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# Some Kind Of Happiness



## Synopsis

Reality and fantasy collide in this “beautiful and reflective tale” (Booklist, starred review) for fans of *Counting by 7s* and *Bridge to Terabithia*, about a girl who must save a magical make-believe world in order to save herself. Things Finley Hart doesn’t want to talk about: -Her parents, who are having problems. (But they pretend like they’re not.) -Being sent to her grandparents’ house for the summer. -Never having met said grandparents. -Her blue days when life feels overwhelming, and it’s hard to keep her head up. (This happens a lot.) Finley’s only retreat is the Everwood, a forest kingdom that exists in the pages of her notebook. Until she discovers the endless woods behind her grandparents’ house and realizes the Everwood is real and holds more mysteries than she’s ever imagined, including a family of pirates that she isn’t allowed to talk to, trees covered in ash, and a strange old wizard living in a house made of bones. With the help of her cousins, Finley sets out on a mission to save the dying Everwood and uncover its secrets. But as the mysteries pile up and the frightening sadness inside her grows, Finley realizes that if she wants to save the Everwood, she’ll first have to save herself.

## Book Information

Paperback: 400 pages

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4-7-A multilayered plot, engaging characters, and more than one mystery highlight this ambitious

novel. Eleven-year-old Finley spends a summer with her grandparents and a swarm of other relatives from her father's side of the family. Suffering from depression which is amplified by her parents' likely divorce, Finley escapes through writing. She creates elaborate tales about the magical Everwood forest, featuring herself as "the orphan girl." Everwood tales, neatly inserted into the narrative, parallel her own worries and triumphs. Exploring the real forest near her grandparents' home brings her hope; so do new friendships with her cousins and a trio of wild neighbor boys. As she defies her grandparents and tries to keep her debilitating "blue days" a secret, Finley also discovers family secrets from the past. She narrates most of the story in first person, present tense, with short paragraphs, formal language, and careful observation that establish her as an astute, intelligent, and very interesting protagonist. Finley inserts lists that help her make sense of things, along with frequent parenthetical asides that reveal her continual self-doubts. Multiple supporting characters are well drawn, becoming further developed as Finley learns more about each one. The central mystery, involving a fire, takes a while to resolve, but it's really Finley and her developing relationships with her extended family members that resonate most strongly. VERDICT Though the measured pace and mix of narrative styles will challenge some readers, Legrand successfully weaves it all into a rich, nuanced tale that culminates in a convincing and satisfying conclusion.-Steven Engelfried, Wilsonville Public Library, OR

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\*Nominated by the Mystery Writers of America for the 2017 Edgar Award\* "Legrand handles the tough subject of childhood mental health gently and honestly, and. . . paints a realistic picture of a girl trying to figure out what's wrong with her. Finley's quest to uncover family secrets reveals not just what kept her father away from his relatives but how a family sticks together through good times and bad." (Publishers Weekly, Starred Review)"A quiet magic is at work in Legrand's novel, in which she adeptly interweaves Finley's imaginative writing with the real-life narrative, underpinning all with an appeal to honesty and self-acceptance. This beautiful and reflective tale carries echoes of Katherine Patterson's *The Bridge to Terabithia* (1977) and will resonate with thoughtful readers who enjoy pondering life's bigger questions." (Booklist, STARRED REVIEW)"A multilayered plot, engaging characters, and more than one mystery highlight this ambitious novel. . . . Legrand successfully weaves it all into a rich, nuanced tale that culminates in a convincing and satisfying conclusion." (School Library Journal)"Legrand has pulled off a difficult trick in this novel. She's constructed a story-within-a-story fairy tale that's

utterly compelling but sounds as though it was written by an 11-year-old girl. . . . A layered, thoughtful exploration." (Kirkus Reviews) "Imagine if Wednesday Addams had written THE PRINCESS BRIDE and you've got some kind of idea of SOME KIND OF HAPPINESS • a dark and meditative fantasy written with Claire Legrand's signature light touch." (Tim Federle, author of BETTER NATE THAN EVER) "Finley's marvelous adventure will resonate with anyone who has battled a broken heart through the power of story. The courage she finds along the way will leave you cheering - and believing in magic - even in the darkest part of the woods." (Natalie Lloyd, author of A SNICKER OF MAGIC)

This book is worthy of the highest praise for its skillful treatment of a most important topic that has been hidden in the shadows for far too long. *Some Kind of Happiness* is a book with an insightful look into adolescent anxiety and depression enveloped in an intriguing tale of family secrets and lies and how they shape or misshape our lives. Ms. Legrand's writing skillfully provides us with a touchstone to examine and explore this topic from which many have shied away while providing the reader with bright rays of hope for treatment and the possibilities of recovery. I can see this book becoming a platform for parents, educators, and therapists to openly discuss this often misunderstood and debilitating illness with adolescents and adults alike. For this reader, the fun part of the book was Ms. Legrand's elegant word pictures woven throughout the story; word pictures of days gone by that brought back fond and cherished memories of my own childhood. A great read for all.

This is a wonderfully intimate story about a young girl making the difficult and delicate transition from childhood to adulthood, learning in the process that she cannot depend on adults or peers, nor can she be entirely self-sufficient. At some point we must risk opening ourselves up, acknowledging our vulnerabilities and sharing our various strengths to support each other. The opening scenes, as the protagonist meets and moves in with her estranged family members, has a sense of creepiness underlying the artificially perfect, clenched smiles that suggests the stories of Shirley Jackson in some ways. But this is not a horror story, nor is it a fantasy, although there are fantasy episodes sprinkled throughout. It's a painfully realistic account of childhood mental illness and of the emotional and physical toll withheld secrets can take on both those who keep them and those from whom they are kept. The story is beautifully paced, building up quietly but implacably to several gut-wrenching climaxes, all depicted at the deepest psychological level and without a trace of sentimentality or melodrama. It is to her credit that the author achieves a satisfying conclusion

without feeling the need to tie up all the loose threads or imply that difficult, entrenched problems can be solved in a pat, fairy-tale ending. It's a story not so much of triumph over adversity as it is one of hope, majesty, and transcendence in the midst of pain and sorrow.

Claire hits the tone and the storyline just perfectly on this one. The combination of realistic segments and more fairy-tale style portions were an ideal mix for the pacing and character development. The story is amazing, and it's also a great way to help kids (and adults) understand what it is like to have anxiety and depression as a child. I know I was able to relate to all of the characters, and I think kids will really love reading it.

This uplifting, big-hearted book is for anyone who experiences "blue days." I gave it to a 13-year-old girl who identified so strongly with Finley's anxiety and found comfort in the way she uses writing to cope with it. Claire Legrand has a gift for channelling authentic young voices--especially in the story-within-the-story--and I look forward to whatever she writes next!

I've suffered from depression my entire life. I wish this book had been here while I was growing up, but I'm happy that it's here now for children in my position. Excellently written, a book that truly knows what it feels like to be lost in a world that feels hopeless.

What a wonderful surprise. Fantastic quick read that explores emotions that can be tricky to bring up in conversation with the target audience (young adult). This is a classic Legrand written book that blends well developed characters with an intriguing smart storyline.

A wonderful book that encompasses mental illness for all ages. It eloquently covers depression and anxiety for younger readers to understand with a beautiful story spun in. Excellent, quick read.

I am enjoying this book, and will share it with a friend. Not a dark story, but just the right balance. Good pairing with Foxheart, which I also purchased.

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