



My Life in Dioramas

Tara Altebrando

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Twelve-year-old Kate Marino thinks she is a real mastermind. At least when it comes to hatching a plan to dissuade potential buyers from purchasing Big Red, the old farmhouse that has been the only home Kate has ever known, and which her parents must sell in order to downsize.

Kate has not even moved yet, and already her life is changing in unwelcome ways. Every moment and memory seems fleeting. Making dioramas of the people she loves in the places that she holds dear gives Kate a sense of calm. But there's no way Kate is going to move now, when her dance troupe is finally going to compete at Dance Nation, and her best friend is starting to replace her with her enemy, Megan. It may take several bags of stink, the help of her friends, and a few fake dogs in order for her to be able to keep her life the way that she knows and loves it.

T.L. Bonaddio's warm interior illustrations complement Altebrando's evocative prose and practically make the farmhouse a character that you'll find yourself wanting the best for. With sincerity and humor, author Tara Altebrando thoughtfully explores the pain—and promise—of letting go.

My Life in Dioramas Details

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From Reader Review *My Life in Dioramas* for online ebook

Heidi says

I found the idea of a girl documenting her childhood home in dioramas strangely compelling. It sounds like a great idea, a bit like a 3-D scrapbook. For Kate, leaving the home she has known her whole life is horrifying, especially when it means giving up her friends and a chance to be in a dance competition. Kate decides to try to delay the sale by making the house as unappealing as possible to prospective buyers. While I didn't approve of Kate's actions, I have to admire her creativity. I appreciated the fact that when her father found out, there were appropriate consequences applied. Like most people, Kate must face the change coming her way despite how unpleasant it is. To make things worse it seems her mother might be depressed which makes everything worse. I thought the book came together in a believable and interesting way. Kate's shifting friendships with Stella and Naveen also come into play and since Kate is twelve this feels realistic. An enjoyable contemporary story about something many children and tweens have to face, because of that I think many readers can relate to Kate and her struggles.

Brandy Painter says

Originally posted here at [Random Musings of a Bibliophile](#).

My Life in Dioramas by Tara Altebrando is a wonderful heart-warming MG story about change, friendship, and family told with humor and realism.

Kate has lived her entire life in Big Red, the old farmhouse her parents own. Now half way through her 7th grade year they tell her they are moving. Worse, they are moving in with her grandparents because they are in financial trouble. Kate has to leave her school, dance class, friends, and the only life she has ever known. But Kate isn't going down without a fight. She hatches a number of schemes to turn off potential buyers, everything from causing a terrible stench to having her teenage neighbor play loud music. As time goes on, Kate realizes that more might be at stake than just her house though, and as she begins to feel more desperate and lost she makes a series of dioramas illustrating her life in the home she loves.

Kate's voice is absolutely perfect for the story being told here. She is a wonderful combination of vulnerable, sarcastic, bossy, and lost. She is a typical middle schooler. The plans she comes up with to save her home border on brilliant and ridiculous. Even though they clearly have little hope of working, she attacks them with all the enthusiasm of her dwindling childhood. The house is not the only change on Kate's horizon though. Her relationship with her best friend, Stella, is changing. Stella seems more and more interested in boys and popularity than the interests they used to share. Then there are the boys themselves. Kate doesn't want to be noticing them, but darn it if they are making themselves more noticeable.

Kate's parents are incredibly important to the story too. Kate learns a great deal about her parents through the course of the story. She is in that stage when a child is really discovering their parents have a much wider life extending beyond the life of the child. Kate's parents have made some foolish financial decision, and she is furious with them. At the same time, she can see that they are mourning these as well. And Kate's mom is suffering from depression. I really like the way this is dealt with. Kate only knows the bare minimum of what is going on, but it she overhears things and has uncomfortable conversations with her mother. I felt this was realistically dealt with and is a situation many readers will be able to identify with.

My Life in Dioramas is a great pick for MG readers who enjoy realistic fiction. It is a short read and wonderfully illustrated too.

I read ARC provided by the publisher, Running Press Kids, via the mail. My Life in Dioramas is on sale April 28th.

Katie Fitzgerald says

This review also appears on my blog, [Read-at-Home Mom](#).

