



One Whole and Perfect Day

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In this Michael L. Printz Honor Book, Lily wishes she could be like the other girls in her class. But how can she? As the only sensible person in her family, she never has time to hang out with friends. Someone has to stay home to look after her brother. Maybe she should fall in love! What could be less sensible than that? When her grandmother invites the whole family to a party, Lily cannot imagine how they will make it through the day. Her mother is always bringing home strange people. Lily doesn't even know her father. Her grandfather has disowned her brother. Her brother has a new girlfriend that no one has met. To top it all off, that day when her eye caught Daniel Steadman's just for a moment, she felt all woozy inside. If that was love, she isn't sure she likes the feeling. As the party approaches, all Lily can hope for is one whole and perfect day. Is it too much to ask?

One Whole and Perfect Day Details

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From Reader Review One Whole and Perfect Day for online ebook

elissa says

Whoo Hoo! Today this won a Printz Honor! I mentioned it at a meeting of all of the children's librarians at DCPL last month. Here's what I had to say before today: This book is full of satisfying coincidences and serendipitous occurrences. Plus it's funny and quirky. 4 1/2 stars (almost 5 stars). January 2008: Made YALSA's BBYA list!

Milly says

Audible Review

Aussie Reading Challenge #8

One Whole and Perfect Day was a pleasant and enjoyable read. The reader for the audible, Gretal Montgomery, was a delight to listen to. Her voice was sweet and joyful and kept me quite entertained. Her Australian accent was delightful to hear especially when she said "Pop", "Lonnie", "Clara". I could still hear her sweet and cute voice in my head and picture the characters in my head as clear as day.

One Whole and Perfect Day is about the life of a sensible 16-year old girl named Lily and her eccentric and dysfunctional family. Though she is the main character of the book, there are several points of views in the book, both long and short, told in the 3rd person. For this reason, the beginning of the book was a little confusing because of the constant changes in voices as each character is introduced, especially when listening to its audible version. Lily complains about her boring life and how she takes care of her disorganized and kind psychologist mother, Marigold, and her older and irresponsible brother, Lonnie. Secondary characters consists of her grandpa Stan and grandma May, Clara who is Lonnie's friend and Clara's mother, Rose. It's quite funny and interesting how these two families come in contact and connect in such serendipitous ways. The book is like a giant ball of yarn with the strands of each of these characters' lives smoothly and haphazardly intertwined into a one big ball of life.

I thought Judith Clarke did such a fine job crafting these larger than life characters. I personally enjoyed Stan's character because despite his gruff, he was all heart underneath. I personally connected with Clara and her family dynamics. I too grew up with a father who was highly critical and condescending of my mother and caused me to lose respect for my father. I too experienced being discriminated upon just like Clara's mother because I am of Asian descent and had to go through my high school senior year being labeled as a dog eater. However in Rose's (Clara's mother) case, she grew up being teased as a cat eater. The funny thing was, growing up in the Philippines, I recall my brother warning me to refrain from buying steamed meat buns from the Chinese fast food places for fear of it being made of cat meat. And since I was young and stupid then, I believed him. It's just interesting how ridiculous stories such as these travel far and wide.

Anyway, I digress. I thought Lonnie was cute and kind despite him being a little clueless and dreamy at times. I thought their Grandma May was sweet and adorable especially with regards to her invisible and childhood friend Seth. I had a friend like that too when I was little and I still call upon him when I'm feeling a little bit down and alone. He's one friend who's always there to listen. And I think May's relationship with Seth is very much the same.

And then there's Lily. Sensible Lily who was forced to grow up early and take care of the household because no one else would. Oh don't I know the feeling. But, I was never embarrassed of it like she was. I was quite proud of being sensible and independent! But Lily definitely entertained me with her curious ways and her experimentation of how to get the opposite sex to notice you. It made me reminisce of all the stupid things I would wear and do just to get a guy to notice me in high school. Oh the stupid things we did when we were young!

I thought Judith Clarke was an amazing writer with her ability to conjure such intricate lives and weave them effortlessly into eventful coincidences culminating into a one whole and perfect day of reunion, self-discovery, a promise of a better tomorrow, and a greater appreciation for family and friends for Lily, Clara, and their families. Unfortunately, because the ending is so perfect and could only exist in fairy tales, I was left not feeling completely convinced and impressed. However, if you are the type who enjoy happily ever afters multiplied by 10, then this book is definitely for you!

Nevertheless, after reading *One and Whole Perfect Day*, I am still in awe of Australian authors and writers!

