



## **Happiness In Jersey**

*Jacinta Howard*

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The only thing in Jersey Kincaid's world that she has time for are keeping her grades up so that she doesn't lose her scholarship to South Texas University, playing the bass in her band, The Prototype, and satisfying her coffee addiction. Oh, and the occasional random hook-up she indulges in to pass the time.

Love? Eh, not so much. Save that crap for a Katherine Heigl or Natalie Portman movie.

Jersey's seen enough in life (courtesy of her Pops) to realize that undying romance is nothing more than a myth used to sell books and movie tickets. As she knows too well, the only thing inevitable in life is death—love is definitely not promised.

That's why when Jersey meets Isaiah "Zay" Broussard with his soulful gray eyes, quick wit and easy charm, she's determined to remain aloof. She doesn't have time to get sidetracked by fleeting fantasies, even if she does feel an unexplainable connection to Zay she's never experienced before.

But when his interest in her only seems to intensify, despite her attempts to brush him off, she gets to see a side of him and herself she didn't expect...

## **Happiness In Jersey Details**

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Author : Jacinta Howard

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## From Reader Review Happiness In Jersey for online ebook

### **EatSleepReadReview says**

Finding that one person in life who makes you a better person is never easy. Love takes time and patience. It also takes two people willing to make it work. But when your soul has been trampled on and beaten down to the point that you don't feel as if you deserve the happiness they can give you, it makes for a tough and rocky relationship, even if you know that relationship can be everything you want it to be. Such is the story of Jersey and Zay.

Emotionally broken and carrying around a ton of baggage, Jersey is a tough character to like in the beginning. Her past is truly heartbreak and you so badly want to understand and sympathize with her, but at the same time, smack her upside the head for some of her actions. Living with an emotionally and verbally abusive father after losing her mother, hardened her in ways no one should have to be. Mentally she tries to come across tough, but we all know it's those types who are usually hurting the worst and it's only a matter of time until they fall apart.

Zay is perfect in every aspect. I mean, I totally fell in love with him. He's beautiful, talented, flawed, tough and just about the sweetest damn man on earth. Dealing with his own issues, he's been where Jersey's at, so he understand where she's coming from and through that understanding, he commits himself to helping her work through her past. But, please don't take his sweetness and confuse it with being a mushy pushover, because he's anything but. Jealous and opinionated, he has alpha tendencies without being severely dominating. He's patient, kind, but also more than willing to call Jersey out on her actions and feelings. I honestly think he's the most perfect hero that I have ever come across. There is just something about him you can't help but love.

"That wall you have up? I'm patient and curious enough to find out what behind it."

Full of emotions that literally drive this story home, Happiness in Jersey is an outstanding read, which I'd highly recommend. I teetered on the edge of 4 or 5 stars. Four only because it took me a while to get into it. The beginning is a bit slow and as I mentioned, Jersey isn't one that you immediately fall in love with. Five because when it takes off, it drags you in and you won't want to put it down. It's one you'll be thinking about when you're away from the story and continue to care for and want to know about the characters even after it comes to an end. For me that is always deserving of a five star read.

Clear and beautiful writing with believable and attention grabbing dialogue, Ms. Howard delivers a heart-wrenching tale of finding that one person in life who makes you whole.

A complimentary copy was received from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Kizzy says**

Another hit from Jacinta!!

I received an ARC for my honest opinion. Three words: I LOVED IT!!

Like her other book, I felt connected to the characters, which I liked. Jersey is in a band with her friends Devin, Travis and Bam. Travis' cousin Isaiah (Zay) comes over while they are practicing and he is instantly drawn to her.(calling her Kitten)..She tried to convince him and everyone else that she was not interested in him, but as time goes on, that changes.

Jersey is a strong young woman and she has some issues all due to her father. what a piece of work he was. I felt bad for her because she felt that she couldn't be loved or was capable of loving someone, but Zay was there letting her know otherwise. He was amazing! We learn something about him too and it breaks your heart to know the hurt he went through.

