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What You Always Wanted: An If Only Novel



Synopsis

Enjoy What You Always Wanted and the other standalone titles in Bloomsbury's contemporary If Only romance line centered around an impossible problem: you always want what you can't have! Maddie Brooks has always had high standards for guys. But she has yet to find one who can live up to the romantic, classic Hollywood heartthrobs, especially the dreamy song-and-dance man Gene Kelly. When Maddie begins to carpool with Jesse Morales, her new neighbor and star pitcher of the high school baseball team, she's immediately struck by his wit, good looks, and love for his family--but a guy so into sports is definitely not her style. Then Maddie discovers that Jesse was raised a dancer and still practices in the community theater dance studio to keep in shape. Perhaps her perfect dream guy exists after all. But when it becomes clear that baseball--not dance--is Jesse's passion, can Maddie find a way to let her dream guy go and appreciate the charms of the amazing guy in front of her?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Rae's (Wish You Were Italian, 2014) second novel in the If Only series proves that she knows her teen audience well, delivering a story that is well-paced, engaging, and enjoyable . . . snappy dialogue and compulsively readable prose render the characters fresh and the situations entertaining. Sure to please any teen who loves the arts or dreams of musical-style romance."
—Kirkus Reviews
"Sweet, sassy, and authentically teen, What You Always Wanted deftly navigates friendship, family, and first love. Maddie is sure to dance her way into readers' hearts."

hearts." [Rachael Allen](#), author of *17 FIRST KISSES* and *THE REVENGE PLAYBOOK* "Rae is the master of swoon with just the right amount of sweetness. You can't help but fall for Maddie and Jesse. A fun, adorable romance that will keep you smiling." [Liz Czukas](#), author of *ASK AGAIN LATER* and *TOP TEN CLUES YOU'RE CLUELESS* "Enjoyable--an ideal beach read." [Kirkus Reviews](#) for *WISH YOU WERE ITALIAN* "This breezy, envy-inducing romance opens the *If Only* series." [Publishers Weekly](#) for *WISH YOU WERE ITALIAN* "Rae's debut novel is a breezy, fluffy summer read full of dreamy romance." [Booklist](#) for *WISH YOU WERE ITALIAN*

Kristin Rae is the author of *If Only* line title *Wish You Were Italian* and was born and raised in Texas though her accent would suggest otherwise. She's addicted to books, music, movies, crafty things, and chocolate. A former figure skating coach, LEGO merchandiser, and photographer, she's now happy to create stories while pretending to ignore the carton of gelato in the freezer. Kristin lives in Houston, Texas, with her husband, daughter, and their two boxers.

@kristincreative www.kristinrae.com

My knowledge of Gene Kelly is mostly limited to his appearance alongside Olivia Newton-John in *Xanadu*. But the main character in *What You Always Wanted* knows all of his movies by heart. In her world, no guy can live up to her perception of Gene Kelly. Then she meets Jesse, a hunky baseball player who has hidden talents. Kristin nails the sexual tension between Maddie and Jesse and creates two characters you can't help but fall in love with.

I loved every page of this book! I power-read it in under a day, unable to put it down. It was chock-full of beautifully drawn, compelling characters and lots of heart. Absolute PERFECTION.

Maddie is new in town and quickly befriends her neighbors, joins the drama club, and worms her way into the school and community. Theater is her life and her only true love (Gene Kelly) is dead. She's a very dramatic, yet likable girl. I love her easy calm in handling her life changes, even the surprises that upset her. I love her new friends and the way they're all so different, yet so similar. They really mesh well together. Jesse is her best friend's older brother and he's talented, good-looking, and full of charm. What's not to like? I'm a little older than these characters (okay...a lot older...) and I'm still learning some of the lessons they learned. Even with good intentions, it's really hard not to judge sometimes. Understanding others is so much better than placing them in a

box. Maddie learns the hard way that what she thinks Jesse's passion should be isn't necessarily what his passion in life is. Sometimes people have to learn things the hard way and it can be painful to go through and almost more painful to read about. There's a nice and realistic feel to the relationships throughout this story and the coming-of-age moments are a real process that progresses naturally. I love that these characters aren't perfect. This book took me back to the good times in my past and I enjoyed reliving those moments again. This is such a fun series that can be read in any order, as they have nothing to do with each other. I recommend it to those readers who enjoy good, clean, YA lit with some "if only" dreams thrown in. Content: mild, clean romance (kissing); 1-2 cuss words. Clean! I received a copy through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review*

Grade: A- An e-galley was provided by the publisher in exchange for review consideration. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Gah, I just love cute, swoonworthy contemporary YA. I love characters with substance and friendships and genuinely nice love interests. And let me tell you - Kristin Rae writes great love interests. Darren from *Wish You Were Italian* is so adorable, and I loved that Jesse was just as fleshed-out as Maddie. I also enjoyed that Maddie wasn't as snobby as I expected - Angela and Tiffany, her first two friends, aren't drama geeks; in addition, they don't end up being her only two friends. Maddie befriends one of the nice girls in the drama program, Sarah. I appreciated that Ms. Rae didn't only give Maddie two friends AND that it wasn't like Maddie, as the new girl, joined the friend group. Instead, she made her own. Still on the subject of Maddie, one of the things that kept me from completely loving *What You Always Wanted* and giving it 5 stars was that I wanted to see a little more character growth for her. She's a bit opinionated and she was rude to her parents and I wanted to see her grow and become more mature. However, she acted like a teenager in a lot of ways, which I did appreciate since so many YA protagonists seem way older than they actually are. I liked how not everything went the way Maddie wanted it to, and she had to work for things. I would've liked to see the build-up to and her audition for the musical, though. As for the romance, I appreciated that the problems weren't based on communication issues, as so many YA romances are. It was such a relief that there was no love triangle. And Jesse was definitely swoonworthy, y'all. He's an athlete and he dances and he's interested in Maddie. He makes an effort with her and even though he doesn't like old movies, he likes that she does and she's so passionate about her interests. Language was mild - if there was any because I don't remember much. Kissing and making out were as far as it went. The Verdict: So, so, so cute and sweet. If contemporary romance is your thing, then I'd be surprised if you didn't like *What You Always*

Wanted.

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