In her second middle grade novel, Tara Altebrando introduces Kate Marino, a middle schooler who loves living in her family home, known as Big Red. When she learns that her parents' financial situation is going to require them to sell the house, and that they don't even know where they will be moving, she is devastated. Her sadness deepens when she learns that her dance class will be participating in a competition in June, and she may not be able to participate. Determined to prolong the sale of the house until the competition is over, Kate (with help from her good friend Naveen) attempts to sabotage the real estate agent's hard work by planting disgusting smells and annoying sounds all around the house to scare off potential buyers.

Much like Altebrando's middle grade debut, *The Battle of Darcy Lane*, this is a gentle read for middle school girls who enjoy themes of friendship and family, and who are most concerned with the emotional ups and downs of everyday life. Readers can easily sympathize with Kate's desire to remain in the home she has always known, and even if they would not go to Kate's lengths to be allowed to do so, they will certainly understand her motivations, and maybe even wish they had Kate's guts. Unlike other middle grade novels of sabotage (e.g. *Revenge of the Flower Girls*, *The Great Greene Heist*), this one keeps the pranks on a small scale and therefore seems fairly believable. The fact that Kate eventually gets caught also keeps this story from becoming too far-fetched.

Another strong element of this book is the subtlety of the growing tension between Kate and her best friend, Stella. As she demonstrated in *The Battle of Darcy Lane*, Altebrando has a great grasp on the politics of middle school friendship, and she works that into this plot in a way that is very true to life. Kate and Stella never have a real out-and-out fight with drama and tears and hurt feelings. Rather, the conflicts between them are woven into the fabric of their interactions with one another, resulting in a mix of moments where they get along fine and moments where they are on totally different wavelengths. This is a much more authentic representation of female friendship than some of the cattier books for this reading level might suggest.

Also wonderful is the way Kate channels her emotions into making dioramas of the rooms in her house. This is a great way to highlight Kate's love for her house in a concrete way and also to help the reader fall in love with the house so that its loss weighs as heavily on the reader as it does on the protagonist. The fact that Kate is able to preserve her memories in the form of dioramas also contributes to the story's overall hopeful outlook on a difficult situation, which is sure to resonate strongly with girls ages 9-13.

Two final notes. I was thrilled, just on a personal level, to learn that this book is set in the Hudson Valley region of New York State. Reading about places like Highland, Poughkeepsie, Rosendale, and New Paltz took me right back to my own childhood growing up in the same area. (I have compiled other middle grade novels set in upstate New York here.) I was disappointed, though, by the cover, which is very dark and difficult to appreciate at a glance. The lettering of the title and the little greenish lights floating in the air also

suggest that the story might be science fiction, rather than contemporary realism, which might draw in an audience that is not ultimately interested in reading the book. I just hope librarians who buy this book will be prepared to give it a great booktalk, as I am sure there are plenty of readers just waiting for a book just like this to come along. (If I were eleven years old, I'd be one of them!)

Brenda says

Kate's parents have been fighting a lot recently, so when they sit her down to talk, she thinks the worst has finally happened. Her parents are getting divorced. Instead, she hears the word "downsizing." Which to Kate just means that they can't afford to keep their farmhouse, "Big Red." Big Red is the only home that Kate has ever known and she really loves her old house. She knows all of its nooks and crannies. She knows what to do to "wake the wind chimes" hanging on the porch and that you have to walk slowly down the stairs or risk having another horrible accident. Big Red has her cozy loft, an old barn with cat's and her claw foot tub. Plus if they move, how will she ever be able to compete with her dance troupe at the Dance Nation competition? Kate believe's she can change her parents mind about selling Big Red, or at least delay things until after the dance competition. So, she forges her mom's signature on the dance registration, and sets a plan in action with her friends to try and sabotage the Realtor's attempts to show the home and keep people from wanting to buy it. But, when the Realtor gets wind of her plans and her best friend spills the beans to the dance trope about her move, what can Kate do now?

Altebrando has a way with these quiet books for me. Her characters read and talk how I envision kids think "I loved my grandparents. I really did. But it was just sort of boring to be around them. They had a lot of stories they told over and over again." I also enjoy reading her books, because I think she has a knack of describing middle school friendships and the struggles that can sometimes occur. The sense of one friend pulling away from you and the resulting hurt and anger. In *My Life in Diorama's*, she illustrates how friendships can change when faced with having to move, while also delving into financial issues and parental depression. I think her story is a good reminder that despite what parents may think sometimes, children are observant to what is going on around them. That finances, depression, or even "downsizing" are real issues to kids and they shouldn't feel like they are supposed to pretend that nothing is happening.