He joined the band singing and the chemistry between him and Jersey was amazing. A favorite part of mine was him singing Marvin Gaye to Jersey and it was so heartfelt. He was so patient with her and wouldn't take no for an answer. There was a point where I wondered why Jersey acted the way she did (after that beautiful connection they shared)..causing more hurt for the both of them. Do they make their way back to each other? You have to read to find out!!

Let me just say another couple to look out for are Willow and Devin. I loved them too and hope we get their book in the future. I wouldn't mind one for Travis and Bam either ;)

Add this book to your TBR list today! You'll be drawn in from the beginning. Jacinta, awesome job and I can't wait for the next one!

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### **Mstcat says**

Read this book! Really! So beautifully written and gripping. Review to come...

Here's my full review of *Happiness in Jersey*

*Happiness in Jersey* is the opposite of wack. In fact, it's anti-wack! Okay, I'm gonna stop with the "wack" references for now (there are a few very cute scenes where this word comes up - I couldn't help myself!), and I'm going to get to my review. I want to say upfront that I hate YA books. Okay hate might be a tad strong, but they aren't my favorite. That said, I loved *Happiness in Jersey*! Loved it!

What it is about: *Happiness in Jersey* is about a young woman named Jersey. Jersey is a sophomore in college, lives on campus, has a perfectly sweet roommate named Willow, and a best friend named Devin. Devin has been Jersey's friend since they were kids. Both Devin and Jersey are members of a band named Prototype, where Jersey plays bass and Devin the drums. She is a girl that doesn't form emotional attachments, particularly with the opposite sex. In her mind death is the only certainty in life, and love is just a fabrication. She has sex, but doesn't date or have boyfriends. Her past is a sad one in which she grew up with an alcoholic father who seemed to blame her for the death of her mother who suffered from postpartum depression and committed suicide when Jersey was just a baby. But then Jersey meets Isaiah, (everybody calls him Zay). Zay is the cousin of one of the band members and he's just moved from New Orleans. It doesn't take long for Zay to become interested in Jersey and she in him. As Jersey gets to know Zay she discovers he's more than just good looks. He seems to understand her on a level that no one else does. And for a girl like Jersey that is terrifying.

This is such a wonderful book that I find I don't have to go into great depth about what I liked or disliked

about it. It was a beautifully written story about falling in love, but it was also about fighting fear and overcoming the sorrow, unhappiness, and loss of the past for the promise of the future. We get fantastic secondary characters who are there for more than just window dressing. Willow, Devin, Trav, and Bam are all fleshed out characters with distinctive personalities. They each have a role in the story and in Jersey's (and Zay's) life. Readers also get a heroine that's far from cookie cutter, and some of the best banter I've read in a long time. There isn't much more that I can say without taking away from the experience of reading *Happiness in Jersey*. If you are like me you'll laugh, cry a little, get angry and frustrated, and fall a little bit in love with Zay yourself. I so recommend getting this book and taking the journey with Jersey as she discovers her happiness. *Happiness in Jersey* gets a 5 out of 5 rating from me. As for the author Jacinta Howard? Well, she's got a new fan.

*I received a copy of this book in exchange for a fair and honest review*

Catch more of my reviews at [http://romancebetweenthecovers.blogspot...](http://romancebetweenthecovers.blogspot.com)

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**--karen Green-berry says**

#### **Another Great Read- BRAB Online Book Club**

Jersey Kincaid has had a tough childhood, never actually knowing her mother and living with an emotionally abusive father; resulted in some very bad choices. Her saving grace was playing bass in a band with her best friend Devin, while attending college.

Isaiah "Zay" Broussard, was a young man who experienced a very tragic event when he lost his brother and sister in an accident. As part of his healing process, he left New Orleans for a fresh start. The first time he saw Jersey rehearsing with her band, he felt an instant attraction.

The author's great storytelling skill comes into play as she takes her readers on Jersey and Zay's journey towards healing. It is brilliantly written and took me along for the emotional ride. I really enjoyed this book and look forward to reading more of her work in the future.

