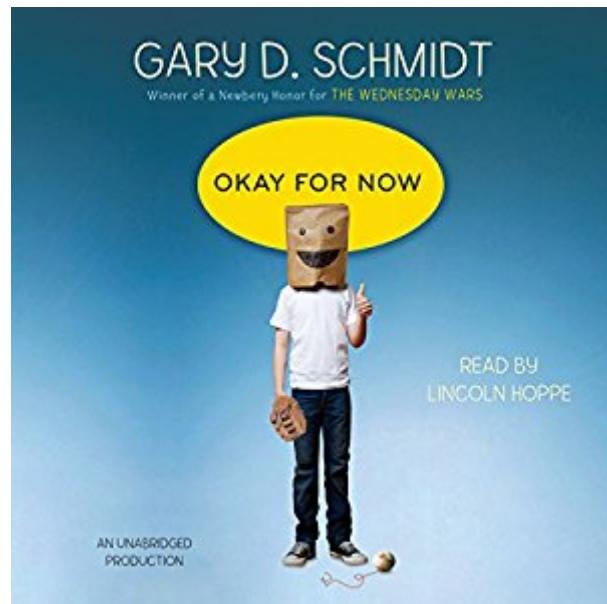


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# Okay For Now



## **Synopsis**

As a 14-year-old who just moved to a new town, with no friends and a louse for an older brother, Doug Swieteck has all the stats stacked against him. So begins a coming-of-age masterwork full of equal parts comedy and tragedy from Newbery Honor winner Gary D. Schmidt. As Doug struggles to be more than the skinny thug that his teachers and the police think him to be, he finds an unlikely ally in Lil Spicer, a fiery young lady who smelled like daisies would smell if they were growing in a big field under a clearing sky after a rain. In Lil, Doug finds the strength to endure an abusive father, the suspicions of a whole town, and the return of his oldest brother, forever scarred, from Vietnam. Together, they find a safe haven in the local library, inspiration in learning about the plates of John James Audubon's birds, and a hilarious adventure on a Broadway stage. In this stunning novel, Schmidt expertly weaves multiple themes of loss and recovery in a story teeming with distinctive, unusual characters and invaluable lessons about love, creativity, and survival.

## **Book Information**

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 9 hours and 16 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Listening Library

Audible.com Release Date: April 5, 2011

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B004V6ARZC

Best Sellers Rank: #7 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Performing Arts > Theater  
#26 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 20th Century #65 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Children's Books > Animals

## **Customer Reviews**

I loved this book too. Usually companion books to the original story, in this case *The Wednesday Wars*, are not as good or even horrible. Also a National Book Finalist like the original, this book stood on its own as a great novel. There is less emphasis on literature but *Jane Eyre* is brought into the story as well as art/drawing, science and geography. It is set in the 1968-1969 in the era of the Vietnam War and the Apollo 11 mission to the moon. The main character Doug, moves with his very poor family from NYC to a small town so his drunk abusive father can find work. Starting out as an

outcast due to his family's financial situation and his brother and father's criminal reputation, Doug is taken under the wing of a few citizens of Maryville like the town librarian, his science teacher, and the grocer's daughter who see him as his own person, a good person with talents and intelligence that no one has tried to nurture and grow until now. They help him get through the abuse and neglect he has to endure as well the town suspicion of his family for the store robberies occurring around town and his older brother coming home from the war with life-changing physical and mental injuries. This was also written as a children's book but as an adult I still thoroughly enjoyed it.

I am 40+ and enjoy a broad spectrum of genres in literature. I find however, that when I want a good fiction book to escape with, many adult books seem to lack a certain essence of insight and enrichment that I do find in many stories written for teens. I am amazed at Gary Schmidt's talent to create very different stories to present a variety of life's hardships candidly, without any sugar coating, and yet finds a way to show the reader some sweetness and hope through life's challenges. I loved Wednesday Wars and consider it one of my favorite books in a list of my top ten or so. This has definitely been added to that list! I found it to be cathartic, as someone who grew up with an unstable and abusive parent. I cannot recommend Schmidt's Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy enough either, totally different type of story again, but your life will be better for reading it. Also if you find these stories enriching a couple from other authors I recommend are: The Book Thief by Markus Zusak - a must!!! Tangerine and a Plague Year by Edward Bloor, and The Fault in Our Stars by John Green, I could name a bunch of others.

What a lovely surprise this book was, and just what the doctor ordered, just as the grey slog of Winter sets in. I had read some very positive reviews, but from the book summary, I couldn't gather much that would excite me. Still, after a series of daunting, nightmarish thrillers, it was time for something decidedly milder. *OKAY FOR NOW* is a wonderful little coming-of-age story that very much reminded me of the TV series, *THE WONDER YEARS* (if you don't know it, go and find it!). The story centers around Doug, a thirteen-year-old living in a small town in 1968. If you are thinking, as I was, what do I have in common with a teenager in the 60s, you'll be surprised! Though there is a generational gap, as well as a historical one, Doug is a "swell" guy with just the right amount of sass and humility. I won't go into the plot, others have done that wonderfully already, but I do want to say that this is one of the nicest books I've read all year, and one I just know I will be recommending to all manner of readers.

There is a lot that goes on in this book, and I genuinely have mixed feelings about it. At the beginning, I was bored. I had a really difficult time connecting with the characters, including the protagonist, and didn't care much about his life, friends, move, or family. About half-way through I began to feel differently and was enjoying the novel, especially the different cultural references and the subplots about his brothers (one is injured in Vietnam, the other is accused of several thefts). I found his parents infuriating - his father had no redeeming qualities, and in the end (spoiler alert) when he does the right thing, I just feel like it's too little, too late, and it angers me how everyone seems willing to forgive and forget. I also have little patience for the mother. But the boy is endearing and his friendship with the girl is interesting, thus I kept reading. Midway, I started to like the MC and get into the plot, until a certain twist towards the end (spoiler - it involves a character \*suddenly\* coming down with cancer like it's a stomach bug at exactly the right moment). That ruined the book for me. It felt trite and contrived, like the author was using cancer to squeeze just a little more emotion out of the reader. Cancer felt like a plot device, and not a good one, nor a necessary one. A stomach bug could've caused the same outcome in regards to the play (which he quits right after? WTF? That's not quite how theatre works) and been more believable/less obnoxious. Rating: The beginning and end each get two stars and the middle gets four, thus the three stars I gave it. Edit: You may have noticed I've upgraded it to four stars. This is because so much of the book has managed to stick with me, which has made me go back and re-read. I stand by what I say above, but at the same time, I feel the layers and the nuances, in addition to lasting effect, warrant an extra star.

I simply love this book! It's one of my favorites to read aloud to students. They stayed tuned in throughout the whole book. We keep guessing what might happen as we progress, and it's fun to see how the students feel about the different characters.

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