



# The Mortification of Fovea Munson

*Mary Winn Heider*

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## **The Mortification of Fovea Munson** Mary Winn Heider

Fovea Munson is nobody's Igor. True, her parents own a cadaver lab where they perform surgeries on dead bodies. And yes, that makes her gross by association, at least according to everyone in seventh grade. And sure, Fovea's stuck working at the lab now that her summer camp plans have fallen through. But she is by no means Dr. Frankenstein's snuffling assistant!

That is, until three disembodied heads, left to thaw in the wet lab, start talking. To her. Out loud.

What seems like a nightmare, or bizarre hallucination, is not. Fovea is somebody's Igor, all right. Three somebodies, actually. And they need a favor.

## **The Mortification of Fovea Munson Details**

Date : Published June 5th 2018 by Disney-Hyperion

ISBN :

Author : Mary Winn Heider

Format : 336 pages

Genre : Childrens, Middle Grade, Humor, Fantasy, Fiction, Science Fiction, Family, Magical Realism, Juvenile

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## From Reader Review *The Mortification of Fovea Munson* for online ebook

### Mary says

Zany premise - three talking heads in a cadaver lab blackmail 12 year old Fovea into completing a final favor for them - and it did not succeed for me. It started out interestingly enough but I didn't believe the motivations or the increasingly out-there chain of events.

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### Lydia Wednesday says

It lived up to the hype. All of the reviews that say it is hilarious and heartwarming are correct.

Absurdist humor with a heart of gold and some severed heads. A+.

I would recommend for that one weird kid in your life. Or any kid really.

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### da\_dan471 (Daniel) says

This book is funny and interesting I think the characters live in there own little world it was cool to see the relationship between Foeva and The Heads

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### Lizy says

This book was SO CUTE! I loved the premise and the puns. The morals were really good, too. Highly recommend.

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### Michelle (FabBookReviews) says

4.5 stars

Get ready for some tremendously funny and seriously off the wall adventures with Mary Winn Heider's debut middle grade novel, *The Mortification of Fovea Munson*.

Told in the first-person narrative of seventh-grader Fovea Hippocrates Munson, Mary Winn Heider's novel follows Fovea as she embarks on one the of the oddest, funniest (and possibly yuckiest) summers even known. Fovea's parents are both doctors, but doctors that prefer to work with and on human cadavers- her parents even have their own lab in Chicago where they study and perform research and experiments. For most of Fovea's life, the fact of what her parent's actually do as doctors has been kept a secret between her

and her best friend Em. Until one day in seventh grade when Em blabs to a new, cool girl she hopes to be friends with during an assembly- and as a result of her blabbing, Em becomes Fovea's former-best-friend and basically ruins the school and social life of Fovea (who gets called *Igor* by doltish classmates) and made fun of for having supposedly weird, gross parents. As Fovea faces the summer after an awful seventh grade of having to work in her parent's lab- something she does not want to do, having explicitly told her parents she wants *nothing* to do with bodies, medicine, etc., ever- her fears regarding her parent's cadaver lab come to life when two defrosting human heads in her parents 'Hall of Innards' (yes, innards) start talking to Fovea and begging for her help with a task that needs to be completed. Fovea reacts to detached human heads talking to her as one might imagine: she vomits. But! Fovea is drawn back into their conversation and is essentially compelled to help the two heads (named Lake and Andy) with their task in order to prevent her parent's lab being shut-down by a deranged, love-sick villain. Add in Fovea's amazing, cutting and riotous grandma, who surprises at every turn; an understanding classmate named Howe who accompanies Fovea and stands by her side through every insanity; a third talking head; and a few hysterical turns followed by some heartache, and you've got a totally strange, hilarious and arguably moving read. There are a handful of black and white illustrations throughout the novel by artist Chi Birmingham, and I find they have been terrifically placed to capture the most of *the most* bizarre moments in the novel. Birmingham's artwork style is clean- uncluttered - yet the artist's kind of understated style manages to *perfectly* encapsulate the total wackiness of certain situations and bring them to life (e.g. when a main character throws a human head at someone, to name but one situation!).

