



The Infinite Wisdom of Harriet Rose

Diana Janney

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What do you give as a birthday present to a beautiful, intelligent fourteen year old girl who says that she doesn't want any birthday presents this year and insists that you donate the money to a worthwhile cause instead? When that girl is Harriet Rose, it can't be an easy decision. After all, how many fourteen year olds have as their hero the Roman Emperor and Philosopher Marcus Aurelius and choose Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason' as their favourite book (which they particularly like because it has a happy ending)? Yet Harriet's mother and grandmother think they have the answer. They present Harriet with a unique gift – they take her notebooks of philosophical 'Meditations' which she has been writing for some time in the style of Marcus Aurelius, and publish them as a book called 'The Infinite Wisdom of Harriet Rose'. The title is derived from one of Harriet's Meditations which she composed after her father's death, the impact of which has had a profound influence on Harriet and her writing.

The Infinite Wisdom of Harriet Rose Details

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Author : Diana Janney

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From Reader Review The Infinite Wisdom of Harriet Rose for online ebook

Rebecca says

This book was a bit too philosophical for me. Though it wasn't in your face, showing off how smart a younger kid could be, the things she said just went over my head and I didn't care. I hated all this stuff in high school and I still don't care about it today. For her birthday, a young teenager's mother and grandmother publish the girl's writings. She becomes very famous for them as she has just entered her teenage years and things she is saying are years beyond her. She competes with another girl in her class for the attention of a much older boy, who ends up with her because he likes what she writes. This book wasn't as boring as I thought I would be, but I still don't remember much about it.

Grade: C

Blair says

A curious book; while I found it readable, I couldn't work out what to make of the titular heroine. Harriet Rose is a kind of female Adrian Mole - an irritating, smug and precocious teenager who fancies herself as a philosopher (but, in reality, is more preoccupied with her crush on an older boy) - without the charm, likeability or humour. It was hard to tell whether I was supposed to sympathise with Harriet or laugh at her. I'm also surprised that this book was packaged and marketed as adult fiction when it reads more like a young adult novel than most young adult novels.

Ifigenia says

Es un libro fácil de leer, con situaciones divertidas provocadas por la ingenuidad y arrogancia de Harriet, o bien por las excentricidades de su abuela.

En general, es interesante, pero mientras lo leía, había días en que Harriet me caía sumamente mal, como cuando piensa que todo el mundo a leído su libro, y un simple sé tu misma, ya provoca que ella le conteste con una de sus reflexiones. Otros días, me caía mejor, cuando pensaba que su arrogancia era el único modo que tenía de afrontar la muerte de su padre y enfrentarse a las dificultades.

Lo que me parece más raro de todo, es que Harriet tiene una "sabiduría" muy sospechosa para la gente de su edad, yo no sé si es superdotada o bien que la autora estaba escribiendo pensando lo que haría ella misma y de repente se acordase que estaba hablando de una chica de 14 años, no tan madura. No sé, en algunos momentos me resulta un poco sospechoso como después de hacer ciertas observaciones Harriet mete la pata (¿será para demostrar su inmadurez?) tan hasta el fondo. Igual son cosas mías.

En resumen, Harriet es una antiheroína, una fracasada social, pero que sabe sacarse las castañas del fuego, y si ella no puede, su familia o su "amigo" Jean Claude lo harán por ella. Es una historia muy tierna y divertida.

Y, por cierto, si alguien me vuelve a preguntar que quiero ser de mayor, contestaré lo mismo que Harriet: "interesante".

Tamara Van dishoeck says

heb nog nooit een boek als dit gelezen. het was geen slecht boek maar wel een apart boek, vooral het laatste hoofdstuk was erg raar. Harriet is een meisje van 14 dat dol is op filosofie en op haar verjaardag zorgen haar moeder en oma ervoor dat er een boek uit komt met haar gedachtenkronkels wat al vrij snel populair word en daar probeert ze mee om te gaan op haar eigen manier.

Kerry says

So close, yet so far. Although Diana Janney has created hilariously bizarre characters in tacky, precocious Harriet Rose and her enabling and somewhat idiotic mother, the text lacks a viewpoint of its own. Unfortunately, this is its fatal flaw.

This story is packed with situational comedic gold, or at least silver, but the author is unable to capitalize on the laughs because the reader isn't sure whether to take Harriet seriously or not. The author hesitates, as Harriet wobbles between poignant, if childish grief, and sheer unsympathetic ridiculousness.

In theory, this should work. At fourteen, many girls vacilate between these exact behaviours. However, as a piece of fiction, the inconsistency is a lot to overcome, and I'm not sure whether Janney has succeeded. If she intended us to laugh our way through the text at the loveable hijinks of a well-intentioned teen, then Harriet needed to actually be loveable. But she's not, and the lack of a father (trust me, this is not a spoiler) doesn't make up for her many irritating qualities. When compared, for example, to Alice from Susan Juby's *Alice, I Think* series, Harriet is virtually unrelateable.

Because Harriet is simultaneously a grieving child and an unapologetic diva, the reader feels unable to laugh out loud at the comedic circumstances.

Pam Masters says

Yet another book I've read recently that's set in England (not that I'm complaining). The basis of the story is Harriet Rose, a 14 year old girl who has written her own thoughts and feelings as Meditations. As a birthday present her mum and nana have printed her Meditations. They didn't make just one copy, but 1000. The story goes on as the trials and turbulations of Harriet as she comes to grip with becoming famous, while missing her dad. As the story progresses she becomes like most teens, and as a moment of frustration that her family have printed her private thoughts and feelings for the world to see.

Ester says

Harriet Rose is an exceptionally talented 13 year old philosopher, and the book is about how she rises to

fame.

