Almost-15-year-old Austin Gray is tired of standing at the curb and watching the parade pass her by. Literally. She decides this is the year she'll ride on the hood of a shiny pickup truck in the annual parade, waving to the crowd and finally showing the town bully that she's got what it takes to be the Sweetheart of Prosper County.

But far from simply being a beauty contest, becoming Sweetheart involves participation in the Future Farmers of America (FFA), raising an animal, and hunting or fishing. Austin will do almost anything to become Sweetheart, and has the support of her oldest friend, Maribel, her new FFA friends (including the reigning Sweetheart, and a quiet, cute cowboy), an evangelical Elvis impersonator, a mysterious Cajun outcast, and a rooster named Charles Dickens. If only her momma would stop overprotecting her,
and start letting Austin live her own life. But Austin can’t move on until Momma moves on, too—and lets the grief of losing Austin’s daddy several years before out into the open.

Here is a bighearted story that will leave readers agreeing with Austin that sometimes, it’s not what you ride, it’s how you roll.

**Personal Review: The Sweetheart of Prosper County by Jill S. Alexander**

Austin Gray doesn't have a lot of things at the beginning of The Sweetheart of Prosper County (2009) by Jill S. Alexander. She doesn't have a blue-ribbon-winning sow. She doesn't have a deer hunting license, or a signature wave. And she definitely doesn't have a mound of cleavage.

What Austin does have is a plan.

Austin is almost as tired of waiting for someone else to pull her into the annual Christmas parade as she is of being the butt of Dean Ottmer's jokes and Austin has a surefire way to fix both her problems: become a hood ornament/Sweetheart in the No-Jesus Christmas Parade.

The plan is pretty simple: join Future Farmers of America, raise a blue-ribbon-winning animal, learn to hunt or fish, and say hello to her new role as a member of the confident, parade royalty that are able to shrug off Dean Ottmer's bullying and taunts. Easy as pie with a little help from her best friend and her momma.

Things soon get complicated (and exciting) when Austin acquires a chicken named Charles Dickens and befriends the FFA crowd. Before she knows it, what had started as a mission for Austin becomes a lifestyle as her dream of becoming the sweetheart of Prosper County forces Austin and her momma to rethink how they deal with little things like annoying neighbors and bigger things like the death of Austin's father years before.

As a New York City native, reading about Austin's world was almost like reading about another country. In the beginning I wasn't sure what to expect. But this book was also disarming in the best possible way. Austin is an open-minded and mellow (except when it comes to Dean Ottmer) character and the book absorbs those qualities.

The book mentions religion a lot (one of the awesome secondary characters is an Elvis impersonator with an Evangelical side) but not in a self-important or righteous way--it's just a part of who these people are. And, really, that's how most things should be treated in a book be it cultural, religious or otherwise.
Alexander is a Texas native and she adds a lot of that flavor to The Sweetheart of Prosper County. Readers will be able to hear the twang and feel that Texan charm in Austin's narration and the story itself. The plot is well-paced and delightfully fun while still having some weight to it.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
The Sweetheart of Prosper County by Jill S. Alexander 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!