Overall, what great, laugh-out-loud and bizarre reading! Truly original and refreshing, featuring an awesome, reflective protagonist in Fovea Munson and some *very* memorable secondary characters, *The Mortification of Fovea Munson* is terrific. Readers who love the strange, the madcap, the sometimes disgusting, and often thoughtful, this is the read for you. Think a combination of Gordan Korman's kookiest, mixed in with the humour of Meg Cabot or Louise Rennison, and add in some laboratory and body part ickiness (think Mark Tatulli's *Li?*), and you might get something like Mary Winn Heider's novel!

*I received a copy of this title courtesy of Disney Book Group in exchange for an honest review and for the purposes of a blog post. All opinions and comments are my own.*

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## **Julie says**

LOVED this. Hilariously goofy. The kind of nutty ingenuity and writing skill that leaves me happily jealous. A marvelous middle grade with a strong voice (well, five, you might say), mixing entirely recognizable issues of friendship, fitting in, and dealing with parents into a sort of jumbled-body-parts-jambalaya of ludicrous insanity. Wacky characters you'll never forget. So much fun, and so punnable: I laughed my head off. It melted my heart. Etc. Buy it for yourself, for the middle graders you know, and for every doctor who has a) a kid and b) a sense of humor.

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## **April says**

A solid 3.5. Fovea is funny, the situation is bizarre but the flow of the story is such that you flow with it just like she does, and her friends/family are great dimensions to the story. Fovea doesn't want to be known as the "Igor" to her family's morgue business. Alas; with her parent's assistant suddenly gone, she's been "drafted" to be their new receptionist for the summer. When Fovea hears singing one day while her parents are out;

singing coming from a few body-less heads; things take a turn from "generic YA coming of age story for a girl headed to 8th grade" and instead veers directly into "whimsical and flippant fantasy romp toying with ideas of death, immortality, changing friendships". You need to suspend disbelief a lot for the fantasy elements; but I found some of the "non-fantasy" elements harder to believe at times. (view spoiler)

Despite those; the story is mostly a quick read and I really did enjoy that Fovea and her ex-best-friend (view spoiler)

Grab this one if you need some easy, fantastical brain-candy for the beach and aren't weirded out by the idea of 3 severed heads singing...

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### **Meredith Spidel says**

Crazy original plotline for early young adult readers! If you can wrap your head around the talking heads, you are in for a treat! Share this latest creative tale with your kiddos and get their imaginations flowing. Thanks for sending and ARC our way for review, Disney!

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### **Pop Bop says**

Weird, and Funny, and Weirdly Funny - A Middle Grade Screwball Comedy

It took me a little while to come around on this book, but once I did I was totally sold.

The setup is that Fovea's parents are doctors who run a cadaver lab and teach dissection skills and anatomy to other doctors. So, it's a lab full of random body parts. The parents are totally into their jobs and make random body part jokes and puns and whatnot. They want rising eighth grader Fovea to join the business for the summer as their receptionist. Fovea hates that idea, she hates being embarrassed by what they do, she hates being called Igor at school, she's embarrassed by her parents and her life and this gross summer job and how boring she is and how she doesn't have any friends. And she tells us that, over and over and over in the first few chapters of the book. The only reason I held on was that Fovea is just witty and sly enough to make some of her incessant kvetching funny, and I suspected that this kid, and the book, were going to pick up and take off at some point. And that's what happened.

Fovea goes into one of the wet lab cold rooms and finds herself being addressed by three disembodied heads that are sitting on a shelf defrosting. Andy, Luke and Mac are a riot. It's like three way vaudeville crosstalk humor with some jokey dialogue, some real wit and style, and a lot of deadpan humor that contrasts very nicely with the decidedly not-deadpan circumstances. Bingo. At this point we have a madcap plot. The heads need a big favor from Fovea. Fovea needs some help from the heads to solve a little problem at the lab. From there we have interludes of antic farce, mixed up heads, a goofy scheme, a cute boy, a deranged crematorium operator, resolution of family issues, and Fovea transforming herself from a whiny sort of drip into her inner heroic Igor.

