



# Kissing Max Holden

*Katy Upperman*

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**Kissing Max Holden** Katy Upperman

Kissing Max Holden was a terrible idea...

After his father has a life-altering stroke, Max Holden isn't himself. As his long-time friend, Jillian Eldridge only wants to help him, but she doesn't know how. When Max climbs through her window one night, Jill knows that she shouldn't let him kiss her. But she can't resist, and when they're caught in the act by her dad, Jill swears it'll never happen again. Because kissing Max Holden is a terrible idea.

With a new baby sibling on the way, her parents fighting all the time, and her dream of culinary school up in the air, Jill starts spending more and more time with Max. And even though her father disapproves and Max still has a girlfriend, not kissing Max is easier said than done. Will Jill follow her heart and allow their friendship to blossom into something more, or will she listen to her head and stop kissing Max Holden once and for all?

## Kissing Max Holden Details

Date : Published August 1st 2017 by Swoon Reads

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Author : Katy Upperman

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## **From Reader Review Kissing Max Holden for online ebook**

### **Christina says**

LOVED this one! Katy Upperman gives us a realistic story about two teens dealing with impossible family situations who can't deny the magnetic pull they feel toward each other.

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### **Rebecca Ross says**

This book has been on my radar ever since I first saw the title (kissing? YES PLEASE). So I was extremely happy to get my hands on an ARC.

First things first:

Before reading this, make the best homemade cookies or brownies or cakes or tarts that you can. Or go buy some from a bakery. I promise that you are gonna want something sweet and delicious while you read this, because our heroine Jilly bakes some incredible treats throughout this book and I was pining after them.

Secondly, don't plan to read just one chapter. I pretty much sat down one evening and ended up reading over half the book, staying up way past my bedtime. It was just too good to put down.

I honestly don't read too much contemporary these days, but this book seriously made me feel like I was 17 again. The butterflies. Those sleepless nights. Growing pains. College dreams. Little siblings. The boy you simply cannot get out of your head. I honestly felt it all again, like it was yesterday, which is why I love YA more than anything else, and why I truly loved this book!

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### **Sara says**

Second read - the ARC. Loved it just as much the second time around.

I was able to read this when it was up on Swoon Reads and it's amazing. Can't wait to be able to hold this book and read it again.

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### **Stacee says**

BFF to more is one of my favorite tropes and even though I wasn't thrilled with the girlfriend aspect, I was excited to read this book.

I love love loved Jillian. She's strong and loyal and one hell of a baker. I enjoyed how passionate she was

about pastries and my mouth was watering over all of the things she made. Max was cocky and sweet and so so infuriating. Together they were adorable.

Plot wise, there was a good amount of push and pull between Jillian and Max, but I could overlook a lot of it because Jillian never backed down. She stood up for herself, she spoke her feelings even when Max didn't or wouldn't. The small miscommunications also didn't register too much because they were open about so many other, more major issues.

This story is heavily character driven and I loved every part of it. Well, except for Jillian's dad, but whatever. I would have liked just a little bit more from the ending, but it was satisfying at the same time. I'm sure I'll be skimming parts of this book in the future.

**\*\*Huge thanks to Swoon Reads for providing the arc free of charge\*\***

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### **Riley Edgewood says**

Oh man. This book. THIS BOOK.

This book gracefully broke my heart. And then triumphantly pieced it (mostly) back together. Upperman's created a beautifully complicated story full of romance and complex characters and heart aching hard situations--but without ever allowing a reader to lose hope.

The main character, Jillian, is strong from the start. She knows what she wants and how her world works and she's had her sights set on a prestigious culinary arts school for as long as she can remember. And then there's Max, the boy she grew up with who lives across the street. He's a damn mess--but with good reason. He's the kind of bad boy who's really worth rooting for because Upperman gives readers a window into his heart and his mind and his life.

