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Saving Francesca



Synopsis

Before there was Eleanor and Park, there was Francesca and Will. A compelling story of romance, family, and friendship, with humor and heart, perfect for fans of If I Stay, The Spectacular Now, and Looking for Alaska. Francesca is stuck at St. Sebastian's, a boys' school that pretends it's coed by giving the girls their own bathroom. Her only female companions are an ultra-feminist, a rumored slut, and an impossibly dorky accordion player. The boys are no better, from Thomas, who specializes in musical burping, to Will, the perpetually frowning, smug moron that Francesca can't seem to stop thinking about. Then there's Francesca's mother, who always thinks she knows what's best for Francesca "until she is suddenly stricken with acute depression, leaving Francesca lost, alone, and without an inkling of who she really is. Simultaneously humorous, poignant, and impossible to put down, this is the story of a girl who must summon the strength to save her family, her social life, and "hardest of all" herself. Melina Marchetta is the Printz-winning author of Jellicoe Road, as well as Looking for Alibrandi and Finnikin of the Rock.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

"This morning, my mother didn't get out of bed." So begins the saga of Francesca Spinelli, the hilarious and achingly real creation of Aussie author Melina Marchetta. Francesca used to think her

biggest problem was transferring to St. Sebastian's--a school only recently turned coed: "What a dream come true, right? Seven hundred and fifty boys and thirty girls? But the reality is that it's either like living in a fish bowl or like you don't exist." But now there's this matter of her usually vibrant and annoyingly optimistic mother Mia refusing to get up in the morning. Her taciturn father doesn't have much to say on the subject, her beloved little brother Luca is anxiously looking to her for answers, and her so-called friends from her old neighborhood seem to have abandoned her. So, Francesca keeps it all inside--her frustration with school (there aren't enough girl's bathrooms and no girl's sports teams); her fear making new friends (with the few girls who do go to St. Sebastian's); and her overwhelming hatred of the smug Will Trombal, who despite being completely infuriating, is also incredibly cute. Keeping this to herself when all she wants to do is spill it to her mother is killing Francesca, but with Mia trying to make herself well again, Francesca will have to figure out how to save herself. What makes *Saving Francesca* an exceptional standout in a vast field of mediocre teen chick lit is Frankie's painfully nuanced characterization. It has been ten years since high school teacher Marchetta's break out hit, *Looking for Alibrandi*, came out in her native Australia, and the care and precision she took in getting Francesca's voice just right is evident. As a result, there isn't a girl alive that wouldn't feel right at home in Francesca's skin. Her frank observations about boys, with their hygienically-challenged habits and their ineptitude in dealing with the opposite sex, are dead-on and riotously funny. Marchetta deftly balances Francesca's humor with a sympathetic depiction of Mia's struggle with clinical depression, creating a well-rounded novel that will prompt both laughter and tears. Fans can only hope that they won't have to wait another decade for Marchetta to gift them with another of honest and moving story. --Jennifer Hubert --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Sixteen-year-old Francesca's compelling voice will carry readers along during a transitional year in her family and school life. The narrator's vivacious mother falls into a deep depression soon after the teen narrator starts "Year Eleven" at St. Sebastian's, a Sydney boys' school now accepting "but not particularly accommodating to" girls (a teacher refers to the class as "gentlemen

This book is amazing. It gives real insights into mental illness and the consequences, and the writing is phenomenal. If you enjoyed this one, I also recommend Marchetta's other books, especially *JELLYCOE ROAD*. I found this book through a recommendation from an author I know who recommended another of Marchetta's books, and I slowly made my way through Marchetta's

book list. This is probably tied as my favorite. It's also one of the book on the required reading list at my local university for their YA literature class in the English department. So when I say it's good, it's really good. It's also short and a fairly quick read.

4.5 stars

Melina Marchetta is officially one of my favorite authors. I love the way she puts words together, her writing is phenomenal. There are always so many aspects of her stories that are relatable, yet she delivers them in a way that is always interesting and it draws the reader in. Her characters stand out in my mind and not one of them is perfect, each has flaws and individual personalities. I ended up liking characters that normally when you look at them flatly would be semi unlikeable.

