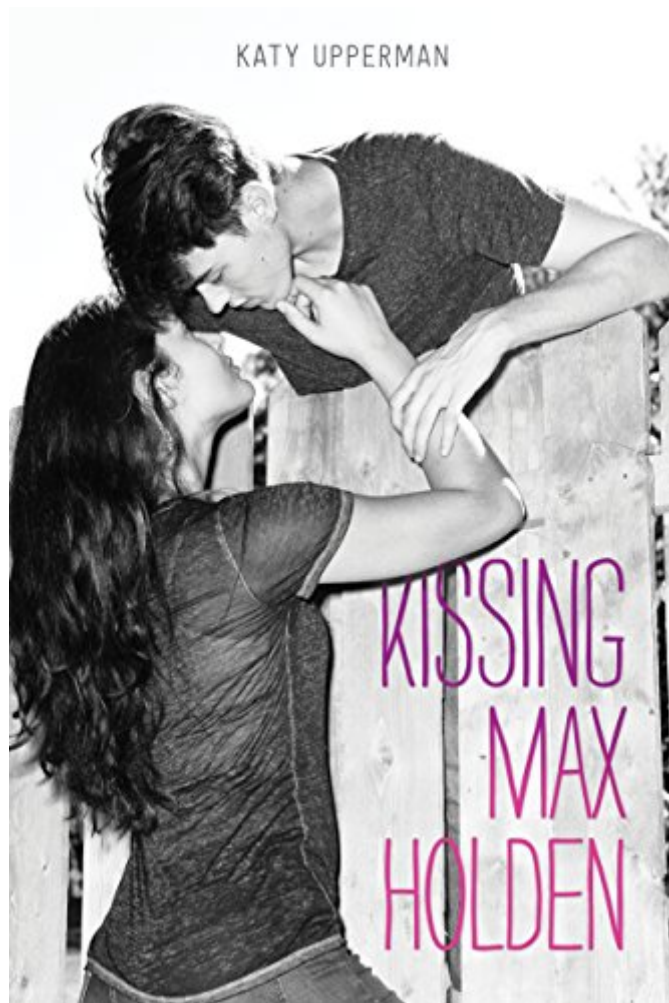


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Kissing Max Holden



Synopsis

Equal parts swoonworthy romance and deeply affecting family drama, this debut novel about the boy next door turned super hot bad boy will have readers hooked from the very first kiss. After his father's stroke, Max Holden isn't himself. As his long-time friend, Jillian Eldridge only wants to help, but she doesn't know how. When Max climbs through her window one night, Jill knows 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 suddenly 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? Chosen by readers like you for Macmillan's young adult imprint Swoon Reads, Katy Upperman's debut novel *Kissing Max Holden* skillfully navigates the tenuous territory of bad influences, good friends, and complicated families. Praise for *Kissing Max Holden*: "Kissing Max Holden is like the perfect slice of pumpkin pie: it's equal parts sweet and spicy, and you can't get enough of it! What a treat!" —Jessica Love, author of *In Real Life* "A moving book with depth, *Kissing Max Holden* is perfect for readers wanting a strong female character in a realistic romance. Wonderfully written and swoony." —Miranda Kenneally, author of *Catching Jordan* "Sarah Dessen fans rejoice!" you are going to love *Kissing Max Holden*! —Lisa Schroeder, author of *Chasing Brooklyn* "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." —Erin Bowman, author of *Vengeance Road*