Jess says

The characters spend a fair amount of time sleeping and dreaming, and the book ends up with an appropriately dreamy quality to it. It's got its details, though, and a delightfully large cast of characters, and the loveliest little descriptions of things. And while there is a great deal of coincidence, particularly at the end, the characters admit that so much coincidence is bizarre, and that things like this never happen to their family, and probably never will again: it is, of course, their one whole and perfect day. The characters cover a nice age range, too - our main character, Lily, is in high school, but we spend a fair amount of time with the parents and grandparents, with her older brother and other students at his college, all of which I enjoyed. I have to admit a particular fondness for Jessaline, the astigmatic linguistics student turned cooking student, who stays up late baking and passes around her cookies and cakes. I may have been a trifle biased in her favor.

PandaO.osheep says

This book was much too predictable and it was excruciatingly slow.
The fact that it had so many POVs could have been interesting but it ended up confusing and clumsy

Christine says

I couldn't finish this book. The characters were interesting, but not enough to keep me entertained. It felt very disjointed, and I was disappointed because normally I enjoy stories about wacky families, but this was one I just couldn't finish.

Katie says

This was definitely an enjoyable read. It doesn't have an intense plot, or any gasp-worthy twists and turns. The title is perfect, because that's what the main extent of the plot is- family and friends trying struggling to be whole, and one girl who pushes for it so she can have her "perfect day."

What I really liked about it was the changing characters. Though it's written in 3rd person, each character has a story and purpose (except for one character- Jessaline. I didn't really understand how she fit) so there isn't really one main character. I also liked the age variations. With most young adult books, you only get a glimpse into the head of the teenage narrator, but these characters spanned from early teens to early eighties.

Everybody connects in a way. When I got into it, I was incredibly confused at why so many characters were being written such large parts, but it all fits. Everybody fits together, hence why the word whole is so perfect for the title. (Almost funny? Probably not. I'm lame, I know) Everybody's issues, which every character has some, intertwine so wonderfully that I appreciated their flaws so much more at the end.

I finished it fairly quickly considering it's not very long. It's not the kind of book that you'll get swept away in, but it's something that definitely will lift your spirits. I laughed a lot, and probably smiled throughout the entire thing. I recommend picking it up, and saving it for a rainy day when you're not feeling so awesome- it'll make you feel a lot better, I promise!

Donalyn says

This book droned on and on for much longer than a day. I just couldn't attach to any of the characters and I wonder if any teen readers would...

Jaemi says

Lily Samson is sure her family is the craziest. Her brother lolls around, dropping in and out of school, unable to find a path in life. Her Pop, though she loves him, is a bona fide racist (as far as she's concerned), her Nan has an invisible friend, her mother is fond of bringing home clients from work to stay with them, and Lily, in all her Year Ten glory, is the responsible one in the house. Her friends giggle about boys, she makes shopping lists. Her friends makes up new words, she makes dinner plans. Really, there's most definitely something wrong here.

Lonnie, errant brother, has moved out after a blow-out with Pop, involving an axe. Living in a Boarding House for Gentleman, and once again enrolled in school, he's still trying to find his way. His mother, with no real way to know how he's doing, worries. Endlessly and pointlessly, if you ask Lily. Indeed, Lonnie nearly does repeat his cycle yet again, but a little intervention stays his hand. In fact, meeting Clara has changed the world for Lonnie, and all for the better.

Back at home, Lily has concluded she needs to fall in love. It seemed just the answer to her premature aging. And yet, once decided, she quickly changes her mind and finds the whole process of having a crush to be quite horrid. Unfortunately, she can't go back.

She's sure as anything that Daniel Steadman doesn't even know she exists; across town Daniel is plagued with dreams of a mystery girl with a beautiful voice.

Waking in a frenzy one night, unable to recall the color of his mother's eyes, Pop takes a trip to his old neighborhood at Nan's urging. Most of it is gone, replaced with stores and shops and food all foreign to him. Worse yet, while sitting on a bench recollecting, he calls aloud a most unfortunate phrase and insults the Chinese woman who just happened to be across the way at the time. He runs for it, but determined not to take abuses anymore, she chases him down. They find in one another an unexpected friend.

Nan, feeling certain that the family needs a celebration, decides to hold a party for Pop's eightieth birthday. A grand event, it will be! She's just sure it will help Pop and Lonnie to reconcile. She's been pestering Lily to try to make it happen, and to make sure Lon comes to the event. Though Lily is certain this can only end badly, what with Clara being Chinese, she does as asked.

In fact, Lily decides this party is important. Maybe the most important thing in their lives. She needs it to be a success. And because he hears this quiet desperation in his sister's voice, Lonnie agrees. To make up, and to attend. Lily can only hope it will be the one, perfect day she feels she, and they all, deserve.

Bekka says

4 1/2 stars -

This is really a lovely, beautiful little book about an average family in Australia. I particularly enjoyed the story being told from all the various points of view, even those characters who would normally be throwaways in other novels. I also loved how all those various threads came together in the end to create Lily's whole and perfect day. Highly Recommended!

Booknut says

What if you could have one, whole perfect day - a day as perfect as your gran's spongecake, as a pure blue sky, as a shiny coin or as perfect as a cool breeze winding its way through a hot town in summer? How much effort would you put in? Who would you include? And what changes would you make in your life, and to yourself, to try and make it last?

