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# The Meaning Of Maggie



## Synopsis

As befits a future President of the United States of America, Maggie Mayfield has decided to write a memoir of the past year of her life. And what a banner year it's been! During this period, she's Student of the Month on a regular basis, an official shareholder in Coca-Cola stock, and defending Science Fair champion. Most importantly, though, this is the year Maggie has to pull up her bootstraps (the family motto) and finally learn why her cool dude dad is in a wheelchair, no matter how scary that is. Author Megan Jean Govern, herself the daughter of a dad with multiple sclerosis, writes with the funny grace and assured prose of a new literary star. A portion of the proceeds of the sale of this book will be donated to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

## Book Information

Paperback: 232 pages

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Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 88 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #393,090 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #44 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Multiple Sclerosis](#) #315 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Illness](#) #533 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Health > Diseases](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4-7 • In this humorous, fast-paced "memoir" set in Atlanta in the early 1990s, Maggie recounts the past "year that changed EVERYTHING!" She aspires to become President of the United States and continually mentions being an avid reader and excellent student. She struggles socially though, studying alone at lunchtime, not getting flowers on Valentine's Day, and procuring many teacher signatures in her yearbook, but very few from peers. On Maggie's 11th birthday, her father leaves his job as an airline ticket agent because his legs "won't wake up," (he is diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis) and her mother begins full-time work as a domestic at an elegant

hotel. Maggie has a caustic relationship with her older sisters who spend more time with hair, makeup, and boys than studies. She is determined to find a cure for her father, who falls out of his wheelchair, loses the ability to eat independently, suffers a seizure, and is hospitalized with a massive infection. As his multiple sclerosis worsens during the year, the fifth grader realizes how hard her mother works at her job and at home and that her mother and sisters have tried to shield her from the grim reality of her father's disease. Meanwhile, Maggie's parents tell stories of their adventuresome hippie pasts to encourage their daughters to live life to the fullest. They share their love of Neil Young, Led Zeppelin, Bruce Springsteen, and other bands of that era, and hold their family together with love, hard work, respect, and courage. Maggie learns that she can survive getting a B, run an entire mile, and bravely face her father's illness and extend support. Readers will appreciate Maggie's humor and rejoice in her growth. This is a remarkable story of a working-class family pulling together in the face of a serious illness. --Laura Scott, Farmington Community Library, MI --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Maggie Mayfield, 11, begins chronicling her life, because keeping a memoir is very important when you are a future U.S. president. This is the year that she will start middle school, defend her science fair title, and become a Coca-Cola shareholder. But while Maggie is acing her classes and keeping an eye on her flighty sisters, her father's health is failing. He quits his job, and her mom goes back to work, plus her sisters are acting even more strangely while everyone is adjusting to this new system. As her father's symptoms of multiple sclerosis become more severe, Maggie's hope is to find a cure with her science fair project. Maggie's story is at once optimistic but realistic. Typical school problems and family issues compete for attention, but she stays true to herself. Give this first novel to fans of other characters that are a little left of center, like Emma-Jean in Lauren Tarshis's *Emma-Jean Lazarus Fell Out of a Tree* (2007). Grades 4-7. --Tiffany Erickson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Really enjoyed this touching story. Loved the main character! She sounded like the kind of kid I'd love to have in class. I read a lot of novels geared toward middle grade readers. I'm always looking for "coming-of-age" novels I can recommend to my stronger reading students and possibly use as my next novel for reading together as a class. *The Meaning of Maggie* is one of the better books I have read from this category (and there have been several outstanding ones recently) and it will be high on my list of book recommendations this year. The main character is so likable and really shines. Her relationships with her family seem real and young readers (especially middle grade

girls) will really relate to her. The references to 70's music and pop culture are a fun addition also for someone who grew up during that era. I highly recommend this novel!

Riveting story of a family living with an increasingly incapacitating and fatal disease. The story, related through the perceptions of the youngest daughter, is written with sensitivity and love. The quiet strength of the mother and the acceptance of the father make this a must read for people of all ages. It is poignant, honest and loving. A perfect slice of life to make one ponder the grace and dignity this family chose as their way of coping with a difficult time in their lives.

Megan Jean Sovern nails it in her debut novel. My heart goes out to all those who cannot yet read at a third grade level. They are missing out on a wonderful young adult novel full of heart, humor and many mentions of delicious snack treats. And when I say full I'm talking about almost every sentence between these pages. If you want to spend four and a half hours with a family you'll wish was your own, read this book. If you want to spend more time than that I suggest reading slower. If you can put your faith in the words of a reviewer who calls himself "cupofpizza" you will be rewarded. If you cannot, you should dig deeper in your soul to find that faith.

A children's book dealing with a horrible disease that is somehow new and weird and hilarious, even for adults. It's a magical thing to pull off and Megan Sovern does it expertly. The humor is sophisticated and quirky while the subject matter is personal and endearing. Plus with a cover and tone like this, it's the kind of book you can give a 9 year old for their birthday and know full well they'll actually read it.

I thought the book was well written. It grabbed me in within the prologue. It very hard to put down. It's about an 11 year old girl growing up and dealing with a parent that has a serious medical issue. I could feel every emotion that Maggie felt and you .can see how she starts to understand what it means to grow up.

I can't say enough good things about this book. It was definitely well-written, but it was also heartfelt, funny, sincere and hopeful. Kids today (and adults too) need more books like this. You can tell the author poured every ounce of her soul into this novel and it shows. I'd love to read more from this author. (And sidenote, as someone who sometimes \*does\* judge books by their cover, I LOVE the cover art ;)

What a wonderful book! To see the world through the eyes of an 11 year old dealing with a parent's illness, as well as the the weight of the world - Megan Jean Sovern does an amazing job explaining who Maggie is and how she is feeling. You really understand who Maggie, and her family, are - and you want to know them. I hope that we hear more from this author.

I bought this book to use in my middle school classroom library. I haven't had a chance to read it, yet, because one of my students checked it out immediately and is very attached to the book. "This is so much like my own life!" Exactly what I hoped to hear from a student who prefers realistic fiction. I may need a second copy.

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