


Maxi's Secrets: (or, What You Can Learn from a Dog)

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When a BIG, lovable, does-it-her-way dog wiggles her way into the heart of a loudmouth pipsqueak of a boy, wonderful things happen that help him become a bigger, better person. Perfect for fans of *Wonder* and *Because of Winn-Dixie*.

Timminy knows that moving to a new town just in time to start middle school when you are perfect bully bait is less than ideal. But he gets a great consolation prize in Maxi--a gentle giant of a dog who the family quickly discovers is deaf. Timminy is determined to do all he can to help Maxi--after all, his parents didn't return him because he was a runt. But when the going gets rough for Timminy, who spends a little too much time getting shoved into lockers at school, Maxi ends up being the one to help *him*--along with their neighbor, Abby, who doesn't let her blindness define her and bristles at Timminy's "poor-me" attitude. It turns out there's more to *everyone* than what's on the surface, whether it comes to Abby, Maxi, or even Timminy himself.

Maxi's Secrets: (or, What You Can Learn from a Dog) Details

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From Reader Review Maxi's Secrets: (or, What You Can Learn from a Dog) for online ebook

Shreya M says

I really liked this book, but I didn't think it deserved a full five stars. It was really boring at the beginning, but it gets much better after the first several chapters.

The story plot is what made me give this book 4 stars. I liked the main character (Timminy) and his deaf dog (Maxi). They had very neat portions in the book that made me really enjoy it and want to keep reading.

I really hated Timminy's blind friend, Abby. I wish the author had chosen to put another character in her place. The deaf dog with the blind friend wasn't really a good mix (at least, in my opinion).

Also, (SPOILER ALERT!!) the dog dies at the end (HUGE SPOILER ALERT!!!) because of bone cancer. It's sad, I know.

If I could change one thing to the story, it would be that the dead dog was just a dream. It had a sad ending and I really wish I could turn it into a happy ending.

Thank you for sticking around to read this review. I recommend each and every one of you to read this book. Have a great day!! ;)

Jodi Ellis says

A tear-jerker, but worth it! When my husband died, people always asked me why I married a man with a terminal illness...why I would put myself through that, knowing what the end result would be. I always said, "Why give up on all those happy times, just because of the one bad thing that would happen in the end?" This rings true in this book as well. Some things are worth the heartache...

Hillary says

This is the first book that has made me cry in front of my class. We loved it! Every time I stopped reading the gang would clamor for more.

Plourde nailed the voice and essence of a fifth grade boy! Specifically the insecurity and anger that goes along with a perceived fault. And just when that anger was on the verge of being too much the character morphed and grew in a realistic and relatable way. Towards the end of the book when Maxi dies -- I started to feel a bit uncomfortable with the frequent iterations of "dead" but then it dawned on me that this age group isn't going to get (or talk) in more "poetic" ways about dying -- so again, it really work for this age group. Additionally, I loved the scope of characters -- none were one dimensional and all felt like friends by the end of the book -- Rory being my favorite.

All in all, I loved it; I can't wait for Plourde to write more middle grade fiction! And most importantly, I can't wait for her to come back to our school so I can tell her in person, how much I (and my kiddos) loved her book!

Jana says

The reader is told right up front: "Let's get this part over with - it's no secret. My dog, Maxi, dies."

But even with that blunt warning, I plunged ahead into the book. And even though I sat on the sofa and bawled my eyes out, I have to say that this book is just awesome!

Book lovers, even those with past experience reading *Sounder*, *Old Yeller*, and many others, dive into these books because the relationship we have with our pets is so universal. We know that we're about to share a special experience with the author, the characters in the story, and those around us. Many people, including young readers, will relate to Timminy's story, and hopefully be able to relate to each other better, after reading this.

For my complete review, please visit: <http://janatheteacher.blogspot.com/20...>

Nancy Kotkin says

Even though the opening of this middle grade novel discloses that the dog dies, the last 30 pgs are incredibly sad. Yet, that's also where the writing picks up and excels. Other than that bold in-your-face opening (Let's get this part over with - it's no secret. My dog, Maxi, dies.), absolutely no symptoms of Maxi's illness show until pg 189 of the book's 262 pgs. Yet when the family takes her to the vet, the cancer has already spread too far to be treatable.