A heartwarming, raw and simply put tale of a family whose idiosyncrasies, imaginary friends, red faces, dishcloths, Bestie magazines and Bronte books make them who they are...and maybe that is better than being perfect.

Kirsti says

I first picked up this book at an 'Op Shop', drawn in by the cover. Mine is slightly different to the hardcover image show here, showing a blue but cloudy sky, and a pink chocolate cake with a bite missing on a pink plate. For some odd reason I felt like I should read this book, so I bought it and put it off for a few weeks until reading it today.

This is the story of family. Not the family, not a family, but of everyone's family. We have members who miss other family members, miss friends, miss times long past. We have members not wanting what they have now, or not understanding it. We have bonds that stretch through lifetimes, inconsequential memories and meetings turning into so much more. Most of all, we have the sense of what it is to be human, to want, to fight, to love.

All of the characters have their own motivations, their own reasons for reacting as they do. Lily sees her Pop as 'racist' and as a 'bigot', but never questions why his views might differ from hers. This is just one example of how the characters start off as being self focused, but as the book progresses they realize that they have to let people into their lives for them to be complete. They have to make it so no one 'slips through the cracks' and gets forgotten. My favorite instance of this was with Pop, not being able to remember what his mother looked like or the color of her eyes. It is only when he thinks of Lonnie, the grandson whom he has 'disowned', that he can remember. It is keeping this little memories close, smells, sights, memories.

So just a really good book, the kind that makes you feel like you should have a family Reunion of your own at the end, or at least appreciate those who ARE in your life a little more.

Rachel says

I am now officially addicted to Aussie YA books, especially the ones which have been short-listed or have some award-stamp on the cover. What can I say, I have high standards hahaha.

When I first began reading this novel, say when I was about two chapters in, the first thing I took note of was Judith Clarke's writing style. How she took the classic approach, introducing the family first and then going into the story. I loved it, because most of the books I've been reading lately have just gone straight into the plot. Don't get me wrong, I love those kinds of books too (some of my favourites fall under that category), but it was nice to see a change.

After reading the first three chapters it was safe to say that I was completely and utterly engaged in this novel. I loved how Judith Clarke wrote in third person and in different points of view, and how all the characters were tied together in some way, whether they knew it or not. I found myself sympathising with all the different characters, whether they were teenagers or old grandfathers. It was amazing how much I loved this book! The ending was so freaking sweet and I loved it so much. I will now be eagerly looking out for Judith Clarke's other novels! She's sure written a lot :o Good thing too, seeing as she is very promising :)
Rating: 5/5, no question about it.

oliviasbooks says

One whole and perfect book filled with wacky, but realistic and endearing characters, family problems, love, forgiveness and a whole bunch of delightful coincidences - felt like it was written just for me.

I am so glad that I had finally caved in and ordered a copy. The Printz Honor title entered and left my wishlist several times starting in 2008, when the home of my virtual shelves was still at Anobii.com. But somehow my positive gut feelings overpowered the doubts brought on by the bad average rating and the lack of gushing reviews.

And here I am: Grinning and perfectly happy after rushing through the multiple-voiced story of the Samson family, which made me cry twice in one evening.

A note on rereading this book half a year later: Judith Clarke's multi-POV (eight, to be correct), very Aussie family story (it's not strictly YA. It's all age at its best) gets even more magical when you are gleefully anticipating all the wonderful interactions of the realistically flawed, but oh-so-unavoidably-lovely characters and those incredibly gut-warming coincidences. I could *eat* that book, honestly.

Heidi-Marie says

This is completely a character-driven book. It took me a while (after some confusion) to realize this book wasn't what I had expected. There is not much of a story, which I had to train myself to get used to. Once you realize it is all about the characters, it becomes interesting. It felt like I was an observer of one chunk of life that begged me for character analysis, especially as it relates to my own life, knowledge, and experiences.

The book was much lighter than I expected--especially as it's a Printz Honor book. (I've come to associate different books than this with that award.) Yet the book had depth if one chose to look more deeply into the characters. (Maybe why it was a Print Honor.) I liked that it wasn't a dysfunctional family in the way that term seems to have become, but just a family that is different from others. (Whose isn't?) The book was actually more refreshing than I expected, which may be one reason why it WAS refreshing. And I can't help enjoying the very Dickens-ian way it all came together in the end. (Once I suspected this was happening, I began to enjoy the book more.)

The audio was a lot of fun, as I enjoyed hearing the Australian accent. I don't hear that one as often. And some dialectal words were just too fun to listen to! Plus, the narrator did a good job in not influencing your mind on how to think of each character.

Christie says

It wouldn't be nice to go into all the reasons I didn't like this book. Let's just say the action is predictable and convenient. This is one of those books that gives the YA genre the reputation of being just for kids.
