

# A NOTE FROM NANCY WERLIN



As I write, it's September 2020, the middle of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and I'd never even *consider* doing what Zoe Rosenthal does—and what I did—back in the before days.

I crowded into a shared hotel room with four strangers I'd met online. We were all attending the same “con” (ALA) and we all had to do it on the cheap (\$26 a night per person—in NYC!). We were writers of children's books. That shared passion kept us up all night every night, talking, laughing, crying, sharing. I'll never forget Debbie wailing “I'm neurotic!” and me saying, “You're a writer, you're *supposed* to be neurotic!”

It was magic. We'd found one another.

That weekend and those friends are where *Zoe Rosenthal* comes from. It's a rom-com about finding your heart-friends, the people you share your weird passion with, the people who get it and who get you. Zoe sneaks off to Dragon Con to see the season premiere of her beloved SF show *Bleeders*. At the con, she meets Liv and Cam and Sebastian and Meldel and Todd—fellow fans—and there's no turning back. How will this affect Zoe's relationship with her super-serious boyfriend, who is *not* a fan? And what about his conniving little sister, who *is* a fan? Stay tuned.

As a side note, I sent Zoe to Dragon Con because I've been there. Honestly, the Dragon Con parade is one of the most joyful events I have ever witnessed. Going to Dragon Con cemented my understanding that in order to really get Zoe and her friends, I would have to go to more cons. Next thing you know, I was off to Emerald City Comic Con with my friend Kathleen—both of us in cosplay. Research!

It was a tough job, but someone had to do it.

I'm smiling as I write, but I'm also sad. Will those crowded, joyful days come again—for all of us who love to gather with other people who love what we love? I have to hope so.

I *have* to hope so.

Love, Nancy

