



I'm Not Your Manic Pixie Dream Girl

Gretchen McNeil

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From acclaimed author Gretchen McNeil comes her first realistic contemporary romance—perfect for fans of Kody Keplinger's *The Duff* and Morgan Matson's *Since You've Been Gone*.

Beatrice Maria Estrella Giovannini has life all figured out. She's starting senior year at the top of her class, she's a shoo-in for a scholarship to M.I.T., and she's got a new boyfriend she's crazy about. The only problem: All through high school Bea and her best friends Spencer and Gabe have been the targets of horrific bullying.

So Bea uses her math skills to come up with The Formula, a 100% mathematically guaranteed path to social happiness in high school. Now Gabe is on his way to becoming Student Body President, and Spencer is finally getting his art noticed. But when her boyfriend Jesse dumps her for Toile, the quirky new girl at school, Bea realizes it's time to use The Formula for herself. She'll be reinvented as the eccentric and lovable Trixie—a quintessential manic pixie dream girl—in order to win Jesse back and beat new-girl Toile at her own game.

Unfortunately, being a manic pixie dream girl isn't all it's cracked up to be, and “Trixie” is causing unexpected consequences for her friends. As The Formula begins to break down, can Bea find a way to reclaim her true identity and fix everything she's messed up? Or will the casualties of her manic pixie experiment go far deeper than she could possibly imagine?

I'm Not Your Manic Pixie Dream Girl Details

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From Reader Review I'm Not Your Manic Pixie Dream Girl for online ebook

Kelly (and the Book Boar) says

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

3.5 Stars

As soon as I saw my friend Peach reading this, I knew I had to get a copy of it immediately simply for that title alone. You're all familiar with the Manic Pixie Dream Girl by this point, right? If not you probably live on Mars, but here's a description for you

"A manic pixie dream girl is a character trope: a quirky, effervescent female who walks to the beat of her own drum and makes the male lead feel like she's changed his world."

"What else does she do?"

"Not much."

Or, in other words

My reaction to this type of girl?????

Be it on television or on Goodreads I have zero room in my life for this vapid waste. I know, I know that makes me a real woman hater. Guess what?????

I'm Not Your Manic Pixie Dream Girl was right up my alley. When Beatrice's boyfriend ditches her almost immediately after new student Toile pirouettes into class and her besties Spencer and Gabe appear to *once again* be on the receiving end of a year-long smackdown by the jocks, Bea does what she does best – creates a mathematical formula that will assure the trio's happiness in high school

"Or, in layman's terms:

- (1) Find the niche.*
- (2) Play the role.*
- (3) Fill the void."*

For Gabe that means he'll have to find a way to channel his inner gay bestie, Spencer will need to unleash his brooding artist, and Bea will become Trixie – a manic pixie dream girl. Bea figures it should only take a couple of weeks for The Formula to work and once she gets the guy and Spencer and Gabe cease being a couple of punching bags they can ease back into their normal personalities. That is, until The Formula

doesn't end up being as foolproof as Bea thought and she risks not only losing her real self, but everyone she loves (or didn't even know she loved until it was maybe too late) in the process.

The blurb says *I'm Not Your Manic Pixie Dream Girl* is "**perfect for fans of Kody Keplinger's *The Duff* and Morgan Matson's *Since You've Been Gone*.**" I can confirm fans of *The D.U.F.F* (like myself and Erica) are probably going to have an A-okay time with this one. I haven't read *Since You've Been Gone* only because of

Simply reading the title will have that song in my head for a minimum of 87 hours.

I realize I'm not the target demographic for stories like these. For me they are pretty much the equivalent of . . .

