



Name Me Nobody

Lois-Ann Yamanaka

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Named after Emmylou Harris because her mother used to "do it" to the Profile album, 14-year-old Emi-Lou Kaya feels like a nobody in her Hawaiian town: "I'm not smart enough to be a nerd. I'm not stink enough to be a turd. I fall somewhere right below the band geeks and right above the zeroes." Abandoned by her mother at age three, Emi-Lou hasn't a clue as to who her father might be, and on top of all this, she is overweight. (The popular Japanese girls at school call her Emi-lump, Emi-oink, or Emi-fat.) Her only salvation is the strength of the hard-as-nails but loving grandmother who raised her, and the feisty spirit of her best friend Yvonne. It is Yvonne who renames the dynamic duo Von and Louie, and who puts Emi-Lou on a strict weight-loss regimen. ("Von always says she's the tough outward and I'm the tough inward.") But Emi-Lou starts to worry about losing her touchstone when Von begins spending a little too much time with Babes, an older girl from the softball team. Rumors abound that her soul sister is a "butchie," and when Emi-Lou suspects it's true, she becomes desperate to get Von back to "normal" and back to her role as best friend. With dialogue that sparks with the rhythms of pidgin (Hawaiian Creole English), this compelling novel explores sexuality, racism, and the troubled waters of establishing one's own identity. Lois-Ann Yamanaka, author of the equally funny and insightful *Wild Meat* and *Bully Burgers*, creates in Emi-Lou a character as complex and lovely as the Hawaiian landscape itself. (Ages 13 and older) --Brangien Davis

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