pain in a complex way. You felt her discomfort, her embarrassment, her hopelessness and so much more. As the book progresses, it is heartwarming to see June grow stronger and feel the love of a real family, with the help of Blister and his family. As the reader, you desperately want June to be happier, to escape from her abusive family and dread when she has to return home to them. It’s hard to tell how the novel is going to end, right up to the last chapter, which is probably what makes the ending so shocking. June was a complex person, but deeply misunderstood her entire life. The reason I did not give this book a “5” rating is because I feel that the ending could have been a little more final. I understand the reason it ended as it did but perhaps it was my desire not to leave June so soon, and to see her happier for a few more pages.

I would recommend this book to anyone who has the time to read it. It is not a long read, and most definitely worth it. It is unlike any book I have ever read; one of its kind. I think that it sheds light on issues that need to be addressed, while simultaneously illustrating the complexities of the human character beautifully.