They have zero nutritional value, they definitely don't improve my I.Q. after finishing them, and they make me super angry I was stuck with *Sweet Valley High* as a kid when I could have been reading this kind of awesome fluff instead. Being that I'm ancient I'm also amazed at the polarized viewpoints the younger set have upon reading this kind of nonsense. I GUAR.AN.TEE. there will be a crapton of young'ins who think Bea is an asshole – and I'll tell you from the perspective of a grown-up she totally kind of is but not because she's a "shamer" or whatever-the-eff the term of the week is that people will choose to call her

Seriously. Dislike the book because it's the equivalent of eating an entire gallon of ice cream, but at least see the point it's trying to make that you shouldn't change for anyone. (This goes triple for all of you "manic pixies" out there because that personality DOES. NOT. ACTUALLY. EXIST. IN. NATURE. Be yourself!) There's even the little bonus of true love being right before your eyes the whole time to make you get the warm and fuzzies

I'm telling if you if this thing becomes a movie - which, once again, it totally should for the title alone - I will watch the SHIT out of it.

Natalie Monroe says

4.5 stars

"Toile's type is heroin for a guy like Jesse."

"And what type is that?" I asked.

Spencer laughed. "Duh. She's a manic pixie dream girl."

I alternated between two expressions while reading. Going "Awww!" or having a big fat grin plastered on my face.

Fine, they're the same thing. I'm a little stuck for ideas on how to communicate the utter magic and intense teenage joy I'm Not Your Manic Pixie Dream Girl brought me, so in honor of the protagonist Bea's nerdiness, **I'm making a list.**

1. It's unbelievably adorable

Younger YA readers would compare it to Anna and the French Kiss or Fangirl. Being the old soul that I am, I would liken it to **Meg Cabot's How to Be Popular in style and plot.** Both are about a girl who remakes herself to climb the social ladder, then eventually realizes being herself was the solution all along. It's a classic chick flick formula for a reason. McNeil executes it brilliantly and took me back to my tween days, lying on my bed reading Cabot.

Then there's Spencer. Le sigh. *Spencer.*

He's the boy who isn't afraid to call the heroine out on her bullshit or cheer her up when she's down. The one who loved her long before she was anyone but herself.

Excuse me a sec.

2. Murders the Manic Pixie Dream Girl trope, stuffs it and hangs it above the mantelpiece

"The wacky outfits.

The unexpected actions.

The positive feedback loop.

The relentlessly sunny disposition.

Manic pixie dream girl was a formula."

Margo Rothman can suck it. This is how you subvert a sexist plot device that's been around since the 20th century. By turning it into a tool.

The gist is Bea loses her boyfriend to the quirky new girl Toile and decides to win him back by transforming into a pixie girl herself. New wardrobe, new personality, new everything. Think Gone Girl meets the TV series New Girl, which is another amazing example of turning the tables on the trope.

The Pixie Girl's purpose is inspire the male protagonist. This is Bea's story. This is Bea using something originated for the male gaze to get what *she* wants. Along the way, she discovers who *she* is as a person.

Spencer isn't left out either. He's not a Pixie Boy and goes through a character arc of his own.

Also, this quote:

"That manic-pixie-dream-girl thing isn't total crap, you know. You can inspire someone without sacrificing yourself in the process."

3. Yassss, feminism!

It handles the feud between Bea and Toile so beautifully. There's minimal girl hate and slut-shaming. Bea eventually questions whether she's pretending to be "Trixie" (her Pixie Girl name) to get Jesse back or just to beat Toile.

That prom scene is magnificent. You'll see what I mean.

4. The diversity

Bea's mother is Filipino, making Bea half-Filipino. There's a sweet, thoughtful portrayal of gay stereotypes, too.

5. Complex familial relations

Bea's relationships with her parents both play a part in her character arc. They're divorced and she splits her week between her mom's and her dad and his new wife's. No wicked-stepmother storyline; Bea and her new stepmother get along quite well and it's heartwarming how everything works out.

Don't kill me for being vague. It's a **plot that has to be experienced, not summarized.**

"Women are not on this planet exclusively to inspire men and make them happy. We have our own dreams and needs, our own shit to get done. We run companies, countries, international

organizations. We're not props, and we're certainly not here to cater to men's egos."