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**Deloris says**

This book is blues and love, the song of Zay and Jersey's relationship was like a well written song. The first time Zay lays eyes on Jersey I knew their story would be powerful and I was not disappointed. I was emotionally connected to these characters I cared and rooted for them even when they did not act as I wanted them to. They shared music and I could hear the music as the played on stage. The very first time Zay had a performance I was there too the author showed me and I loved the way he sang . When Jersey and Devin were rocking on their band I was there too and more important I went looking for the songs to be sure what I was hearing. Jersey and Zay have a musical story, a real love you through the pain even when you don't think no one can love you story , and when you finish the last page you will feel like I feel happy because this author wrote a book and it's damn good music.

I Loved it just as much reading it the second time ❤?❤?

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## Meka♥books says

### 4.5 stars upgraded to 5

This is one of those fill good books. The type you can't get enough of. The type of story you can read at any hour. The type of book with the right amounts of humor, angst, and slow burn. **Happiness in Jersey** has all those elements and more. It is a well crafted romance that stirred every emotion in me while reading. Simply put, it's damn good.

I don't want to summarize the characters or the story like I tend to do, but what I will say is that this is a story about accepting yourself, overcoming fear/self doubt, trust, and allowing love in. **Happiness in Jersey** also made me understand the sentiment of having a *book boyfriend*. Isaiah, aka Zay did this for me. His example of what flirting is had me swooning over him like Debra Messing's character Kat in the movie **The Wedding Date**.

Kudos to author Jacinta Howard for writing **Happiness in Jersey** which takes your emotions on a rollercoaster ride and showcases a great plot and character development. If you're into well written stories with angst, delicious *book boyfriends*, and humor, then this is for you.

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## Delaney Diamond says

So, Jacinta Howard is two for two. I love her writing voice. She's skilled at sucking you into a story, and after this one I'm looking forward to whatever else she writes. Despite the fact that these are young people, they're very mature because of their life's experiences, and I actually enjoyed **Happiness in Jersey** more than I did her first book – **Better Than Okay**. I didn't even think that was possible.

This is another story about young love (Jacinta has me being all cougar-ish, falling in love with these perfect, twenty-something heroes of hers). Jersey plays in a college band, and Zay is related to one of the band members and joins the band, too. These two are perfect together, but it takes some time for Jersey to accept this is the man for her. But have no fear, Zay is persistent!

There's a cast of secondary characters that I enjoyed and whose stories I want told ASAP, romance, and enough of a painful past to make the reader empathize with the hero and heroine and root for them to come out on top. Kudos for great storytelling!

A+++

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## Victoria says

This is an APB Perspective Review.. Well I am finally done... and the notation from the author at the back helped me understand my difficulty initially with the book. With that said. ..I have again fallen in love with Jacinta's writing. HIJ is a layered read. She took us on a journey through the many layers that made Jersey

the girl I grew to Love. I was a Zay fan out the gate and Jersey needed a strong Male character to help counter act that NO good SOAB called her dad. The emotional growth was told in real life speed. This book is very indicative of her growth as a writer as it fosteted the amazing skills revealed in Better than okay. Nice job Ms. Howard

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## Lustful Literature says

### **\*\* MEGAN's 5 STAR REVIEW \*\***

This quite possibly be the hardest review I've had to write. Why? Well, because my words won't come close to how awesomely awesome this book is. I've highlighted my butt off and I want to add so many quotes or simple lines because I'll never be able to tell you how I feel when I read it. I will try though.

I just came off a stellar 3-book series and I probably was an idiot to start a book the next day because I thought I'd be in a book hang-over. But, I guess when a book is good like Happiness in Jersey my book hangover will just be extended! I am soooo OKAY with that!

The first sentence I smiled.

The first paragraph I repeated out loud to my husband and we both laughed. And then when she put on her Spider-man undies I knew I would be all about this book!