Put the two of them in the same scene? Jilly and Max? Oh man, the chemistry is ridiculous. Tie it all together with a plot that keeps you guessing and prose that makes the ride completely gorgeous, and you've got a romance that you'll never forget reading and one hell of an amazing book.

The book's pub date isn't until 2017. Which, yes, is basically forever from now, but trust me--it'll be worth the wait.

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### **Jasmine from How Useful It Is says**

About: *Kissing Max Holden* is a young adult contemporary written by Katy Upperman. It was published on 8/1/17 by Swoon Reads, an imprint of Macmillan, hardcover, 304 pages. The genres are contemporary, young adult, romance, and fiction. This book is intended for readers ages 13 to 18 and it is the author's debut novel.

My Experience: I started reading *Kissing Max Holden* on 11/12/17 and finished it on 11/20/17. This book is a fantastic read! I like the mention of Disney World's Space Mountain because I have been there, (though my 5-year-old has a big scare of his life for my lack of research because that roller coaster ride is definitely

not for kids!). It's extra interesting how a 17 year old can expect to have a younger sibling at this age. I like the mention of fertility treatment because it's real life stuffs and it's good to see what others are going through. I like the diversity with the supporting characters.

This book is told in the first person point of view, following Jillian Eldridge, 17, who likes to bake delicious desserts. She learns how to bake from Marcy, Max Holden's mom and neighbor. Max is Jill's best friend growing up but later drifted apart. The two family celebrated many holidays together until Max's dad stroke. The stroke left him in wheelchair and different. Max blames himself and turns to underage drinking and causing troubles. Jill's life is less than perfect. She's overcome with a lot more responsibilities at home now that her step mom's pregnant. She's not excited for the unborn baby because the baby has taken away her chances at the Culinary school in New York. At the same time, she's pining after the guy who's unavailable and the guy who her dad told her to stay away from. On top of everything, she worries that she's her father's daughter when she finds out what she's been doing is parallel to what her dad's been doing.

This book is very well written. I love the Holden family. I love the meals with everyone at the table. I like Kyle and what a great friend he is to Jill. I like that Jill has a job. Jill's baking makes my mouth water. I like the Bunco party, though I'm not familiar with this game. I like the beginning how Jill's dad caught her and the ending how Jill caught him. Very cool. I like the concept in family and love. The story ties up nicely and I highly recommend everyone to read this book!

Pro: fast paced, page turner, easy to read, humor, love, family, diversity, romance

Con: none

I rate it 5 stars!

\*\*\*Disclaimer: I won this book from the author, Katy Upperman through her giveaway on Twitter. Please be assured that my opinions are honest. I'm super excited to have won the book, but a candle, bookmark, and chocolate chip cookies recipe on top of autographs are a plus! Thank you Katy!

xoxo,

Jasmine at [www.howusefulitis.wordpress.com](http://www.howusefulitis.wordpress.com) for more details

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## Tracey Neithercott says

Second read and, yep, still love this book. I'm going to write a longer review closer to the pub date, but bottom line: It's a sure bet for contemporary romance fans, but above that it's a story packed with really beautiful writing, rich characters (who aren't perfect but who you root for anyway), and family dynamics that add depth to the story. Best to read it with a sweet treat—Jilly's baking is going to make you crave cake and cookies big time.

...

I was lucky enough to read an early draft of *Kissing Max Holden*, Katy Upperman's gorgeously written YA romance about two old friends who have drifted apart but are slowly coming back together. The writing is beautiful, characters flawed but real, and plot fast paced. I'll admit I wasn't on Team Max at the

beginning—he's a bit of a loser and a total mess. But his transformation throughout the book was great, and he completely won me over. In terms of side characters, I appreciate that Katy wrote Max's girlfriend not as the cliché mean girl who deserves to be treated poorly but someone readers can sympathize with. The fact that I was rooting for both her and Jillian shows just how talented a writer Katy is. Fans of Huntley Fitzpatrick, Morgan Matson, and Jessi Kirby will especially appreciate the well-crafted family dynamics (Jillian's relationship with her new step-mom is particularly well done).

