



Smiles to Go

Jerry Spinelli

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What is stargazer, skateboarder, chess champ, pepperoni pizza eater, older brother, sister hater, best friend, first kisser, science geek, control freak Will Tuppenec so afraid of in this great big universe?

Jerry Spinelli knows.

Smiles to Go Details

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From Reader Review Smiles to Go for online ebook

Evan says

I read Smiles to Go by Jerry Spinelli which is a fictional book about a pretty normal teenage boy who gets hung up on the decay of a proton. The main character's name is Will Tupence. Will is a freshman in high school. He has two best friends, Mi-Su and BT, and an annoying little sister named Tabby. The conflict of the story is Will and reality. He still can't comprehend the fact that the proton died. Why does that matter, though? That's such a stupid conflict. All Will is interested in is chess, skateboarding, astronomy, Mi-Su and monopoly. It gets really boring and really uninteresting. At the end, Tabby takes Will's skateboard and gets injured. Where does that ending even come from? It was so obnoxious.

I thought the quality of writing was pretty dreadful for this book. He couldn't relate to the writer at all. Who has heard of a chess-playing-star-loving-skateboarding-super-geek? Last time I checked, no one has. I chose this book because it was by Jerry Spinelli and I loved Maniac Magee. I disliked this book because the lack of excitement, and that the author poorly connected to the reader.

If you compared this book to Maniac Magee, it'd be like comparing the 2003 Detroit Tigers, who were 43-119, to the 2001 Seattle Mariners, who were 116-46. Yeah, that's how bad Smiles to Go compared to Maniac Magee. I would not recommend this book but I would recommend any other books by Jerry Spinelli.

Harmony Wooden says

Smiles to go by Jerry Spinelli was in my opinion a very good book. The main character Will Tupence is in 9th grade about to go into 10th. Will's two best friends are named BT. BT is a laid back kind of guy which is the complete opposite of Will. Will has a little sister named Tabitha Tupence and he despises her in every way. Tabitha looks up to BT and whatever he does she will follow. One day BT goes down a skateboarding hill called dead mans hill. It is the most dangerous and scary hill any onw could go down. One day Tabitha is left with her aunt while Will and his parents go to a chess compition and Tabby didnt get to go. So Tabby threw a fit and she took Will's skateboard and went down deadmans hill. She was put in a trauma center and soon recovered. All in all Smiles to go was a very amazing book.

Grace O says

A feel-good book centered around the importance of family. Not my favorite, but it was nice to read.

Miz Lizzie says

This book did not click with me at all. Actually, I intensely disliked it though I reserve the possibility that there may be some readers who actually enjoy the false sentimentality of the story. The main message seemed to be that teenaged Will needed to see finally understand that his preschool little sister Tabby was not actually a pest but a cute little sister who loves him and whom he really secretly loves in return. Problem

is that Tabby was an obnoxiously spoiled and completely out of control brat and I had complete sympathy with Will's frustration for the ways she interfered with his life and I never doubted that he loved her in spite of that. Perhaps Tabby came across as a kid who needed some major parental control and boundaries in place because I listened to the book rather than read it. Maybe my elder sister status influenced my view of the situation (though my brother was never so bratty and out of control and we were actually quite close growing up). I did appreciate that Will needed to learn that he could not control and plan every aspect of his life but I just didn't buy the whole supposed transformation when Tabby almost dies, after completely trouncing Will's attempt to defend his chess championship by stealing his skateboard and going down Deadman's Hill because she was peeved she wouldn't get to have any kind of ice cream she wanted as she did the year before after nearly ruining Will's tournament.

Josiah says

"And smiles to go before I weep,
And Smiles to go before I weep."

--BT, "Smiles to Go", P. 44

"I feel like I'm playing chess underwater. The pieces keep floating away. I don't know where things are. I can't figure out tomorrow."

--Will Tupponce, "Smiles to Go", P. 140

Simply put, Jerry Spinelli never misses. HE...NEVER...MISSES. The beauty of this story really sneaks up on the reader, but it is as spendidly crafted as just about anything else that has been written. The love scenes are really, truly magical, and the ends to which the relationships bloom and are seen to their full potential is a work of real art. This must be viewed as one of the top works in the genre for 2009. I love this book. Jerry Spinelli is unbeatable.

"I'm that way, goofy as it sounds. Sometimes I don't want things to happen-I'm talking about good things, even wonderful things-because once they happen, I can't look forward to them anymore. But there's an upside, too. Once a wonderful thing is over, I'm not all that sad because then I can start thinking about it, reliving and reliving it in the virtual world in my head."

--Will Tupponce, "Smiles to Go", P.P. 168-169

Marilyn says

Spinelli's back with a gem of a story. I loved the focus on relationships between friends and siblings. It seemed very true to life. Will is a believable character and one that both boys and girls will relate to.

I just re-read this for my teen book group. Still a great read; Will is a wonderful character, flaws and all.

Meg Gornick says

3.5/5 I think. Spinelli is so unique and refreshing. I love when "kids" books tell "adult" stories. If you liked Stargirl, you'll love this. Poignant, refreshing, and full of character - which is saying something considering that the novel is short. Spinelli manages to touch our hearts in so few words <3. Lovely!

Ryan says

I'm a nerd.

And yet as I read this book, I couldn't help but think, "Whoa. This kid's a *real* nerd. Like Percy." While not my favorite of Spinelli's books, definitely a reminder of why he is such a good author.