Jersey- aka "Cookie Monster" is a oreo eating, bass playing, Different World obsessed college student who isn't looking for her one. She has fun with some but she isn't interested in love anything. She's grade driven and constantly worried so she won't loose her scholarship. I have to admit, I kind of fell for her actually!!! I loved her attitude, her mannerism, her flare. She was quick-witted, snarky and hilarious. She didn't take crap from anyone.

One of my favorite parts of a romance book is when the two 'meant to be' characters meet for the first time. There is something about that first interaction, that first hello, the first smile. When it's done good I feel the flutter in my tummy. When Jersey and Zay meet- I FELT IT!!!! I felt myself grinning deep when Jersey locked eyes with "Zay" in the middle of her band's rehearsal. The entire time she sang and he stared I was so content with what was happening on my kindle.

*'A pair of gray eyes were staring right at me. They belonged to a face I hadn't seen before and definitely wasn't expecting. His eyes trained on mine, peering at me like he knew me.'*

Isaiah “Zay” Broussard- let’s have a chat about Zay, shall we?! Well first off, I love him. Not only because we share the same last name, but simple because of HIM. He was fun, cute, playful, very genuine, he had the perfect comebacks for Jersey. The exchange between them, for a reader, the best type to read.

**“So, it’s Zay as in Isaiah?”**

**“Yep. So, it’s Jersey as in ...New?”**

**“Are you an as\_as in ...hole?”**

**“You’re cute kitten.”**

**“Just don’t call me kitten,**

**“Okay, Kitten, I’ll try.”**

Do you know how hard it is to find books with adorably spontaneous connection that makes you feel like you are a teenager lusting over the hot guy in class? Those butterflies twirling around deep down. Your cheeks pinned up in a smile.

**“You’re beautiful and adorable. My favorite combination.”**

**“I guess I should feel special now?”**

**“You should always feel special, Kitten. You obviously didn’t watch enough Barney growing up.”**

**“I was more of a Power Ranger’s girl.”**

I know in all books there must be some mystery, some hidden plot that at 70% we will drop our jaw in unbelievablity. But I LOVE when there is no mystery when one of the characters can easily admit that he/she likes the other. I find that even cuter than the brooding male keeping his feelings hidden until finally he gives a nice “baby” term of endearment when he finally realizes he likes/loves the girl.

**“I like you.”**

**“I’m thrilled.”**

**“That almost hurt my feelings.”**

**“You think you really know me well enough to like me?”**

**“I asked Travis a lot more than you think.”**

Jersey and Zay both have personal issues that they keep to themselves. Zay is a little more open with who he

lets in while Jersey keeps the select few she lets in close and when she starts letting her thoughts run wild you slowly see she's alone in the world besides her 'family'...her small in number family. But Zay just might be what she needs..... He just has to get in there. Zay being "Zay" does just what she needs and just what I love. He's there. Around the corner, after her work, at school, at practice. There when she needs. A friend. Some one who she can talk to...open up to.

***"I think I fell a little bit in love with you again today, FYI."***

***"What happens when you fall all the way in love with me? I'm pretty irresistible"***

***"You are irresistible, Kitten. Think you can handle it when that happens?"***

***"Because I think I kind might be halfway there already."***

She's dealing with, now in our literary world, normal issues but for her and the way it comes across I sympathize with her. She's off to college, taking care of herself-nothing new there. When her only living family treats her as though she's a long distant relative. Zay tries and tries and never gives up (another redeeming quality of his) He knows she's dealing with something heavy and he knows kid gloves are needed but she doesn't want to let anyone in. But she really can't help it when it's Isaiah.

Now, the good stuff right. I'm sure you are shaking your head going- now the good stuff? What was all that ^?!! That was just a little of the great stuff. People! I can't quote the entire thing!!

**GO BUY IT!!!**

5 STARS! FIVE amazing, awesome, butterflies in my stomach, smiling, swoon-tastic STARS!!!

This was just the book I needed after finished a heavy series. It was so very goosebumpy all the way through. I was excited every time Zay was on the page. How can I not give this 5 stars when this is MY kind of book.