Altebrando also makes sure to interject humor into her stories, in this case in the pranks that Kate and her friends pull. Their ideas aren't over the top either, and I think middle graders will enjoy reading them. There is also a sense of childhood, in the games that she chooses to include in her stories, In *The Battle of Darcy Lane* it was "Russian," a ball bouncing game in which different moves are done between each bounce of a ball. In *My Life in Diorama's*, Kate plays "MASH," a game in which the girls figure out if they are going to live in a mansion, apartment, shack or house, what kind of car they would drive and how many kids they'd have. I loved how Kate turned to making Diorama's as a means to capture special memories in her beloved home, similar to taking photographs to remember special events. And that dance was very important to her but not because she wanted to win, but because "It was about doing. About stepping out of the shoebox." Overall, a wonderful story that shows the struggles in friendships, is heartwarming and one in which middle graders may be able to identify with.

In exchange for an honest review, a review copy of the book was provided from the publisher for free.

Aeicha says

Twelve year old Kate loves her home, “Big Red”. She loves its quirks, big back yard, even its stinkbug problem. So when her parents put Big Red up for sale because of money problems, Kate’s convinced her life is ruined. And when her dance class finally gets a chance to compete at Dance Nation, Kate just knows she can’t move. So what’s a smart, resourceful girl to do? Sabotage, of course! With the help of some bags of stink, some noisy neighbors, and her friends, Kate sets out to make her house un-sellable. But changing friendships, a sad mom, and lies upon lies starts to become too much for Kate and she doesn’t know if she can ever learn to let go.

My Life in Dioramas is a thoughtful, charming book that is both poignant and uplifting. Tara Altebrando combines sincere storytelling, humor, heart, and realistic characters to create a story that is meaningful, amusing, and powerful. My Life in Dioramas deals with some very real very, heavy topics (depression, financial problems, first crushes, changing friendships, etc) and does so in honest, yet age appropriate ways. Altebrando explores these topics through the innocent, yet observant and intelligent eyes of young Kate, creating a perspective and voice that is relatable, pitch-perfect for its audience, and unabashedly honest. Altebrando also does a wonderful job creating such palpable, deeply felt emotions; this is a story that will really sink into its readers. With every heartache and triumph Kate experiences, and with every diorama she makes, readers will feel more and more attached to her and her story.

My Life in Dioramas is inhabited by some compelling, engaging characters, from spunky, endearing Kate, sweet and charming Naveen, determined Stella, and Kate’s realistically flawed parents. And of course there’s Big Red! Through captivating details and Kate’s immense love for the old house, Big Red is brought to life so beautifully.

my final thoughts: Full of heart, humor, and honesty, My Life in Dioramas is a moving and entertaining book about friendship, growing up, and learning to let go. Older middle-grade readers and adults are sure to find this a worthwhile read.

Hannah says

I was provided with a free copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Kate Marino loves her unusual home, with the high ceilings and the beams that run across them, even with the dead flies that they keep finding in her parents room. She loves her backyard and the stream that runs through it by the forest in the back. She also loves a square of blacktop that she calls the tennis court, where she and her friends play and ride their scooters. Oh, and don't forget her dance classes and the dance troupe that they are finally starting up at her studio.

Then her parents tell her that they are moving.

That is not okay with Kate. So she devises a plan that will turn all potential buyers away from the house. Kate decides that she will do everything in her power to make they house reek. and for a while, she succeeds.

I finished this book in three days.

This was an easy read, but it still had substance to it, even with all the fun elements.

For example, there was a bit of friendship trouble that Kate was having with her best friend Stella. For one thing, they were developing separate interests. For another, Kate was hurt when Stella didn't seem to care that Kate, her best friend, was moving and hour away.

At first I really didn't like the rivalry between the two girls, particularly because Stella was making me angry. But as the book went on, their 'fight' and characters developed more, and it then interested me, and I really just wanted Kate to stop being friends with Stella, if I am perfectly honest.

Another part of this book that I liked was that the main character danced. I also dance. Of course, my dancing is of another type and is not competitive, but I still enjoyed it.

