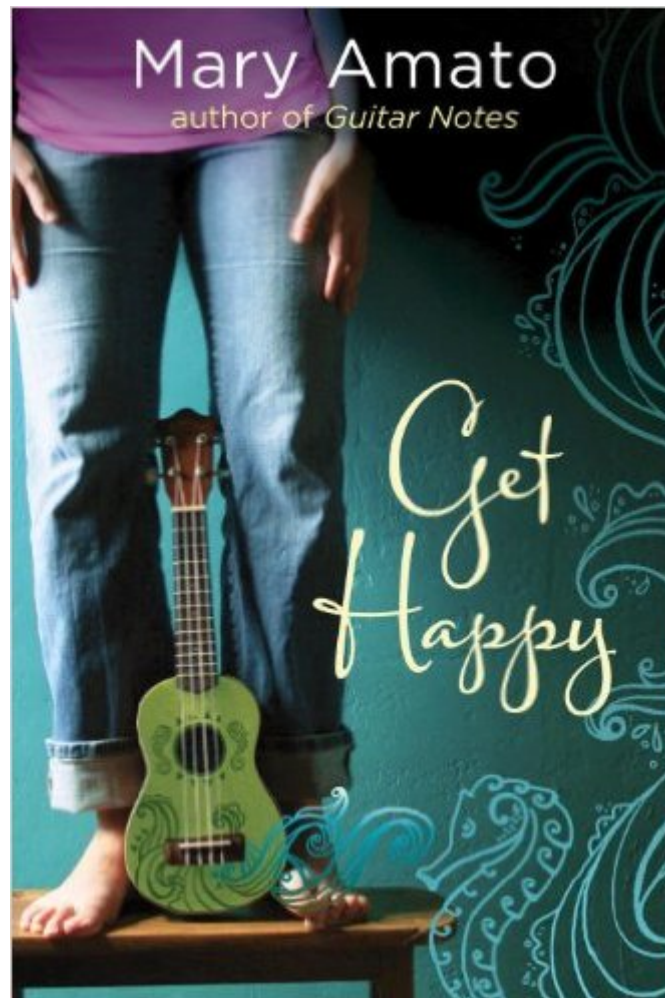


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Get Happy



Synopsis

In this poignant, realistic, contemporary YA by a state master list star, perfect for fans of Sarah Dessen and Gayle Forman, a young songwriter builds a substitute family with her friends in place of the broken family she grew up with. Minerva has been raised by her single mother after her father left them both. On her 17th birthday, she is shocked to discover that he has been trying to keep in touch, but her mother has been sabotaging his attempts. Furious at her mom, she begins to investigate her dad, a famous marine biologist, only to discover that he has a new family, including a beloved, and perfect, stepdaughter--a girl Minerva already knows and despises. As she makes her way, trying to build her performing and songwriting career, her jealousy takes over and threatens to derail her life completely. It is only through the efforts of her best friend, Fin, and the introduction of Hayes, a new young man in her life, that she is able to see clearly who she is and who makes up her family. You may visit Mary Amato at either www.maryamato.com or www.thrumsociety.com, or follow her on Twitter @MaryAmato. Releases simultaneously in electronic book format (ISBN 9781606845233).

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 760 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: EgmontUSA (October 28, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1606845225

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Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.9 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (15 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #751,211 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Stepfamilies #173 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Performing Arts > Music #192 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Stepfamilies

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Get Happy is a super-short read. It's only 256 pages, and the spacing makes it even shorter than

that sounds. To add to that, we have Minerva's song lyrics at the end of most chapters, and the last of those 256 pages has those lyrics again, this time with the musical chords. So the good news is, it only took me like two and a half hours to read Get Happy. But the bad news, sadly, is that this short length means that nothing really happens, and nothing is as complex as I would like, making this a very underwhelming read for me. The main storyline is the one about Minerva's family; her search for her father and the discoveries about her mother and all of their past. That storyline isn't bad... it's just nothing new; it's a very basic story that I've read a million times before. I found Minerva's reactions to all of this to be kind of melodramatic, to be honest; it might be just because I've read so many similar stories, or because Minerva reads so young (younger than the 16 she's supposed to be), but I didn't find what happened to be big enough to warrant such extreme reactions. I just don't think this is enough to carry the story. And with the strong focus on all of this, I found the developments towards the ending to be lacking: we never get to see what happens between her father and stepsister. Minerva and her best friend Finn work at Get Happy, where they dress up as mermaids, pirates, etc. to entertain kids at birthday parties. That whole idea is cute, and some of those scenes are pretty entertaining. It's a bit contrived how the two of them, as well as the two other characters, Cassie and Hayes, always ride together and have to entertain parties at the exact same times, but it serves the purpose of showing how they all interact.

Set in Evanston, just outside of Chicago Get Happy is a delightfully quirky and heartwarming story that I think many people will enjoy. Minerva and her best friend Finn have that typical teenage banter that's filled with dry humor and endless sarcasm - all things that I love. It's her birthday and all Minerva wants is this ukele that she's been eyeing for ages. She doesn't get it. Instead she receives a sweater from her mother - so not an uke. She also receives an unexpected gift from her absentee father that sends her into a tailspin and she's not quite sure what to make of it. She doesn't disclose any of this to her mother who has an "off limits" attitude about the topic of her father. That same day, Finn convinces her to try out for Get Happy with him. It's a welcome distraction to audition for this business where they dress up as characters and sing for kids birthday parties. At the audition, Minerva and Finn meet Hayes and Cassie. These four are such a funny group together led by the business owner Joy who's a bit of a character herself. Some of the funniest stuff in the book happens during the Get Happy birthday parties and Minerva's first experience is hysterical!! I really liked Minerva, a remarkable songwriter who pours her emotions into her words. Her curiosity about her father overshadows a lot of the book and brings out the insecurities she has felt all this time but never admitted aloud. She's curious but she can't

bring herself to reach out to him directly. Since her mother refuses to discuss him, she operates covertly to find any information she can about him. The more she finds, the more confused she feels about him. It all comes down to a very uncomfortable scenario that forces Minerva to confront her family for the truth.

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