***"So, can I keep you?"***

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**Kim says**

Such a deep and profound love story between Zay and Jersey. I really enjoyed it.

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**Romance Novels in Color says**

With Jersey Kinkaid and Isaiah “Zay” Broussard you see love meet and love unfold. Jersey is protective of Jersey, she’s guarded and portrays a “don’t care” attitude. It is what got her this far in life. It is what helped her survive the suicide of her mother and being raised by a “fault Jersey” drunkard as a father. It is what helped her with relationships, which she doesn’t do.

In steps Zay, and he sees her with new eyes. You feel that no one was ever meant to see her that way, no one other than Zay. Then Jersey’s “don’t care” attitude betrays her as she begins to feel Zay, his presence, whether he’s near or far. He occupies her thoughts, whether she’s asleep or awake. She begins to crave him because he provides something never provided to her before, a safe, non-judgmental comfort zone. Although father-and-daughter relationship was tumultuous at best, it is what she grew up with. Acceptance is a small price to pay for the guilt she feels about her mother’s death. However, her dad shows growth, as he decides he needs to move on, which gives her the clue that maybe she needs to move on, too and admit she’s human, that she has feelings and she is deserving of love. Love which is offered patiently and unconditionally...by none other than Zay.

This is my second book by Jacinta Howard and she has solidified her position as a romance writer to be reckoned with, the breakout writer of the year. She not only tells the story, but she makes you feel. She makes you want to crawl under the covers with Jersey and cry with her, she makes you feel vulnerable and yet able to overcome. This book is so beautifully written and it flows at the right pace from beginning to end.

-Reviewed by Sophie

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### **Ciarra Hedges says**

So I finished the book. It was great just as I knew it would be! I think I feel I love with Zay a little lol. But seriously, it was great. It was a reminder of the power of love. It took me back too... To a time when possibilities were endless & I thought I was grown lol. So although the target audience is the younger crowd, I'm sure the older crowd would enjoy it as well because it has the power to bring you back to teenage years.

It's very refreshing. It also takes you away from life. When I'm reading, I acknowledge and admire a book that can really create a new reality for me.

I'm a sucker for layers! This book has tons of layers & I think that's the difference between telling a good story and creating a great story.

Last thing! Usually, as readers we tend to go along with what the main character is doing but I was pleased to find that I was able to relate to all of the characters. Although I do relate to Jersey in more ways than one. I really enjoyed the book.

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### **Beyond the Pages says**

Happiness in Jersey was a deeply emotional book. Not only was it about a couple coming together, it was also about two individuals learning to forgive themselves and to move on from their troubled pasts.

Jersey, the main character, was a scarred, scared, empty young woman upon first meeting. She was a user who seemed to think running through males was what she deserved. She would not commit to anyone. She only committed to herself, her schooling, and her music. It was obvious that she was searching. She was lost.

Jersey's past was one of abuse, neglect, loneliness, and isolation. She was drowning under the weight of her father's ridicule, as well as haunted by the death of her mother. And therein was the problem.

Zay, Jersey's bandmate, friend, lover, and ultimately her love, was... Well, he was something. He was attracted to Jersey from the get go. He was drawn to her and he had no problem letting her know it. He was direct, mature, patient, passionate, romantic, sensitive, and unreal. Where Jersey was concerned, he was hopelessly fallen. This man loved this woman - his woman - fiercely, despite all her fears and reservations.

I loved how protective Zay was of Jersey. I loved how he tried to shield her. He respected and loved her even when she did not respect or love herself.

I found it interesting how even though Jersey hurt Zay a lot, she was also mindful of his feelings. Of his hurts. Of his loss. The anniversary scene of his siblings death and her mother's birthday was touching. It was noteworthy because it was a major turning point for both of them.

The way these two came together was so explosive for want of a better word. The emotional connection, the physical chemistry, it was all right somehow.

The supporting characters in this book were great. I would certainly read some of their stories. Willow and Devin intrigued me.