The dance troupe in the book was another cause for disharmony between the girls. Kate decided that she wanted to do the troupe, even through she was moving and shouldn't be able to. Stella, insisted that it was selfish of Kate to do that, because Kate would be moving and if she left then the entire class would have to re-choreograph the entire routine. During this part I could see things from both sides of the characters views. I agreed with Stella, who was being practical. However, I understood that Kate wanted to participate, and who thought she could hold of her move until after the competition.

In the beginning of the book, Kate and her parents don't understand each other and she seems to feel like they are distant. On top of this, Kate's mother is going through a difficult time and their family struggles terribly with their finances. I enjoyed seeing their relationship change throughout the story.

The last thing that I want to mention that I really like is the diorama element. The book is called 'My Life in Dioramas' for a reason. Throughout this entire story, Kate is putting all her happy memories of her family and life in her house, Big Red, into the form of dioramas. She makes her yard, and every room in the house, so that she could go back and look at them once she is gone and remember her old life. For the character, it was probably a very therapeutic exercise.

This book is meaningful and deals with real problems, but manages to be so in such a way that it makes you feel happy at the end and that ensures that you have fun reading the book.

It is appropriate for all ages and I would highly recommend it.

Enter my giveaway for the book!

<https://www.rafflecopter.com/rafl/dis...>

Srosch says

Great.

Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

Kate Marino, 12, truly loves living in her rambling red farmhouse, affectionately known by everyone in her small Hudson Valley town as Big Red. But when her parents tell her that they are forced to sell Big Red because of money problems, Kate has a hard time accepting this stinging blow.

So, without doing her homework, a diorama about a scene from life, Kate goes to bed, clothes and all. Next day, when her teacher asks for her diorama, she promises to make two to make up for being unprepared. What Kate really needs, though, is a plan to thwart any potential buyers and best friend Naveen is there to help. He suggests that she make the house smell badly and to do that they collect some recently made cow pies. And it works for the first open house. But soon the realtor is on to her.

Meanwhile, Kate's dancing teacher announces that her dance class will be participating in a dance competition in Albany at the end of the school year. It's a problem for Kate, who may be gone by then, but who refuses to say anything to the teacher, even when her other best friend Stella urges her to. In fact, sabotaging the sale of Big Red just becomes even more imperative, at least until after the dance competition. Stella, who is well off, also wants to enter the individual dance competition as well and can afford hire a teacher and choreographer to help her. Luckily, Kate, who would be real competition for Stella, has no interest in doing that. Kate and Stella are growing apart anyway, as Stella's attentions turn to boys and Kate isn't interested in them yet.

While all this is happening, Kate finds herself making dioramas of each of the rooms in Big Red, each one depicting a meaningful memory for her that happened there. The dioramas help Kate deal with leaving the only home she has ever known and stepping into rootlessness with her parents who don't seem to know where they will go or what they will do and aren't particularly worried about it. Kate's parents work freelance, so they are able to accept that kind of insecurity. In fact, sometimes they seem totally disconnected with reality, including Kate's love of dance and her strong desire to be in the competition. And to make matters worse, her mother seems to be suffering from clinical depression.

When the house is finally sold, Kate discovers she must say goodbye to more than Big Red as she steps into the unknown. On the day the family moves, the old family dog Angus dies. It was like the dog was letting Kate know it is time to make a fresh start. But will she be able to?

This was an interesting coming of age story. Kate is a convincing 12 year old, although I think the first sabotage using the fresh cow pies went on a little too long for my taste (but kids probably won't be too bothered by that). I know that lots of kids must deal with a seriously depressed parent, and it was refreshing to see that this wasn't just treated as an unimportant aside or plot device to move the story along.

Change is never easy, but as Kate learns, it can open new doors and that is the message of this novel. But don't get me wrong, there is plenty of humor in in *My Life in Dioramas*, and Naveen is one of my favorite characters. But, for me, the best part is that it reminds us that sometimes people really do hear you and pay attention and then they do something.

Oh, yes, and I loved the setting. I used to go to camp every year in the Hudson Valley so I know how really beautiful that area is. But I did not like the cover - it's just too dark and you can barely make out Big Red.

