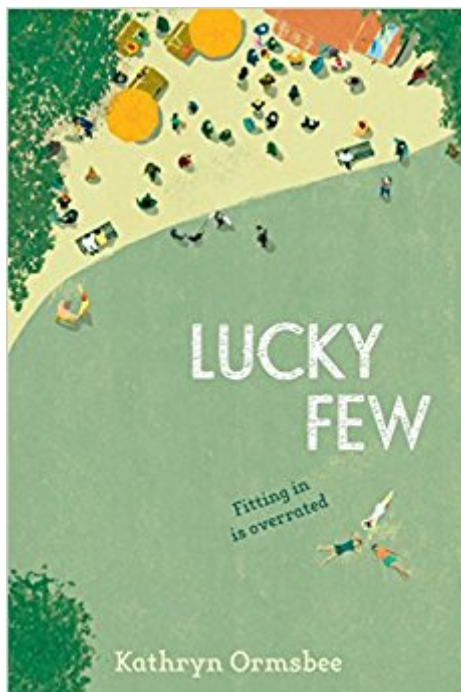


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Lucky Few



Synopsis

In the tradition of *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* comes a hilarious, madcap, and “quirky novel” (School Library Journal) about a group of oddball teens struggling to find themselves when facing their own mortality. The life of homeschooler Stevie Hart gets all shook up when she meets Max, a strange boy who survived a freak near-fatal accident and is now obsessed with death. He enlists her and her best friend, Sanger, to help him complete his absurd “23 Ways to Fake My Death Without Dying” checklist. What starts off as fun begins spiraling downward when Stevie’s diabetes sabotages her fumbling romance with Max, Sanger announces she’s moving out of state, and then death—real death—cuts a little too close to home.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up—Stevie Hart first meets Max when she finds his dead body in her neighbor’s backyard, or at least she thinks it’s his dead body. It turns out the blood is corn syrup and the death is bogus, just part of Max’s goal of faking his own death 23 different ways. Homeschooled, Stevie doesn’t have a lot of friends, and she isn’t sure she wants to add this strange new neighbor to her small list. Her best friend Sanger disagrees; she has her own reasons for wanting to add Max to their friendship and help him with his checklist. Eventually, Sanger and Max manage to convince Stevie that the plan is worth pursuing, and Max charms his way into her heart. Ormsbee gives readers a sweet, believable romance without weakening the bond between the best girlfriends. Against the backdrop of their fake death checklist, which takes them all over Austin, the three teens

explore friendship, romance, activism, and their own mortality. Sharing fears stemming from near-death experiences, Stevie understands Max's need to face his own anxieties around death. However, when her diabetes leads to another brush with death, Stevie begins to question their project. This quirky novel brings humor, relatable characters, and an inside look into the world of homeschoolers. VERDICT A fun, character-driven novel likely to find readers among fans of realistic fiction. —Genevieve Feldman, San Francisco Public Library --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Ormsbee writes with an occasionally tongue-in-cheek tone that manages to be authentically emotional while delivering a realistic picture of a population that rarely gets much scrutiny in fiction for young adults: home-schoolers. The smart, efficient language features dialogue that pops. A sweet story told with intelligence, humor, and just the right amount of kissing." (Kirkus Reviews, STARRED REVIEW) —"Stevie Hart puts the cool in homeschool. Whip-smart dialogue, top-notch writing, and truly unique characters make for the perfect reading combination: quick pacing and heartaching. This book is alive in so many ways." (David Arnold, bestselling author of Mosquitoland) "LUCKY FEW swings between a wholly immersive search for a hand to hold in the midst of fear and loss, and navigating the vulnerable joy of true friendship and first love — a totally unique, beautifully crafted story at once hilarious and heartbreaking, exhilarating as the waters of Barton Springs. This book absolutely sings, without forsaking the honesty of loneliness and self-doubt — and the bravery it takes to become who we truly are." (Jennifer Longo, author of Six Feet Over It and Up to this Pointe) —"A beautifully written story of loss and acceptance, of humor and tragedy, of finding yourself by losing yourself." (Marci Lyn Curtis, author of The One Thing) "Winsome characters, crackling dialogue, and an effortlessly enjoyable writing style help this one stand out in the crowded contemporary YA marketplace." (Booklist, STARRED REVIEW) —"This second novel from Ormsbee shines in its offbeat humor." — (Publishers Weekly)