This book just makes me embarrassingly happy.

ARC provided by Edelweiss. Quotes taken from an uncorrected galley proof and may be subject to change.

Stacee says

I've always been a huge fan of Gretchen's, so I was super excited to see what she came up with for her first contemp without murderly goodness. And she definitely delivered.

I love love loved Bea and Gabe and especially Spencer. They're all awesome characters and I think we would have an amazing time getting arrested. I truly enjoyed being in Bea's head and seeing how she was all math all the time. It was amusing {and a bit exasperating} that someone so smart could be so stupid, but I was thoroughly entertained watching her figure things out.

As always, there's some delightful and mildly random reference and this time it's a song and it's perfect. This will definitely be a book I read over and over again.

****Huge thanks to Balzer + Bray and Edelweiss for providing the arc in exchange for an honest review****

Zoraida says

Love love love

Cait • A Page with a View says

THIS WAS SO FUNNY & ADORABLE. I read the whole thing in one sitting because the writing was so strong that the story just flew by.

Beatrice is a pretty chill, intelligent teen whose classmates only know her as "Math Girl." When her boyfriend breaks up with her for a quirky new MPDG named Toile, Beatrice creates a math formula for popularity. She convinces her two best guy friends to become the stereotypical brooding artist & gay bff to the popular crowd while Beatrice becomes "Trixie" the MPDG.

The story could've easily become too shallow or cliché, but it was so self-aware that it just *worked*.

Plus, there were enough interesting side plots to give the story more depth. Contemporaries are usually hit or miss with me and I had a lot of fun with this one! I was laughing SO hard in multiple parts.

Thank you to the publisher for sending me an ARC and I'm so sorry it took me over a year to get to...

Erin says

Predictable.

Laurence R. says

I liked the idea of this book, but it developed into something similar to many other books. Still cute, though!

Rhianna says

Too problematic to earn a rec from me.

The whole concept of the Manic Pixie Dream Girl is controversial. Do a little Googling and you're going to quickly realize what a sexist term it is. So I thought this book might be an enjoyable commentary on that sexism and the problem with it. Alas, it isn't.

I'm usually the champion and defender of unlikable heroines but this time I just can't make myself do it. I liked the idea of this book but once I had it in my hands and started to read I quickly realized I hated Bea. Sadly, my hatred of Bea got worse and worse to the point I almost stopped reading and went with a DNF. To put it quite bluntly... Bea is a horrible person. The way she treats her friends, her boyfriend/ex-boyfriend, her stepmother and parents, and especially Toile, just disgusted me. She's arrogant and the way she uses her friends was totally cringe inducing. If the novel has resolved with a feeling that Bea had truly grown or learned from what she did I might have liked it but I just wasn't feeling it.

While I won't encourage anyone to steer clear of INYMPDG—problematic books deserve to be read—I definitely will not be recommending it. It just left me with too strong of a negative feeling.

Notes: ARC received via Edelweiss.

Viktoria Winter says

I received an ARC from the publisher, and that in no way swayed my honest opinion.

If you're a fan of high school comedies like Mean Girls or Clueless, this is the one for you. It was quirky, funny, and a little dark at times. But I enjoyed it nevertheless! (Full review to come soon.)

Kim at Divergent Gryffindor says

The concept for I'm Not Your Manic Pixie Dream Girl's concept is not that unique as I have seen it in other books like This is My Brain on Boys and The Boyfriend App but the author definitely made it unique in her own way. That said, I should probably avoid books like this in the future - books where the girls use some kind of academic knowledge in real life and things fail. Sometimes the character tends to seem robotic in this book, and although the author manages to make things unique, I find that they can be predictable, or as predictable as can be when it comes to contemporary. For the most part, I did enjoy this book, it's just that I realized that this type of book is not for me.