This book is recommended for readers age 9+

This book was borrowed from the NYPL

This review was originally posted on Randomly Reading

Ms. Yingling says

Kate enjoys her life in her family's old house. Both of her parents freelance, so there's lots of time for them to do things together. The problem is that they are struggling financially, and decide to sell the large farmhouse and move in with Kate's grandparents, who live about an hour away. Kate is upset because she would have to leave her good friends Stella and Naveen, and she would miss a big dance competition. Stella also dances, and the two have always been close, but Stella wants to train for a solo dance, and starts hanging out with girls that Kate doesn't like. In order to postpone the sale of the house (hopefully indefinitely), Kate works with Naveen to find ways to make the house unattractive to visitors. She fills a bean bag chair with bags of manure, plans lots of noise when showings are to take place, and generally does anything she can to scare off prospective buyers. Knowing her efforts won't put off things forever, she tries to recreate every room in the house in shoebox dioramas. Her parents get a bit more organized, but the house eventually sells. Strengths: Lots of funny moments, and realistic problems. Moving, mean girls, trouble in school-- those are age-appropriate concerns of middle grade readers, and I like that they are addressed with humor and positive movement.

Weaknesses: A tad on the whiny/sad side, and the art (in the ARC) isn't the type that appeals to my readers.

What I really think: While I'm really fed up with books with dysfunctional parents, Kate's are at least able to hold things together. There was enough humor in this that I will buy it, and readers who like realistic fiction will pick it up, although a peppier cover would help.

Isobel McIntosh says

Tara loves the big, sprawling house she calls "Big Red", stinkbugs and all. So when she discovers that her parents are selling it, she springs into action to sabotage the sale with lots of stinky surprises. To add to the confusion, her Mom isn't herself, and her best friend is acting strangely when it comes to an upcoming dance competition. Tara finds some comfort in the dioramas she constructs of her beloved home, capturing the memories of "Big Red".

My Life in Dioramas is written in a clear, straightforward style. Tara is a likeable and spunky heroine, and the reader will find him/herself rooting for her as she tries to save her beloved house from the sale. Told in Tara's words, the voice is believable, and it resonates with the reader. This book will appeal to young readers who appreciate strong female characters.

Heather Gunnell says

Staff Pick

Heather

This book is full of emotional ups and downs. Most children have faced the uncertainty of moving to a new place, which makes this story very relatable. I love that Kate is a dancer; she reminded me a lot of my dancing days when I was younger.

Heather Gunnell says

I flew right through this one. Loved it! Full review to come soon at heathermariereadsmg.blogspot.com

Liz Friend says

The story: Kate's family has run out of money, and now they have to move--right when her dance team has decided to attend a big competition the girls have been dying to try for years. While the rest of the team gets ready, Kate tries to sabotage her parents' real estate deal: first by stashing stinky stuff around the house to discourage possible buyers, then by planting loud noises around to bug people who come to the open house. But when the house deal goes through and it looks like the family really is going to move despite Kate's tricks, her mother's depression, and the death of their dog--Kate finds out what she's really made of...and is pleasantly surprised.

NYP: Coming May 2015. June Cleaver's ratings: Language G; Violence G; Sexual content G; Nudity G; substance abuse PG; magic & the occult G; GLBT content G; adult themes (clinical depression, death of a pet) PG; overall rating PG.

Liz's comments: Who says a book has to have bad words or super powers to get a reader's attention? Girls in grades 4-up will enjoy 7th-grade Kate's war against reality, as well as her final acceptance of it--and while she's slow to embrace the changes, Kate finally comes to realize that things aren't going to end up nearly as bad as she expected (a good life lesson for lots of teens!). There are some funny moments in the story, as well as a light-hearted look at the confusion adolescent girls feel about boys and crushes. This is a fun one!

Annotation with SPOILERS:

MY LIFE IN DIORAMAS, by Tara Altebrando (April 28, 2015) Annotation with spoilers: The story opens with Kate's parents (artsy types; dad's a former rock band member with one hit song to his name; mom's a violinist he met at a recording session) announcing that, due to financial problems, they're going to have to sell their beloved country home and move...somewhere else. Probably in with grandma. Kate is so bummed about the news that she mopes herself to sleep, wakes up without having done her social studies homework, and goes to school without the assigned diorama. In return for an extension on time, she promises her teacher to make two for tomorrow. The first one shows her circling the asphalt "tennis court" on her scooter; the second one shows the cat in the barn that just had kittens.

At dance class, different news awaits: the troupe has finally decided to attend the big competition in Albany this summer, right after school gets out. When Kate confides to best friend Stella that her parents are planning to move, Stella partially freaks out and begins discouraging her from practicing with the troupe as they prepare their routine. But Kate is determined to keep on with it--cuz who knows how long it'll take to sell the house anyway? Their disagreement about tactics is the first little wedge that appears in their friendship.