I bought the wacky premise, the Fovea character, the funny dialogue, the puppy love romance, the talking heads, and the whole over-the-top concoction. Once it gets started it's unpredictable and manic enough to keep young readers invested and it all wraps in a satisfying and entertaining be-who-you-are fashion. This

was sort of a hoot, and a nice find.

(Please note that I received a free advance copy of this book without a review requirement, or any influence regarding review content should I choose to post a review. Apart from that I have no connection at all to either the author or the publisher of this book.)

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## **Devann says**

*I received an ARC copy of this book from NetGalley*

This was such a fun book! There have been a lot of really great middle grade books coming out this year and I would definitely add this one to the list. Foeva is a great protagonist and she definitely meets a lot of other colorful characters on her journey that made this book great. There are definitely some parts of this book where I had to work a bit harder than usual to suspend my disbelief, but at the end of the day it was funny enough to be enjoyable anyway and I think it has some really great messages about growing up and figuring out what is important to you. Also I think it was more 'things you notice as an adult but that children wouldn't even think twice about' so I definitely think this would be a fun and enjoyable book for children even though some adults might balk when things get particularly zany.

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## **Mandy says**

This might be the most adorable middle grade book that I've ever read?

Omigosh, this book is a triple threat: funny, heartwarming, and a tiny bit morbid? And it WORKS. Every part of combines together to create something so wonderfully great. This book is teetering on my favorites shelf and totally might be landsliding in, and I just need y'all to read it.

The premise of the story is a little bit kooky, a lot quirky, totally morbid, and really interesting. Foeva Munson is stuck with working at her parents' business for the summer - which would be okay if they didn't own a cadaver lab. That's right - this poor girl heading into the 8th grade is friendless, called Igor by her classmates, and has to have dinner with her death obsessed, crankfest grandmother - is now forced to work at a lab devoted to collecting body parts and dissecting people. Things are going about just okay as they go - until she discovers 3 body-less heads that are alive and kicking - well not actual kicking since they have no legs. And let's just say it's disaster after disaster after that in the most adorable, funny MG way possible.

I was sold on every single plot twist and new funny moment that popped up. Seriously, there were so many little things that popped up and this story somehow involved blackmail, illegal dealings, missing body parts, and more??? But it's ultimately a story of finding new friendships, finding yourself, and seizing your moments instead of being stuck in the "boringness."

The cast of characters was amazinggggggggggggggggggggg too. Everyone that popped up was quirky and funny and was just so great. Grandma Van might have been my favorite? She was morbid as a part of the Addams Family and totally Angry Spice, but she was all sorts of epicness. Foeva was an amazing narrator and I never stopped wanting to root for her. I was loving being in her voice, and I shared her pains, her dreams, her joy, her sadness (although, LOL,book, if you actually thought I would cry because alas, I'm a heartless book

princess over here). Other side characters like the 3 heads, Hower, Fovea's parents, Whitney, Inko, and more were so wonderful as well. I will say that I did get Andy and McMullen a bit confused at times, but other than that, it was good.

Look at me - trying to think of synonyms to describe how good it is and failing because my brain is just going !!!!!!!!!!!!!

I really enjoyed Winn Heider's writing too. It was funny, breezy, and just the right amounts of sad, heartwarming, and light. I sped through this book in 2 days, because it was just so easy to read. And the author actually got me to read chapter headings????? What is this madness? Mandy, actually reading something in a book???

It also brought some great messages with it in between the crazy moments and sadness and

Ugh, it was just so good. It's such a fun little read, and it just brought so many heartwarming feels. I immediately wanted to come back to this world the moment I left it. It's adorable and funny and just totally quirky, but it works perfectly. I'm totally going to be looking out for more of Winn Heider's work in the future because I was so into this. 5 crowns and a Tiana rating for now!

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### **Ginger says**

I LOVE THIS BOOK. It's hilarious. I stayed up far too late reading it, just because I couldn't put it down. Highly recommended, though perhaps not for the slightly squeamish of stomach.

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### **Sandy says**

If you're ready for some silliness, this children's book is for you. If you can handle talking heads and I am not talking about the band, this kids book is for you. If you like a feisty, entertaining grandma, who loves to have a good time, start reading this book, as grandma will show you how she's leading her life and she will not let you down.