SPOILERFirst, I like to think that the relationship aspects of this story happen with 16 y/o, not high school freshmen. And second, I don't like that they have cell phones. But third, is a real plot point: Mi-Su struck me as unrealistic because although she is popular, she doesn't seem like a player but nor does she hook up with Will after they kiss. She dates around (or at least, doesn't fixate on Will as much as he does on her). Does this really happen with kid's today? MK & I have talked about this and don't know if we can tell our kids it's okay to kiss after 16, but they can't seriously date until college. Are those conflicting messages?

Emma Randall says

Usually i don't read Jerry Spinelli's books because i think they are childish, but Smiles to go proved me wrong. The author kind of make the beginning of the book so uninteresting, but then it starts to pick up. But other than that, the book is pretty all right.

In the beginning of the book, it talks about how this kid Will Tupponce is interested in protons and science. But the story drags on like the author didn't have anything else to say, until the next chapter comes along. The story talks about Will's best friends; BT and Mi-su. BT cares about nothing, and Mi-su is all about science and chess like Will. So they go to this star party to look in telescopes, well a little bit more happens then just looking into telescopes... BT and Mi-su kiss! Will totally freaks out! I mean yeah, if i caught my friends kissing, I'd freak out too! But then Will fires up this plan to kiss Mi-su for some odd but interesting reason.

Will ends up kissing Mi-su and more than one kiss. I think personally that Mi-su takes advantage of boys because the next day, she kisses some guy who's lead role in the play she's in, just to kiss him! Does Mi-su want to drive Will to insanity of jealousy? But of course, Will finds another way to get her back to him. Will has this annoying little sister that he has to deal with too. She throws away his favorite jelly beans, answers the phone and then hangs up, messes with Will's and she says things to him just to make Will snap. While all this stuff is happening with Will and his friends, his sister trys to make his life as miserable as she can possibly make it. During one of Will's most important chess games of his teenage life, Will's dad came in and told him that his little sister was in the hospital! I bet that Will felt bad that he was mean to his sister then!

I think this is one of the best Jerry Spinelli books i have ever read. He needs to make more books mature like this book is, instead of for like 10 year olds. This book is recamended to everyone who likes drama filled, confused boys in it (me)!

babyhippoface says

It wasn't until about 1/3 of the way into this book that I began to think any teenager would ever read it.

Having grown up believing protons to be an immortal part of the universe, 9th-grade chess whiz and future astronomer Will Tuppence's world is rocked when scientists witness a flash that marked the expiration of a proton. Will is so upset over this that he can barely function for a few days, and is genuinely shocked and surprised that no one else seems to care.

Once he finally accepted the death of the proton, it was like a different book. He almost completely forgot about it and was much more "normal" and the story picked up. He skateboarded, crushed on his best friend Mi-Su, and was combatant with his little sister (his incredibly annoying little sister who needed several spankings she never received). Much more normal.

I think 7th-9th graders will enjoy this book quite a bit if they'll stick with it past the Proton Part, but I'm not sure they'll hang in there that long.

Marilyn says

Another home run for Jerry Spinelli. His characters are spot on.

Malbadeen says

I always think it's funny when books say "My first...", "My first ABC book", "My first book of rhymes", "my first book of Holiday's", etc. I mean how many "first's" are there before "first" isn't a big deal. and yet, I think this book could marketed as "My first book of existential crisis" The main character realized protons die and questions the nature of everything while being with others for not recognizing the gravity of things."

I don't necessarily like the idea of introducing the idea of self doubt to kids and I probably would have given this book 3 stars but I had to move it to 5 because my son recommended, actually *insisted*, I read it.

The thing is, that being a divorced mom of a 10 year old boy can bring about a myriad of insecurities I'd not even considered. It's compounded by the fact that his dad shows up occasionally and sweeps him off to surf in SanDiego for weeks at a time or takes him backpacking around Mt. Hood, while I - - - ? um, read to him. That's some pretty stiff competition for me to compete with.

So the fact that he cares what I think about his book, that he wants to share the story with me and asked constantly "what page are you on?", and we shared bits we liked here and there means it's a 5 "sentimentally-starred" book for me.

Kim says

It all starts with the death of one proton.

Who knew?

I enjoyed it, but it wasn't what I was hoping for, which was more of what I saw with his 'Stargirl' books.

It's a sweet story with a tidy ending. A good representation of what the young adult book should be.

And I learned the meaning of 'solipsism'. Now to incorporate that in every day life. hmmm... I'm sure I'll find a way.

I did enjoy this part (dealing with the above death of proton)

Two hundred days since 10:15am that September Saturday morning when Riley picked his nose and the phone rang and Mi-Su said turn on 98.5 FM and I learned that a proton had died in Yellowknife. How many have died since then across the universe? Are dying protons like roaches: for every one you see there's a hundred behind the wall? How many need to die before it starts to show? Before steel becomes transparent? And people? Ghost World. I feel a twitch. A blip. Was that a tine flash inside of me? Is my liver down one proton from yesterday?

Unfortunately, there are not a lot of these...

Roxanne Hsu Feldman says

I'd have to put this title down as one of my favorite Spinelli novels. Will is a real person with a convincing and consistent internal voice. His obsession with planning and attention to minute details reveals a scientific and intellectual mind -- at the same time, he is slightly lacking in the "social intelligence" -- not being able to read the cues of his peers and more damagingly, not being able to decipher his little sister's actions as cries for attention in a somewhat positive way. Now... I was not as convinced by the 5-year-old Tabby and all her super sophisticated ways and the parents' lack of intervention between the two siblings since they seem to be VERY aware and understanding of both Tabby and Will's emotional lives. Usually, this would have been ground enough for me to discredit the whole book -- but since Will is so well drawn, I am willing to suspend my disbelief for those dozens of pages.

Chelsea says

Cute audiobook. Not something I'd want to sit and read, but it was nice to listen to while working