The downside: You won't meet your new book boyfriend until 2017.

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## Joshee Kun (???) says

**Gleaning upon the tenets of Formalism (i.e. "The author is dead"), please note that my thoughts are not directed to the author.**

Kudos to my second 1-star read this year. I actually dislike writing negative reviews because it just brings out the mean side of me. Also, I don't want to waste my time brainstorming about something I didn't even like. Still, it's only logical to justify my rating for a book that a publisher kindly gave to me. So here we go. It's time for a rant. I would like to apologize to my family, who shot me questioning looks after seeing me read such fluff.

This debut novel follows two annoying protagonists, Jillian Eldridge and Max Holden. They were very close when they were children, but a particular tragedy caused a rift between them. Now that they're hormonal teenagers, Jill can't help but fall in love with Max. Unfortunately (for Jill), Max has a girlfriend (whose name I can't remember). When Max visits Jill after arguing with his lover, infidelity and a bunch of drama ensues.

Ever since I watched Lily C Reads's review of *Anna and the French Kiss*, my attitude towards books with "complicated" relationships changed for the better. I just cannot tolerate that thing called infidelity, aka cheating. I especially hate it when the cheaters try to justify (and escape the consequences of) their actions. The characters in *Kissing Max Holden* were exactly like that.

Between Jill and Max, I wasn't sure who was more at fault. However, let me shed a light on Jill first. Max was the one who initiated the kissing sessions, but Jill obliged him even though she herself admitted that she didn't want to be his **Other Woman**. To make things worse, Jill sugarcoated everything by **hating on Max's girlfriend**, who was supposedly a \*\*\*\*\*. Man, I just couldn't handle the hypocrisy. Just because Max's girlfriend was mean and manipulative didn't mean that it was all right for Jill to play Querida.

Jill made me roll my eyes a lot, but Max made my temper flare. I couldn't understand his appeal. He was a playboy, a disrespectful son, and a disgusting alcoholic. I wasn't surprised that the girls who were attracted to him were similarly...unprincipled. I really disliked him because he was such a bad influence to Jill; **he was able to eclipse whatever remained of her conscience**. All hail, Max the Tempter. I wouldn't want to be associated with a person like him.

This might come as a surprise. Are you ready for it? **JILL AND MAX WEREN'T THE ONLY CHEATERS IN THIS BOOK**. Salt was rubbed into my wounds when it was revealed that someone important to Jill was also unfaithful. I resented that predictable plot twist, and I wished that I could forget it.

Initially, my rating was leaning toward 2 stars. Sadly, my patience reached 0% when Jill's step-mother,

Meredith, justified her infidelity. Apparently, it was okay for Jill to be guilt-free because she only had "good intentions" when it came to Max. In other words, she wasn't a complete infidel. WHAT THE HECK?!

I'm sorry, I can't do this anymore. I'm only reinforcing my negative emotions. For the sake of "looking at the bright side," I shall enumerate the few virtues of this book.

1. You can read it in one sitting. (Probably because you would just want it to be over ASAP)
2. Jill and Max are perfect for each other. (Probably because they're both so flawed)
3. It will make you laugh. (Probably in a mocking, not-so-delighted way)

Ultimately, I guess reading *Kissing Max Holden* was not a waste of time because it taught me one of life's most important lessons: **STAY AWAY FROM PEOPLE WHO CAN'T KEEP IT IN THEIR PANTS.**

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### Monica Murphy says

I LOVED THIS BOOK. Max Holden was so freaking angsty, gah. But in a good way. Highly recommend!

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### Kaitlin Bartlett says

2016, I'm sure you'll be a great year and all, but can't we jump straight to 2017 so I can get my grabby hands on a physical copy of KISSING MAX HOLDEN? I was lucky enough to read this book when Katy posted it on SwoonReads, and I became instantly obsessed with Jillian and Max. The story has perfect pacing and delicious descriptions (many of which relate to Jillian's love for baking), and the romance is spot-on. The mix of romance, family, and friendship strikes the perfect balance. Katy's prose is fresh and free of clichés, and her characters feel one hundred percent real.