You start to feel sorry for Fovea as her parents work on cadavers and she's embarrassed at what they do. Her best friend has ditched her and when summer camp is cancelled, Fovea plans for the summer are zilch.

When Fovea's mother suggests that she work at the lab with them, Fovea immediately thinks of many other things she'd rather do but her mother wins and Fovea summer plans are at the lab. Supposedly alone at the lab, Fovea hears voices but that can't be right. She soon discovers that two defrosting heads are carrying on a conversation on the lab table. Try to wrap your head around that one! In a restricted room, Fovea tries to cover her tracks so her parents don't find out she was in that room, but the heads know she was there and they talk to her They want a favor from her but she must leave quickly before her parent return.

As Fovea tries to come to grips with her encounter, she notices that her parents are acting quite peculiar. Left alone again, Fovea makes some new discoveries on her own before talking to the men who sit on the table.

The men which now amount to three, still need a favor from Fovea and after what she had discovered, she

needs help from these men now too. It's quite an adventure for Fovea as she tries to help them and seek the answers she needs.

It's a silly escapade for Fovea to undertake but quite an entertaining journey for her summer vacation. I liked how there were a few illustrations inside the novel. I enjoyed having her grandma along for she added spark and entertainment to the adventure. The story moved quickly and I think the story will be enjoyed by kids who like their stories a bit crazy.

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### **Laura Sibson says**

Mary Winn Heider's debut novel is funny, absurd and full of heart, but those words don't do this book justice at all. This story is original and surprising. Heider takes a familiar set-up of the kid who is embarrassed by her parents and pushes that concept to its edges. There's nothing at all wrong with Fovea -- except that her parents own a cadaver lab. So she is contaminated by association. Heider's unique sense of humor and worldview mark each page, filling me with delight and forcing me to laugh out loud on more than one occasion. I love that Heider took Fovea's mortification (everyone in school calls her Igor after Frankenstein's helper) and asks: what if the worst possible thing happened? What if she DID need to help in the cadaver lab? It's not a spoiler to tell you that she DOES end up in the cadaver lab, where the hijinx that ensue are unpredictable and FUNNY! But the book isn't all laughs. Heider weaves in the full range of emotion in this novel allowing her main character, Fovea, to experience different types of loss and to develop new, deeper understandings of the people closest to her and of herself too.

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### **Rajiv says**

A BIG Thank You to NetGalley for providing me an advanced copy of "The Mortification of Fovea Munson" by Mary Winn Heider in exchange for my honest review.

This book was HI-LA-RI-OUS!! I LOVED reading it! There are very few books out there which make me laugh out loud throughout, and this was one of them.

I honestly cannot find anything to complain about this book. The story is unique and unlike anything I have read before. Even though the plot contains some pretty morbid matter like cadavers, appendages and cremators, it is written in such a light hearted manner that would intrigue the young ones to read without spooking them. The story has so many twists and turns happening that I was just glued to the pages to find out what happens next. At times the plot got so farfetched (like when Fovea realizes she has to find a baritone to entertain her new found friends) that I wondered where the author was going with this, but I think that is the reason why this book was SO good where I really didn't know how the story would turn out. In addition to that, it also touches on the values of friendship and how to deal with breakups and see the more important things in life.

Coming to the characters, Fovea is one of those characters that you can easily relate to, and her snarky sense of humor that makes the entire book so entertaining. In fact, up until the first twenty pages, I thought Fovea was a boy because of her unique name, and until Em mentions refers to her as a girl, I had no idea the main character is a girl (I just jumped into the book because I loved the cover). The supporting characters like



Howe, Whitney, Andy, McMullen and Grandma Van were also a treat to read. My favorite of course was Lake. He was the funniest amongst them all, and even though he was in the story for a while, he turned out to be a memorable character for me just because of his personality.

I have become a fan of Mary Winn Heider after reading this book and cannot wait till her next one comes out. The illustrations are also cute and add a whimsical tone to the book. I feel if you are a middle grade fan and are reading only 3 books this year, this should definitely be one of them “The Mortification of Fovea Munson”.

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