The story is slow-paced until the last quarter of the book, which ratchets up the pace considerably. The paragraphs are so short, the book seems choppy. The life lessons are a bit didactic for middle grade readers, mainly because of the sheer volume of them - one at the end of each of the 51 chapters. Themes are friendship and living life to the fullest, whatever your circumstances.

Abby is a strong female character who lives life fully despite her disability, or maybe because of it. She makes this book worth reading. But the protagonist is a whiner with a large chip on his shoulder. Dealing with that is his character arc. Still, he is difficult to hang out with for the first half of the book. Some of Timminy's friendships feel forced, especially Carver and Kassy. I still don't understand how/why Rory and Kevin are friends. They certainly don't act like friends around one another.

Overall, I have mixed reactions to this book. I suspect more emotional readers will like it better than I do.

Stacy Natal says

It didn't touch me as much as most dog books I've read, but I liked the life secrets posted after each chapter. Also, middle school kids could identify with feeling "different" as Timminy, Rory, Abby, and Devon all had ways in which they were different from other middle schoolers.

Stacey says

This is not your average boy and his dog book. Maxi's Secrets will have you reveling in Plourde's ability to develop characters in a true and surprising way.

This is a heart print book for me. One that will stick with me long after tonight. If you love stories about friendship (even in the most unlikely places), bravery and canine companionship, then this is the book for you.

Patrick says

Oh my gosh. Another incredible MG novel. Read it in one day and yes it made me cry again!!! A must/read...

Joy Lane says

I love the opening chapter. Encourage the reluctant reader to at least read to Chapter 8 before they stop reading. They need to be patient as the stage is being set. They will not be disappointed.

Erin says

My favorite of the SSYRA books so far. I liked the characters, how they changed and were different based on the perceptions people had of them. The fog was pretty cool too. It's like the different popular dog books (A Dog's Purpose, The Art of Racing in the Rain, etc) but for kids.

Jimmy says

This book is exceptional. It goes so beyond the mere presence of Maxi. It really provides "secrets" which can be applied to all human beings. It explores many themes such relationships, overcoming challenges, and accepting others differences. It hit close to home in so many parts. I laughed and cried. And the quotes to end each chapter.

Scott Fillner says

Wow! I am usually able to judge a book based on the buzz it gets. This book generated A LOT of buzz with readers I trust. Due to this I ordered it for our Mock Newbery before I even read it. But, the buzz couldn't have prepared me for what I actually experienced. This book is SO much more than a "Dog" story.

This book has it all. The layers between characters, the growth of characters, the connections in this story, and the importance of having and developing a voice are so strong in this book.

I cannot wait for others to be able to read this book on August. It is a special book, and it is one which I hope will be honored and cherished by not only committees, but more importantly by the readers it will serve.

I cannot recommend this book any more strongly than I am right now. It is for sure a book you will reread. I often will reread books I love and cherish. This book will join that list!

Ryleigh Hotaling says

This story was amazing and was a sad one too, but now it is my favorite book ever

Mary says

I picked this book to donate to my library as a memorial for my dog Liza. Liza was more than 14 years old last December, nearly blind, mostly deaf, and suffering from too many aches and pains, it was time to let her go. It took me until September of this year to find the right book to dedicate to Liza. I think this was the right book, hope it reaches its audience here, and everywhere.

Lynn Plourde is a Maine author who previously wrote picture books. This is her first middle grade novel. Maxi's Secrets is a story about a 5th grade boy, Timminy, who moves from Portland, Maine to a smaller rural town in Maine. Getting the dog, Maxi, was his parents ploy to help him with the move.

His new school is a middle school that includes 5th through 8th grade. Timminy is the shortest kid in the school. One of his neighbors, Abby, is blind, another, Rory, a huge 8th grader. Through all his adjustments to his new place, bullies, friendships, and anger, it is Maxi who comforts him at home and keeps him going. Every chapter ends with a secret to understanding, living, and enjoying life. Short, single sentence, low-key advice, and not too preachy in it's delivery. I really liked this book. It refers to several other dog stories, Shiloh, Where the Red Fern Grows, Marley and Me, and on the first page it says this about fictional dogs, "You cried, I cried when fake dogs died. Maxi was real." No secret, there will be tears before this book is done. But don't let that keep you from reading this sweet story.

Michele Knott says

This book is going to be around for a long long time because it's going to stick in the hearts of many many readers.

Thank you, Lynn Plourde, for giving us Maxi and Timminy.