For her birthday Harriet receives a book-her collection of meditations-published. It is a collection meditations about her reflections on life-good and bad. The book turns out to be a great success and as a result Harriet experiences many new things, and although she is wise she still faces normal teenage dilemmas-like boys and clothes and self-image. Throughout the book Harriet is loved, corrected and encouraged by her mother and grandmother, who she is very close to.

I found the book extremely funny and the characters kept me interested the whole way through. I recommend this book for girls 13 and older-Harriet uses some difficult words.

Donna Brown says

The Infinite Wisdom of Harriet Rose is a strange book. It feels like it should be a book for children and yet I'm not sure I'd want my son/daughter to read it. That said, the days when I was 14 (the age of the central character) seem a long time ago (well, 14 years to be precise) and I'm sure I wasn't playing with Barbies and being all sweet and innocent. Even so, there is something about the book that makes it difficult for me to pinpoint if it is for teenagers, adults or both.

Harriet is 14, apparently immensely wise and clever for her years, on the brink of a relationship with a young French student a couple of years older than her, living with her mother and grandma. Her father has died.

I say 'apparently immensely wise and clever' because this is my second point of indecision. The words on the front cover state 'Prodigy. Philosopher. Superstar?'. It's true that Harriet does seem to have some insightful thoughts and has much more going on in her mind than some of her fellow students; however, I found her intensely annoying and superior in attitude. Whether this was the intent of the author I don't know. But Harriet Rose is, by and large, a character I could not empathise with. And I certainly couldn't decide if I felt she was a prodigy or a pain!

The story is relatively simple and actually very touching. Harriet's mother and 'nana' arrange for her collection of meditations to be published as 'The Infinite Wisdom of Harriet Rose' and the book takes off quite nicely, much to Harriet and her family's glee but some of her schoolmates' chagrin. Along the way there is a touch of teenage romance. It's quite well written and well developed and a number of the characters are very believable, including Harriet's nana, Olivia and her headmistress and schoolmates. However, I found Harriet and her mother to be false in many ways and thus the story never really came to life.

It could have been a very sweet novel for children had it been a little less adult in content and if Harriet had been a little more likeable it would have been quite inspirational. However, as book for teenagers or young adults it just seems to lack something and comes across as a little too juvenile. This is a book that is trying too hard to be in more than one camp.

Jessica says

I enjoyed the story behind The Infinite Wisdom of Harriet Rose, and think it's a neat idea that isn't so unbelievable. It feels like something that could be plausible, especially these days when self-publishing exists and media picks up on stories of this nature.

A few things about it bothered me. Namely, the age difference between Harriet and Jean Claude, which nobody in the story seemed to care about. Also, the fact that Harriet's school headmistress threw her under the bus and tried to make a mockery of her at a PTA event. The goal of a headmistress should be to support her students in their endeavours, especially when it's so personally important to the student and is also related to their education.

Otherwise, a fun story that was a little bit hard to put down at times.

Keris says

The Infinite Wisdom of Harriet Rose is a funny book. Not so much funny ha ha (although it is), but more funny peculiar. Written by supermodel-turned-philosopher (surely the **only** supermodel-turned-philosopher) Diana Janney, it's (apparently) an adult book that looks and sounds more like a young adult book.

Harriet Rose is a schoolgirl philosopher. Intelligent and precocious she takes herself - and the "Meditations" she writes - extremely seriously. When she tells her mother and Nana she doesn't want anything for her fourteenth birthday (requesting that they donate to charity instead) they present her with a published copy of her collected meditations and a plan to promote and publicise the book (of which they've had 1000 copies printed).

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Tiffany says

Another bargain book gem! I used to always feel so sad for the authors who ended up in the bargain bin, because to me it felt as though those books were no longer worthy! Let me tell you, I couldn't have been more wrong! This book was a fantastic example of things that can be found in the bargain bin! This book is written about a young fourteen year old girl obsessed with philosophy. As a result, she decides to write her own book of meditations, which her mother and grandmother decide to have published. As a result, Harriet is rocketed into a world of fame unlike any she has known before. The author had the voice of a fourteen year old girl down perfectly, because I spent half the time feeling sorry for her naivety and the other half hating her for her selfishness. This was a cute, intriguing story. Definitely enjoyable!

Carly says

Easy to read, enjoyable and I really liked Harriet Rose as a character even if she is a little precocious.

Julia says

unfortunately, it seems others don't share my love of this book. It humorous, honest, gripping and clever. Maybe Harriet Rose is slightly precocious, but I feel like all the people that have reviewed this book, with a

low rating are missing the point. Harriet has lost something, something very important to her. And the meditations are not just small, possibly insignificant opinions but more of a release and dealing with loss. She's learning how to function without her major father figure. Her slip up at the School Night, is an important step, her realising she does still have people to look out for her and appreciate her doings.

Katie says

Goes into the horrid, self-absorbed parts of being a 14-year-old and doesn't acknowledge how ridiculous they are. The narrator is insufferably arrogant and only seems to respect one of her peers--whom she doesn't even attempt to befriend. Ostensibly a reasonable first effort, but books like these need to be a little more charming if they're going to have main characters who are so wholly unlikeable.

Alexandria says

Fantastic. Harriet, her mother and her nana were a joy to read about. I normally find books that deal with teenagers annoying due to the unavoidable angst that always seems to be shoved down my throat when I read YA fiction but this was such an enjoyable read that I was happily surprised - I am only annoyed that it took me so long to pick it up and read it.

Harriet's way of looking at things was great fun to read and the situations she was constantly finding herself in had me cringing and empathising with her.

My one complaint would be the way that it ends but I would be very happy to see a second book from the author in the future.