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Customer Reviews

~~~Review posted on The Heart of a Book Blogger~~~Kissing Max Holden is Katy

Upperman's debut novel and the latest book published by Swoon Reads. Living up to its publisher's name, Kissing Max Holden will leave you swooning in delight. Jill and Max were childhood friends until the day they weren't. That's why Max climbing through her window one night surprises Jill. It's something that hasn't happened in a long time. Jill knows she shouldn't let Max kiss her for a couple of reasons: 1) because he's drunk, and 2) he has a girlfriend. After being caught in the act, Jill promises her dad it won't happen again. But with her life falling apart, Jill soon finds Max to be the perfect distraction and a person she can confide in. Oh man, I loved Kissing Max Holden. I could not put this book down and was able to easily read it in one sitting. It's such an enjoyable read, and I fell in love with the story instantly. The writing style was addicting, and I could not get enough of Jill and Max's story. They aren't perfect, but I loved that about them. They're both in difficult situations with their families, yet they find a way to get through it together. One highlight from this book was the relationship Jill has with her stepmom, Meredith. It was refreshing that Meredith not be portrayed as the stereotypical 'evil' stepmother and to actually see their relationship grow throughout the book. The family dynamics of both families in general added to the story's depth. Another highlight? Jill's talent for baking. I adored that her dream was to attend culinary, specifically pastry, school. More importantly, we see her love for baking in action throughout the story with all the different types of pastries she bakes. It sure made me want to throw on my apron and bake some delicious desserts. Now to address a certain part of

the book, beware semi-spoilers are ahead. Ready? Okay. Yes, Max cheats on his girlfriend several times by kissing and confiding in Jill the way he does. Is the girlfriend manipulative? Yes. Does she deserve it? No. What Max should have done is break up with her. However, he makes a mistake as does Jill by continuing to let this happen. Towards the end of the book, we see a parallel between Jill and her dad who is also having an affair. That's where the similarities end. What Jill's dad does is completely inappropriate and wrong. He cheats on his pregnant wife. Not only that, but he cheated on his first wife, Jill's mother, which is why she left. After Jill confronts him, he continues to have his affair. He obviously does not learn from his mistakes. Jill and Max, on the other hand, are teenagers. They are not grown adults in a serious, life-long committed relationship. Teenagers make mistakes, it's how they learn to grow up. Could the situation have been handled better? Of course. Do I fault them for it? No, because they both undergo major character development within the story, which is the most important part. Overall, I adored *Kissing Max Holden*. It included the tropes I love reading in YA romances and was such a swoon-worthy novel. I look forward to reading Katy Upperman's next book! \*This ARC was provided to me by the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for a honest review.

*Kissing Max Holden* is very slow and very sweet. I've been looking forward to reading this book for quite a bit, and while I did have some issues with it, it was still a cute and meaningful read. Jill and Max's friendship has never been easy. They fall in and out of love with each other faster than people change underwear, but the timing has never been right. So when the story starts out with a full-on make-out session between the two, it's the perfect launch for a helluva lot of drama. Exhibit A: Max was kind of, sort of drunk when it happened. Exhibit B: Max kind of, sort of had a girlfriend at the time. So I've never been a big fan of cheating stories. I mercilessly DNFed a book named *Mercy*, tore down a chicklit called *Sleeping Arrangements*, and I have a few thoughts on my mind about *Stienne St Clair* from *Anna and the French Kiss*, as well. It's also really typical that the girlfriend is a bitch, because otherwise there's no reason for us to root for Jill and Max. So yes, even though the girlfriend is supposed to be this terrible person, I found it hard to root for our protagonists. They did have a lot of chemistry, though "the author definitely came through when she decided to put *Kissing Max Holden* in the title. It is a kissing book, and the more heated scenes are good enough to shoot tingles down everyone's spines. And when you have a less-than-ideal home situation on both sides of the equation, it is not hard to imagine that they would seek refuge in each other's arms (and mouths). I did appreciate the fact that Jill's storyline paralleled with troubles in her own

parents' marriage, and how she was able to use that to evaluate her own actions as The Other Woman. I also enjoyed watching her relationship with her stepmother grow because of these issues. And though I often grew really weary of her on-again-off-again fling with Max " seriously, sometimes this book felt so much longer than 304 pages " it was good to see that things didn't immediately become sunshine and rainbows, both as casual friends and as boyfriend and girlfriend. The hard topics are handled quite well. One more thing I really loved was the fact that Jill had a passion for baking, and therefore described people like pastries. For instance, there was a character who was described as being like a "crème brûlée" " soft and sweet on the inside, but in order to get there, you have to crack a hard wall first. I thought those little nuggets were a really cute touch, and all the baking made Jill a softer and more caring character. Thank you to NetGalley and the publisher for providing me with a copy

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