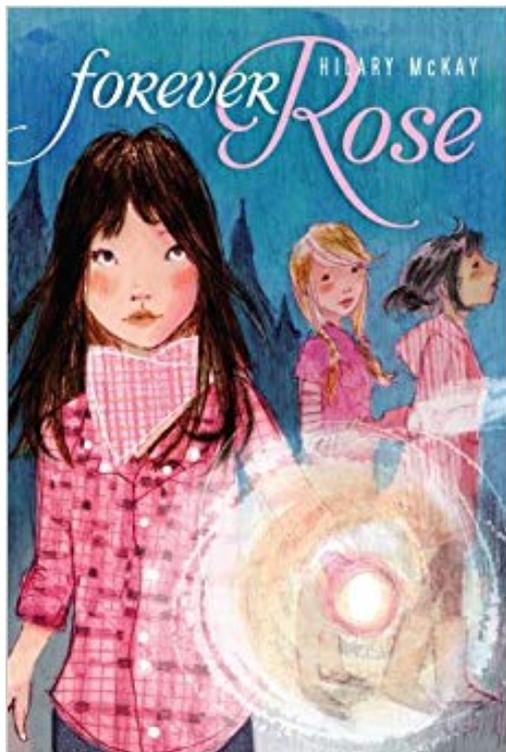


Forever Rose *by* Hilary McKay



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Rose knows that nothing stays the same forever. Still, it's hard to watch her sisters and brother growing up and moving so far ahead of her. Caddy is back, but she's not living at home. And worse -- she's broken up with Darling Michael. Saffy and Indigo are so busy, they are seldom home. With her father in London and her mother painting in the shed, Rose is often alone in the house. Maybe that's why she agrees to her new friend Molly's crazy scheme. At least it seems crazy when Rose finds herself locked in the zoo at night with a roaring tiger. Maybe she should have been paying more attention to what Molly was saying. But on that spooky night, Rose finds out a secret that just might change everything -- and help bring her family and friends together and new life to their old house. Hilary McKay infuses her charming characters with much love and laughter in this final visit with the delightfully daffy Casson family.



Reviews of the *Forever Rose* *by* Hilary McKay

Jelar

I know, don't judge a book by its cover, but I have to say up-front the McKay has some of the worst designed covers outside of the \$1 bin at the Walmart store from the 70's. That said, do not let yourself be turned away by them. McKay has been writing some of the most lovely children's literature set in a realistic framework. The families in her books are flawed, but utterly charming and usually female dominated. "Forever Rose" is one of 5 volumes in the life of a rather unconventional family, the Casons. They are the bohemian English cousins of Jeanne Birdsall's Penderwicks (Also worth reading). Dad is a philandering artiste who tries to avoid family life as much as possible by having a studio far away in London. Mom makes ends meet by painting kitschy art for the local market in the shed where she hides from her children. 13 year old Rose is in love with a 18 year old boy from New York and gives her unloved teacher a nervous breakdown, her sister Caddy has disappeared after running away from her wedding. The only sane one is Saffy, but she is adopted (sort of..). But with all their flaws the characters in the book are ... nice. And a lot of fun. I have been fighting with my 11 year old daughter whether I get to read the book to her at bedtime chapter by chapter, or if she would read it by herself.

Check out "Rose's Blog", a free Kindle book that is set after the 5 proper books. It will give some of the twists away that play out in these books, but it will give you a good idea of McKay's writing. And then read everything of hers you can get your hands on

Kizshura

Rose is facing up to having to spend Christmas by herself. She's not alone in the house, but she might as well be. Her father, Bill, is in London as usual, her mother, Eve, is down with the flu, and Saffy and Indigo, her sister and brother, are busy with their own teenage hobbies and are hardly in the house anymore. And Caddy, the oldest? Forget Caddy. She went chasing after Darling Michael just after her almost-wedding to Alex, and even though Michael may have come back home, Caddy sure hasn't.

But Rose is determined to have a good Christmas, even if her sadistic teacher won't even let the class celebrate. And with the help of a school Nativity pageant, her rather dull friend Molly's desperate attempts not to be boring anymore, and Indigo's somewhat annoying (to Rose, anyway) but well-meaning friend David, Rose will surely have a holiday like none other she's ever seen.

Anyone who's enjoyed the previous escapades of the Cassons will surely have fun with "Forever Rose." As the title tells us, Rose is the main focus of the book, but she's growing more compassionate by the day, so even though I wasn't too enthused about spending a whole book with her, I got used to the idea pretty quickly and even got to like her voice. Did the book push the cuteness factor just the tiniest bit? Yes. Was it a little contrived? Well, maybe a little. But did I have a whole lot of fun and gobble this book up like Christmas cookies? Yes, I did. There's one more Casson novel - a prequel about Caddy - and I'm not sure whether I'm excited to read it or sad to see this series go.

Peles

Okay, you should know that all things considered, I invariably choose fantasy over contemporary realism, and I can usually keep my head when reviewing and not gush. BUT--Hilary McKay's five books about the Casson family are among my all-time favorites. EVER. I LOVE the delicate blend of humor and truth and trouble and compassion in every one of these books. The characters are so quirky and likable and real--not only the Casson kids and their rather odd parents, but secondary characters such as David and Sarah, as well. In this last volume, even the various school teachers shine in their brief cameos--and the bits about the first grade Nativity play are the funniest thing

since The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!

I ordered Forever Rose the second I saw it was available and opened it up with bone-deep joy, then had one of those minor panic attacks that can sweep down upon avid readers: "What if it's not as good as I think it will be? As good as I want it to be?" But it was. In this book, the youngest Casson, Rose, is grumping her way through a pre-Christmas season beleaguered by a mother with an endless cold, a truly awful sixth grade teacher, and siblings who are clearly growing up and away and leaving her behind. Among other things. Like--how might someone get away with spending the night at the zoo? (In the arctic foxes' shed, of course. The foxes are apparently out of town.)

I do strongly recommend you read all of the books in order, since you'll enjoy this one far more if you do. I mean, I imagine you can still have a good read without doing that; I just wouldn't recommend it.

There is an air of magical realism about McKay's Casson books, even though there isn't a scrap of actual magic in them. (The main character does have some interesting things to say about fairy tales in Forever Rose.) I personally find real life--the people and words and sights and sounds of it--magical in its own right. McKay somehow manages to capture that world-faith/world-joy in her Casson books. It's also quite an accomplishment to write such hopeful books about life and family without being the least bit didactic.

I'm just so happy today, having spent some time with the Casson family again. Thank you VERY much, Hilary McKay!

Jonariara

The only thing wrong with this book is that it's so clearly the end of the series. I know exactly who should marry whom when they all grow up - but we'll never find out!

Usic

Rose portrays the feelings that of many teenager girls. Very relatable. This book seems good for any eleven year old girl looking for a few laughs.

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