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The Meaning Of Maggie



Synopsis

As befits a future President of the United States of America, Maggie Mayfield has decided to write a memoir of the past year of her life. And what a banner year it's been! During this period, she's Student of the Month on a regular basis, an official shareholder in Coca-Cola stock, and defending Science Fair champion. Most importantly, though, this is the year Maggie has to pull up her bootstraps (the family motto) and finally learn why her cool dude dad is in a wheelchair, no matter how scary that is. Author Megan Jean Govern, herself the daughter of a dad with multiple sclerosis, writes with the funny grace and assured prose of a new literary star. A portion of the proceeds of the sale of this book will be donated to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Book Information

Paperback: 232 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (83 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #203,302 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Multiple Sclerosis](#) #171 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Illness](#) #287 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Health > Diseases](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Maggie, a super-smart, very organized, overachieving 11-year-old, was shocked. Her dad had quit his job after his legs "fell asleep" (as Maggie calls it), and their mom had gotten a job. Her dad stays at home, in a wheel chair, working around the house. It is a new scenario for Maggie. She isn't used to her dad being around all the time, and her mom working. When her science project approached, she decided to do it on what had made her dad's legs fall asleep "multiple sclerosis. Maggie is determined to find a cure for her dad's disease. What she finds out is how great her family really is and she can survive getting a

in school. First of all I'll say I am a bit biased on this book. The "super-smart, very organized, overachieving 11-year-old" in my description above sounds a lot like me (only I'm 12 but just go back a year). Speaking as a "precocious" kid (as I am tired of being called), Ms. Sovern has gotten Maggie's personality down pat. I felt like I was with her the whole entire time, cheering her on! I like the sibling rivalry between Maggie and her sisters. It felt like a real situation and the characters were believable. I think this is another one of those "Crossover" books "one written on a YA reading level but the story is more for advanced middle-grade readers (as an advanced middle-grade reader, this makes me more biased ;)). The book ends extremely well, and although there are some loose ends, they are the right kind that leaves you thinking about what happens next, but you know the characters will be okay. I think that Ms. Sovern has a very distinct writing voice. I would read other books by her. *NOTE I got an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review

This book's suggested reading age is for 9--12. This book mentions sex, "cocktails," marijuana, cigarettes, and finally--the one that really upsets me and got me to write this review: that there's no Easter bunny or Santa--you just don't do that, ever! Such bad form. How can this book's age range include a 9 year old? Or even 10? Especially since many younger kids read at higher reading levels. This book is very confusing. It's easy writing and vocabulary for a younger reader, but the subject matter is for older kids. Excerpts: Page 71: "I would've thought this was s-e-x on the c-o-u-c-h. But now I knew that it wasn't. They were just wrapped in a sleep hug." (talking about her older sister and a boy.) Page 142: "'Who wants a cocktail? I want a cocktail.' He pointed at Mom. 'Do you want a cocktail?' Mom stood up. 'I would love a cocktail. I'll go fix us cocktails.' Cocktails? REALLY?... Tiffany called out to Mom. 'I'll take a cocktail.' Layla nodded. 'Me, too.' I felt myself beginning to cave. Sometimes on New Year's Eve, Dad let us all have a sip of his champagne while Mom wasn't looking... I raised my hand. 'Make mine a double.' Dad yelled back to Mom. 'Honey, the girls want cocktails.' 'Okay. Two rum-and-Cokes and three Shirley Temples.' Great. A mock-tail. She better give me two cherries. I needed two cherries." Page 19: "'How about you fix your dear old dad a cocktail?'... 'Can I help?' Mom asked. 'Dad wants a cocktail. Stat.' 'Good. So does Mom.'" Page 205: "I felt we could both use a laugh so I finally broke the silence. 'Man, I could really use a cigarette.'" Page 209: "Dad squeezed my hand and said, 'Doc, at least tell me you can get me medical marijuana.'" *** Page 144: She looked at me with the same look on her face that she had when she broke the news to me about the Easter Bunny." (And then there's a footnote with this sentence, saying, "Just like with Santa--highly suspicious.") So yeah; I'm disappointed this book is

offered to a 9 year old. Or 10. Or maybe even 11? It's not that it's a "bad" book. It's actually a great story. Just too many inappropriate parts for younger readers. And 1-star only from me--for the author's taboo decision to write down and ruin my kid's belief in the Easter bunny and Santa.

This is a book which takes you by the hand and pulls you along. You have to keep reading because you want to keep listening -- Maggie is talking in your ear and you don't want to turn away. Within pages you will fall in love with Maggie, and I promise you by the end of the book you will love all the Mayfields, and wish a bit that they would let you come visit more often. The Meaning of Maggie is delightfully funny. I spent the entire time I was reading it with a big stupid grin on my face, laughing out loud. (Meaning: don't read this in public unless you're ok smiling hugely and cackling in front of strangers.)

It's hard to find anything bad to say about this sweet, well told story. The Meaning of Maggie tells us about a year in the life of 11 year old Maggie Mayfield as she struggles with middle school, annoying sisters, and her father's failing health. Maggie is smart, funny, and honest to a fault. She bashes through life like a bull in a china shop, surrounded by a family that loves and supports her. I loved this authentic portrayal of a working class family, and felt that Maggie's relationships with her sisters were simply stellar. It's the love that all these people share and their unfailing commitment to each other that will most likely inspire readers of all ages. If I can find any fault with this memorable family story, it's that sometimes I found it difficult to believe that a young girl as smart and aware as Maggie could be so clueless about some very practical things. I became frustrated with her parents for not including her and for failing to provide her with accurate information about her father's illness. It made me question why brilliant young Maggie would stand for this? Why would she not be more aware of what was going on in her own family? This is a girl that prides herself on knowing everything. Despite a few character inconsistencies, this novel is an enthusiastic recommend for any young reader. It's an inspiring story soaked in realism and filled with heart.

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