Do not miss this book, folks. I know I'll be counting down the days until it's released!

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### alice (arctic books) says

2.5 stars.

I wasn't a huge fan of this novel when I first started it, due to the girl-on-girl hate and slut-shaming, and upon finishing it, I'm still thinking of bumping this rating down. Essentially, the plot revolves around Jill and Max, childhood best friends, becoming a bit more after they kiss while Max has a girlfriend, Becky. Drama ensues, and some stuff happens, basically.

This novel made me mad in a few ways:

- Max talks about how he broke up with Becky: "She's humiliated - she made that very clear, right after she burst into tears and slapped me." Explain to me how physical abuse is okay??
- Jill slut shames: "First I hate the limited selection of costumes available to girls my age (slutty nurse or skanky angel... no, thank you." If I wanna dress like a slutty nurse, I FUCKING WILL.
- Jill literally has no friends and only pines over Max while he has a girlfriend. She has one real friend, and

she's mentioned like two times within the whole novel. I don't even remember her name because she's literally background noise.

- Cheating. So much cheating! Max cheats on Becky; Jill's dad, Jack, cheats on Meredith, her stepmom while she's pregnant with his baby daughter. So that's cool.

The cheating thing is interesting though, because at the end of the novel, Max does think about his actions and how he's hurt Becky. Can't say the same about Jack though, since his first wife left him because he cheated, and now his second wife is separating with him because he's cheating. Literally keep it in your pants. Please.

Another thing I noted is that Jill is very set on going to International Culinary Institute in NYC, and I liked how passionate she was about her future and her career. However, when she finds out that her parents used up her college tuition for fertility treatments and for the baby, she's upset for like 5 minutes and never brings it up again until the very end. I don't know about you, but I'd be fucking pissed.

Overall, I'm not too impressed by this book, but it was filled with lots of ugly drama, if that's your thing. Can't say I'm too happy with the internalized misogyny though. That being said, I'm leaning more towards the 2 range rather than the 3.

*Thank you to Macmillan and Netgalley for providing an ARC in exchange for an honest review.*

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### **Meredith says**

I didn't want this to end! The story is deep and layered, and holy hell with that twist at the end! I did not see that coming! I think what I loved best were the characters, each flawed (some way more than others) but perfectly believable. Jillian and Max are perfection. I adore them separately but especially together. What a great story to curl up with on a weekend. Now I only wish I could get a few of Jillian's dessert recipes...

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### **Erin Bowman says**

My official comments: "Full of wit, humor, and spine-tingling smooches, **KISSING MAX HOLDEN** combines the classic themes of contemporary romance with riveting family drama. ... I literally could not put this book down and would buy a physical copy for my shelf in a heartbeat. I can't wait to read what Katy writes next."

My unofficial comments: 2017 can't come fast enough!!! I can't wait for everyone to fall in love with Jill and Max!!!

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### **Liz Parker says**

I had the opportunity to read MAX when it was up on Swoon Reads this November, and after I read it I told EVERY person I could think of to read and comment. The world NEEDS this book.

Katy's prose is beautiful and fun, both heart-wrenching and comedic. Her characters jump off the page as real,



fresh, and raw. From Max's first appearance at Jillian's window through their growth throughout the book, I was sold. I actually couldn't put it down once I'd started.

I can't wait to see how Katy and the Swoon Reads editorial team work together to continue to improve it, but I can tell you that you **MUST** read this book when it comes out!

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### **Melissa says**

When high school junior Jillian Eldridge shares an unexpected kiss with her long-time neighbor and friend Max Holden, she never expects it morph into something more. But when it does, and when attraction turns into genuine affection, Jillian is left to grapple with these unfamiliar, and deeply unexpected, feelings. A delightful, swoon-worthy debut! Highly recommended.

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