I learned at the beginning of this book that the main character's mother is a Filipina, and that made me really excited about the book. It's quite rare that I see any Filipino characters in the books that I read, so it was a fantastic surprise! Bea's mom also use Tagalog words like *Anak*, and I really saw the Filipino culture in her. Bea's parents are also divorced but I liked that she has a good relationship with both of them, and even with her stepmother. She even lives with both her mom and dad on different days of the week, so they really get to spend time together.

This book focuses on a certain formula that Bea uses to make her and her two other friends popular because a new student, Toile, stole her boyfriend from her. It follows their transformation, as well as the new drama that emerged resulting from that transformation. I found Bea to be naive and heartless at times, but I realized that it's understandable, given that this is set in high school.

My main issue with this book is that I didn't connect with the story nor the characters. Overall, I actually found this book quite entertaining because a lot of things happened, but I just couldn't fully enjoy it because I couldn't connect. Sometimes it felt like there was too much drama going on and the friends were constantly fighting, but for the most part it was entertaining, like from a detached point of view. See, I found the drama entertaining! What is wrong with me?

Anyway, I liked the tension in the romance aspect, but that was about it. This book is kind of a 'meh' read for me. I mean, I read the book and didn't exactly feel bored, but I didn't feel excited either. I enjoyed it, but not that much. I just wished that I connected with it so I could give it a higher rating.

Tissy says

Boring.

Christina M Tremaine says

Beatrice Maria Estrella Giovannini has life all figured out. She's starting senior year at the top of her class, she's a shoo-in for a scholarship to M.I.T., and she's got a new boyfriend she's crazy about. The only problem: All through high school Bea and her best friends Spencer and Gabe have been the targets of horrific bullying.

So Bea uses her math skills to come up with The Formula, a 100% mathematically guaranteed path to social happiness in high school. Now Gabe is on his way to becoming Student Body President, and Spencer is

finally getting his art noticed. But when her boyfriend Jesse dumps her for Toile, the quirky new girl at school, Bea realizes it's time to use The Formula for herself. She'll be reinvented as the eccentric and lovable Trixie—a quintessential manic pixie dream girl—in order to win Jesse back and beat new-girl Toile at her own game.

I have to admit, I didn't start off liking this book and it took me until halfway through before I really started to like and enjoy it. The pacing was a huge issue for me in the beginning. It felt like the storyline was crawling until Bea came up with the formula and then the book took off.

Although I admire the author's attempt at breaking down stereotypes, I feel the book actually played into them. I enjoyed the characters and felt they were well established.

The plot was way different than anything I've ever read before. I was intrigued by Bea's theory and how she invested a lot of time and effort into it. The plot had good twists so it kept me on my toes. The ending was a little bit cheesy but still worked.

Roni Loren says

Very cute. Read it in one sitting.

Jen Ryland says

Read more of my reviews on YA Romantics or follow me on Bloglovin

I've read all of Gretchen McNeil's books and there are always aspects of them that I enjoy. She has a lively, funny writing style and is always switching up genres.

I'm Not Your Manic Pixie Dream Girl had its appealing points, but also some things I didn't enjoy. At times, it felt to me like this book was a bunch of classic movies (*Mean Girls*, *Election*, *Garden State*, *Clueless*, *Revenge of the Nerds*) thrown into a blender and then poured into a computer. There were two main plot strands: 1) a romantic "win the guy back" plot, which I was really not feeling for most of the book, and 2) a plot about Beatrice trying to win a college scholarship by making a mathematical formula by which high school nerds can reinvent themselves. At times the two plots worked together, as when Beatrice reinvented herself as "Trixie" to win her guy back, but at other times I thought these two plots were sort of moved on parallel tracks.

Beatrice was, for the most part, hard for me to relate to. Yes, she's smart, but she's also not the nicest person on the block. She schemes and she plots. She's bossy and egotistical. At times, she treats the people in her life as pawns. The romance was all over the place. As the story starts, Beatrice is madly in love with Jesse. I guess the blah-ness of their romance was part of the plot, but I didn't get what she saw in Jesse or why she wants him back after he dumps her. I'm *really* not a fan of the "winning the guy who dumped me back" plots because ... why? *Why* do you want to grovel and connive and get back a guy who didn't know the value of what he had? Find a better guy.

