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Mahalia



Synopsis

MATT LOVED EVERYTHING about Emmy. He loved her freckled, luminous, magical body. He loved her free spirit. He loved the future he saw when he found out Emmy was pregnant. And he loved her answer when her parents protested their decision to keep the baby: "We'll just love it, okay?" •Full of emotion and insight, *Mahalia* is the story of one teenage boy's struggle to be a better father than he knows how. A poignant and memorable love story of a young father and his daughter. "School Library Journal" A starkly candid and sensitive portrait of teenage parenthood. "The Horn Book Magazine" Children's Peace Literature Prize Recommended Book Children's Book Council of Australia Awards™ Shortlist --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 8 Up-Baby *Mahalia* is the love of her 17-year-old father's life. Her parents, Matt and Emmy, drop out of school and try to provide a home for her, but Emmy can't cope and leaves when the baby is five months old. Matt was raised by his mother and wants a different life for his daughter. When he moves back to his hometown, he's afraid that the temptation to rely on his mom to raise *Mahalia* will prove too strong, and he and the baby move into a rental house inhabited by a 22-year-old music student. While Matt struggles with the loss of Emmy and the stresses of taking care of a baby, he begins to realize that love will not conquer all. And while he fails at times to cope with everything, with the help of a new and an old friend, he ultimately succeeds and becomes a

good man as well as a good parent. Like Margaret Bechard's *Hanging on to Max* (Roaring Brook, 2002), *Mahalia* explores a real and relatively ignored issue—the problems and emotions of a teenage father. Matt and *Mahalia* are winning, engaging, and genuine, as are all of the characters in this novel. It is set in contemporary New South Wales but there is much that would seem familiar to American teens. Certainly Matt's coming-of-age problems are universal. A poignant and memorable love story of a young father and his daughter. Jane Halsall, McHenry Public Library District, IL
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Gr. 9-12. "We'll just love it, ok?" say teenagers Matt and Emmy to their respective parents after they discover that Emmy is pregnant. Living in a small town tucked into Australia's rain forest, they await the birth of their child. A few months after *Mahalia* arrives, however, Emmy moves out, leaving Matt alone with the baby. Never melodramatic, Horniman's subtle, heart-wrenching story follows Matt as he tries to care for *Mahalia* and rebuild his life. Readers who require plenty of action may grow impatient with the quiet, layered plot and the detailed, unhurried language, which is filled with an artist's attention to color, texture, and light. But Horniman portrays a teenage father's inner life with unusual depth, from the power of first love ("When Matt was with Emmy, nothing was ordinary") to resentment ("There wasn't much fun in Matt's life") to heartbreak choices. The physical intimacy isn't graphic, but the book is probably best suited for mature readers, who will more likely be drawn to the beautifully told depiction of deep love's unpredictable shifts and the surprising ways that strong families form. Gillian Engberg
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There are many different books about teenage pregnancies and the struggles of raising a child on your own, but the book *Mahalia* does not fall into the normal catagorie of those books. For the most part most books focus on the girls point of view, or only concentrate on one side of the story. The book *Mahilia* tells the story from the fathers point a view. Matt(*Mahilia*'s father) takes care of her after Emmy(*Mahilia*'s Mother) leaves from feeling too much pressure from being a mom at such a young age. Matt is constantly struggling from only thinking about the future, and trying to move on from the past. Remembering his past, and how he was raised by his single mother, early on in *Mahilia*'s life Matt decides he wants somthing better. When Matt takes *Mahilia* and moves back to his town, he does everything he can to keep from letting his mom take over taking care of *Mahalia*. Matt and *Mahalia* move into a house with a 22 year old student, and another girl. They all are

struggling with bills, and their own lives but the girls take time to watch Mahalia so Matt can have a break. This story shows the struggle the Matt has between his old life, childless and carefree, and his new life, full of hardships. Towards the end Matt realizes that it's love that keeps him and Mahalia together." Now the man has a child, He knows all the names of the local dogs." - Japanese Poem

Eventhough the plot is somewhat sad it is really an uplifting book about a poor teen single father trying to cope with having a child whose mother has left him. I recommend highly for teenage boys who are in the same predicament. Definitely also for teen mothers. Very realistic plot about the poverty of country side of Australia.

Matt is 17. His girlfriend Emmy has left with him with their daughter, Mahalia. Matt loves Mahalia more than anything else in the world, but he quickly realizes you can't live on love alone. We follow Matt and Mahalia's life as they move in with his mother, find their own apartment and meet an eclectic cast of supporting characters who support them in different ways. We see Matt's fatherly pride and love as Mahalia says her first word, takes her first steps and grows up slowly, but surely. Matt grows a lot too, and learns about himself, Emmy's motivations and the Australian world around him. This is not a superb book, but it is a recommended book all the same.

This book is great! It's such a sad book but it is also hopeful and happy. I've read this book many times. I love it!

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