Kate and her friend Naveen try to think of ways to sabotage a sale, and decide that no one wants to buy a stinky house. Stella doesn't really want any part in the sabotage plans. Kate plans to make the house reek with a fresh cow patty during this weekend's open house; Naveen helps her acquire it. She pulls it off, but no one seems particularly put off. She vows to do better the following week, and plans an elaborate rotting-chicken smell. However, she comes home after the open house to discover that the realtor is on to her. She's going to have to change strategies.

In the meantime, each time she does something around the house, or has a run-in with her parents, she finds it therapeutic to make a diorama of one of the rooms in the place she's lived all her life.

Stella announces that she's going to have a karaoke birthday party (could be okay) with boys (groan), including Naveen (friend she kind of thinks she might like, but how does that work when he's just your friend?) and Sam (on whom she might have a crush, although she's not sure). Stella's also inviting girls Kate doesn't really like, and so all of a sudden, the party doesn't sound that fun. Even worse, right before it, Stella lets their dance teacher know that Kate's family might be moving, so now Kate is off the team. Stella is so focused on her dance solo for the competition that it's not clear she even cares about the team events (although she obviously cared enough to rat Kate out). Stella and Kate have a fight, and it's obvious that Stella is thinking about moving on friends-wise, because after all, Kate is moving anyway.

Eventually, the house sells and they start packing. Although Kate doesn't like it, she gradually comes to accept this new reality, partially as she makes more dioramas of places and events that have been important to her during her life at Big Red (the neighborhood's name for the house). A visit to her grandmother's finds them going home without Mom, who's been vague and unpredictable during the whole story, and whom we're pretty sure needs a counselor and some meds. But the move must go on, so she and dad continue packing and boxing, eventually ending up with their stuff in storage and a room at grandma's. Surprisingly, the sale of the house falls through when Kate's dad decides he's NOT going to sell it to mean-girl Megan's real-estate-developer dad; eventually, it goes to a mom and two little girls, so Kate feels better that it won't be getting torn down to house a new development. On moving day, Kate comes home from school to find that her old dog Angus has died. Talk about a low point--everything has come together to be depressing. She finds comfort in a last diorama that shows the family and Angus in the living room at Christmastime.

While staying temporarily at grandma's, Kate comes up with the idea of doing a solo dance of her own for the statewide competition. She and her former dance teacher Skype and email back and forth about it, and she uses her dad's one hit song as background music. The family goes out house hunting and finds a much smaller place on a quiet street with a cute boy who lives across the way. Kate, her former team, and Stella all go to the competition; realistically, Kate places 7 out of 15, while Stella places 3rd--but Kate feels good about her performance, and that's what really matters to her.

In the end, Kate realizes that after next (8th grade) year, her new neighborhood and her old one will go to the same rural high school. The parents agree to shuttle her back and forth to her old school for 8th grade year, so it's not the traumatic upheaval they all expected. Maybe they'll even get a new dog.

Abby Johnson says

This book was fine. I like the concept - the idea of a girl saying goodbye to the house she's known all her life by making dioramas of each room is a poignant and sweet one. Kate's also dealing with her mom's depression and her parents' sense of failure in losing the house that they also loved so much. But it felt like a couple of different books jammed into one in a way that didn't quite work for me. There's the madcap plot of Kate trying to find ways to stink up her house, the poignant story of a girl dealing with losing her home and her parents' sense of failure, and then the end kind of started reading like real estate listings, which I feel like is not going to really interest kids too much.

I mean, it was fine. But (to me) that's all.

Maria Tag says

The story: Kate Marino loves her house, the Big Red. But when the horrible (to Kate) news gets out that Kate's parents are selling the Big Red, life is never the same. She spoils the realtor's showings by hiding bags of stink in the house, playing barking dog noises on her phone, etc. But she gets found out. To heal, Kate makes dioramas of her house. The house gets sold. life moves on. And Kate heals from her emotional scars.

Positive Content: Kate heals from her emotional scars, and the story is eventually hopeful. Kate has good friends. This story is a good one.

Negative content: Angus, the dog, dies, which might upset sensitive readers. At the end of the book, Kate mentions a boy being "hers" and romance is hinted.