I received this via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. Kathryn Ormsbee's *Lucky Few* follows an epic end of the school year and start of the summer for a homeschooler named Stevie. She isn't your stereotypical homeschooler by her own admission, she's normal. Between trying to save a local pool from being polluted, being best friends with a loyal genius, and assisting the new boy-next-door in his attempt to fake his death 23 different ways, she's totally your average sixteen year old. But as

she's quick to dismiss the idea of what a homeschooler is known to be, she's starting to find out she might not be so different from all those people that are so quick to judge her. Lucky Few grabs you with an opinionated narrator that quickly lays down all the different "types" of homeschoolers there are and how she differs from them. Stevie is wonderfully fleshed out with her all her failings making her so utterly human and relatable. When she finally meets Max, pretending to be dead in the yard next door, they both, along with Sanger are drawn into a summer long game of helping Max fake his death in increasingly difficult and incredible ways. Ormsbee captures the budding relationship between Stevie and Max without having it overshadow the death challenge and the other relationships Stevie has and maintains with her family and friends. Overall, Lucky Few was an adorable, quirky read that I couldn't put down.

This story is the perfect poolside read. => For fans of: quirky comedies, Mosquitoland, Harold and Maude, and Austin, TX. Stevie and Sanger are joined by newcomer Max who has a list of things to do before the summer ends. This book is reminiscent of a quintessential summer break in high school. I absolutely adore all the characters. With Sanger's wit, Stevie's passion, and Max's maxness, how do you pick a favorite?! And then there's Joel. Lucky Few has all the elements of the perfect indie film, including the bittersweet conclusion. Lastly, Stevie's 4 different types of homeschoolers is the best. Though she discovers that maybe lumping people into stereotypes is not as simple and accurate as she thought.

Pitch-perfect, a lovely girl-girl best friendship, and really intriguing looks at death, loss, and acceptance. Beautiful book!

Smart, quirky, and in the end powerfully real-this book left me with all the feels. With an original point of view and a very relatable and likable voice, I couldn't put the book down.

Very enjoyable and entertaining. Realistic characters that you like and engage with. Serious issues discussed as well. The book makes you think. How do I view death? What makes life worth living? I loved this book and would strongly recommend it to a friend.

Reading this book is like taking a leisurely stroll through all the best parts of a John Hughes film, with a few scenic detours through the cult classic Harold and Maude.

The story is from the POV of Stevie, a “Normal Type” homeschooler with no shortage of dry wit and teenage pessimism. She and her best friend Sanger, who (1) drives a lemon-yellow Fiat and (2) is basically my patronus, join forces with Max, the new kid in town, as he attempts to fake his death in 23 ways (without actually dying). Here are some things I love about this book, in no particular order:

1. Sanger (okay, well slightly particular order, because Sanger is the best). She’s cocky, smart as a whip, and devastatingly clever. So basically, all my favorite things. She also takes a ridiculously long time to text, rocks red aviators, and her favorite composer is Grieg. I could probably start a Sanger fan club. In fact, maybe I will. But moving on.
2. Stevie’s friendship with Sanger. These two have been through a lot together, but their friendship has only grown more flavorful with age. I love their loyalty and honesty with each other, and I felt it was a beautiful, authentic look at what it’s really like to have a best friend rather than the watered-down version of female friendships that popular media constantly tries to feed us.
3. Stevie’s activism. Stevie’s favorite spot in Austin is Barton Springs, which is in danger of being destroyed by a big corporation’s encroaching pollution. For Stevie, Barton Springs is so much more than a public pool—it’s her personal safe haven, tied to precious memories with Sanger.
4. Max’s fake deaths. I mean, they are kind of the driving force of the entire plot. Some of my favorites include Allergic Reaction (Max eats a ghost pepper) and Scared to Death (there are Abraham Lincoln and Prince Charles masks involved). It’s not all fun and games though. The three teens figure out pretty quickly that flirting with morbidity is asking for trouble.
5. The kissing. Kirkus says there’s just the right amount of it, and I wholeheartedly agree. (Well, okay, I wouldn’t complain if there were a little more.)

Overall, this book is clever, genuine, heartwarming, heartbreaking, and brimming with the best kind of gallows humor. It’s impossible to pick any single theme that this book encompasses—there are so many important ideas woven skillfully into the narrative. And really, that impossibility is representative of one of the story’s central questions. At the beginning, Stevie categorizes homeschoolers into four neat groups, but by the end she’s asking herself why it is that we are so eager to pigeonhole our fellow humans, when nothing else in the world can be categorized so easily. It’s something that bears thinking about—whether you’re a teen or an adult.

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