This book was not necessarily the easiest read for me. It did not pull me in right away, but as I kept going, I wanted to see Jersey and Zay move past themselves and to make it happen in terms of a relationship. I wanted them to work. I especially wanted to see Jersey get to the place where she would stop seeing herself so negatively or so unworthy and broken.

Lastly, this book had such a sweet ending. I loved that Jersey found a home, a family, and a true partner who loved her unconditionally.

Rating: 3/5

Audience: Adult

Status: Mature (adult situations, sexual content)

A complimentary e-copy of this title was made available for review in exchange for an honest critique. The words I have shared are my own.

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### **Christina Jones says**

This was my first read from Jacinta, and will definitely not be the last! Jersey and Zay's story took. Me. Through. It! (it =emotional gauntlet. Jeez!) Jersey was funny without trying, and sympathetic without coming off as whiny. She was also tiresome, but understandably so. Her hard shell was formed to deal with

some effed up things (that daddy of hers makes me stabby), but it was really sweet to watch Zay break through alladat to get down to the real Jersey. That boy had AWWWWWWW the patience in the world, but it was exactly what she needed, and I found myself relieved that he didn't give up on her. Their journey was emotional without veering into corny, and beautifully compelling. Great writing, great read, and would totally recommend!

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### **Carol [Goodreads Addict] says**

Happiness in Jersey by Jacinta Howard is one of those books that your heart just wasn't prepared for. It just grabs you and doesn't let go. For me, the tell-tale sign is that when I wake up in the morning, my first thoughts are about the main character in the book, Jersey. I was worried about her. How is she? What's going to happen next? Yes, in other words, I was obsessed.

Jersey Kinkaid doesn't believe in love. The only thing inevitable in life is death, she believes. She tries to make people believe she is tough. She is a sophomore at South Texas University on scholarship, works at Aroma coffee shop and plays bass in the band, Prototype. This has nothing to do with the story but it might be that I felt so much for this young girl because my Mom was a bass player during my growing up years. The music they played was quite different, of course, but I can totally understand the workings of a musician's mind. My Dad was also a musician and my son currently is. Ok, now that that is out of the way, I want to tell you more about Jersey.

Jersey's growing up years were not good. Her Dad is a drunk and over her lifetime has never shown her any kind of love or support. When things get tough and Jersey can't stand the pressure inside her chest, she will have random hook-ups with guys for sex. Or turn to music. Music was her solace. But the night Isaiah "Zay" Broussard walked in during a Prototype rehearsal, with his gray sexy eyes, everything changed.

***"I turned and looked at him, this guy I'd known for just a few weeks but seemed to innately understand me better than anyone ever had. The way he affected me was so thorough it was starting to overwhelm my hesitation, tear down my carefully constructed walls. I felt naked and exposed, and I was starting to not mind it. Part of me wanted him to know me."***

But Jersey did not believe in love. Feelings would inevitably change and she would end up getting hurt. She is determined not to let him in.

***"Nothing good could come of this, of these feelings I was having for him."***

***"It's better to let it go, to let him go now because the truth is, if I don't protect myself, then nobody else will."***

Zay has had pain in his past as well. He needed this change of location, this fresh start. And the first time he laid eyes on Jersey, he knew he needed her as well. Zay plays guitar and finds a place for himself in their band, Prototype. But as tensions grow between himself and Jersey, it definitely effects the other members. Can he convince Jersey to let down her walls?

*“You!” he bellowed, throwing his hands up in frustration. “You’re my problem! You’re my solution! You’re my high; you’re my low! You’re my muse; you’re my pain! It’s you. Everything! Everything I do and think and breathe is you!”*

The band, Prototype, is slowly gaining momentum, gaining a following. But at the same time, Jersey is struggling with herself. She is a young woman forced to grow up so much faster than she should have, forced to be independent, not wanting to rely on anyone but herself. My heart ached for her as she was forced to re-examine everything she believed and as I watched as she denied her heart the love being offered. Zay is so patient and loving. Can he convince her that love is worth taking a chance on? I hope you’ll read this wonderful book to find out.

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