This is the story of Francesca, who is discovering who she is. She has always taken her family for granted in the way we all do until things change. Her mother was always so aggravating pushing Francesca to be more, do more, experience more but then everything changed. Her mother suffering from depression stops doing everything and now there is an empty spot in her family where her mother was. This deals with the feelings you have when you discover what you have lost and how to cope with it.-- Ä¢Â œAnd being that happy makes me feel guilty. Because I shouldn't be. Not while my mum is feeling the way she is. How I can dare to be happy is beyond me, and I hate my guts for it.Ä¢Â •You might think a book dealing with depression would be depressing but that is so far from the truth. Frankie remembers all the great things about her mother and family and we get a view of what their life was like before. She is also dealing with the introduction of girls into a previously all-male school. Leaving behind the friends she had before, for a new group of friends. She discovers that maybe her mother was right and that she changed herself to be what her previous friends thought she should be instead of being herself. I loved MiaÄ¢Â ™s (the mother) bits of wisdom that she gave her daughter throughout the years.-- Ä¢Â œPeople with lost personalities will suffer a great deal more than those with lost virginities.Ä¢Â •As Frankie acquires a new group of friends a little at a time she begins to discover who she is again. The banter between all the friends is fun and light and I loved hanging out with the group and seeing the world through their eyes. Each character had a definitive voice and personality and nothing comes instantly.

Francesca notices that things change subtly and then become normal. There are touching moments, especially those with Frankie and her father. My heart totally went out to the family that they were trying to recapture and how each person felt their own guilt over MiaÄ¢Â ™s condition. Marchetta really captured how a family cope and try to move on together, how friends can influence and change your life a little at a time and vice versa.-- Ä¢Â œI think I'm a bit in love with these girls. They make me feel giddy. Like I haven't a care in the world. Like I'm fearless. Like I used to

be. There is also a very cute love interest in the mix as well and I have to say that added a lot to the story. No worries there isn't an insta-love or anything as trite as that. There are building friendships and budding love interests. They are all interesting and well developed and I relished every moment of the growing story line. All I can say was that I was greatly touched by this story and even though it was a little deep it was done so well that I never felt bogged down in the heaviness of it. What a great contemporary story.

Warning: This review does not do the book justice...and then she'll get out of bed and we'll live happily ever after...I know that I have changed a lot since high-school. I use to pound on the make-up, dye my hair fire red with hot pink highlights, listened to unpopular music and wanted expensive s*** to look cool. I was pathetic, that was my way of hiding all the s*** I was going through as a teenager. I came from a broken home, with parents that were never there for me and no one to lean on. Looking back now I think, "How did I survive? How did I make it to where I am now?" Kicking my own ass is what changed me, what made me fight harder and harder for myself. Francesca is fighting hard to get her life back to normal. Her mother refuses to get out of bed, her father will not tell her what is going on. Her little brother is lost, not knowing how to feel, and Francesca has started at a new school that happens to be an all boys school and she feels more out of place and more lost than ever before. The group of girls she is friends with, where outcast in her old school, and she quickly learns they are not all as bad as she thought. She feels like she is loosing the battle on her normal life, and doesn't know what to do or how to handle it. Everything is slipping through her hands, then she learns some devastating details and decides it is time to put her foot down and fight. She fights for her life, her brother, her father and most of all her mother. She finds first love, and the book is not saturated with young lust, but of an innocent attraction between her and a boy she least expected to fall for. When I think of you, I think of future stuff. I think of "this is it" and I'm not suppose to think "this is it" at my age. I don't look at you and think "Nice!" I look at you and think, oh my God, I want to hold her and never let her go. She finds her real friends along the way. They are a true group of misfits, one fights for their rights at school, like a tampon dispenser, to an old friend turned enemy turned friend, and one that just wants to be accepted my Francesca. And she realizes how much different she was in her old school with her old friends. It's how they've stayed popular for so long. By not doing anything that will make them look like fools. They never leave home without their safety nets and I think, good for them, but the things with safety nets is this. I got tangled in them so many times that the Stella girls always seemed to leave me dangling, upside down, to the point where I almost couldn't breathe anymore. I wasn't expecting

to fall in love with this book, in fact I read this book for a challenge and love that I loved every minute of it.

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