I also didn't love the fact that all the characters in this book start off as the most extreme stereotypes (the math nerd, the popular girl, the gay best friend, and, of course, the Manic Pixie Dream Girl.) Yes, they do *finally* break out of their stereotypes, but that happened at the 95% mark on my kindle. Plus, I felt that the book's message on self-acceptance was all over the place. You should be yourself. But if your family moves a lot, it's okay to reinvent yourself. If you reinvent yourself, you might be elected class president (I seriously doubt that). But if you do reinvent yourself, you might lose all your friends.

By the end, "Trixie" learns her lesson about being nice and being herself and getting the (right) guy. But getting there was a bit of a bumpy ride!

Thanks to the publisher for providing a free advance copy of this book for me to review.

Alison says

3.5 Stars

This wasn't what I was expecting (but don't ask me what exactly I was expecting, because I still don't know). It's about a girl who is nerdy and her two best friends and her get bullied. They find a formula to becoming cool and she discovers Manic Pixie Dream Girl tropes and becomes one to steal her boyfriend back. I think I was first annoyed by the girl who comes to their school and is the "Manic Pixie Dream Girl" who is honestly weird and flamboyant and she is automatically accepted as cool. First off, I was that girl in high school. I will have you know, I was most certainly NOT cool. I was exactly what I described, weird and flamboyant. Just add annoying and that is what this girl was and what the main character ends up becoming. I was also slightly annoyed that the main character was so judgemental despite not wanting to be judged by others, plus near the end she didn't want to take responsibility for her actions. This might be because this does take place in high school, and therefore she is suppose to be immature, but I didn't care for it. It wasn't as noticeable as I'm making it sound though. I swear I did enjoy this book (I read it in one sitting!). The rest of the characters are pretty great (despite the boyfriend she is trying to win back, what does she even see in him?) and I really enjoyed that they were part of her experiment and fought like real high school friends do.

This is still a contemporary romance, don't get me wrong. It was still cute and wonderful and made my heart happy. It wasn't angsty and it did deal with family issues and other high school social issues and I was glad that it followed the normal "nerds" of high school and their feelings of being outcasts. It has LGBTQ+ themes and from what I could tell the main character is POC (cover doesn't whitewash either YAY!). I also like that this brings attention to the Manic Pixie Dream Girl trope, even if I felt it didn't quite do it right, especially to possibly high school audiences - it wasn't something I knew about at that age, but wish I had (again, I was THAT girl).

I did enjoy this and I would recommend this to anyone looking for a cute, quick, read.

Romana says

Nem?la bych sice kopat do knížky, kterou jsem p?eložila, ale tady mi to nedá. Tohle je fakt d?s, a nejen proto, že je to plný matematiky (kterou fakt nemusím, ani když se podá vtípn?). Už dlouho jsem nem?la tu

Ještě s tak sobeckou, sebestřednou, zbedněnou a veskrze nesympatickou hrdinkou. Motivace postav stojí na tak vratkých nohách, že pokud se nad nimi jen trošilinku zamyslíte, totálně se sesypou, a deus ex machina zasahuje ve zcela nelogickém důji tak často, že by se to klidně mohlo jmenovat "Convenience". Nic v příběhu nedává smysl, rozuzlení i konec jsou naprosto předvídatelné a asi od polky se kniha motá v kruzích a jen opakuje už vyřčené. Tohle je asi moc i na mě. Ale přečtěte si to, třeba mi tenhle názor vyvrátíte...

Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to HarperCollins and Edelweiss.)

“A manic pixie dream girl is a character trope: a quirky, effervescent female who walks to the beat of her own drum and makes the male lead feel like she’s changed his world.”

This was a YA contemporary story about a girl who tried to stop her friends being bullied by using a mathematical formula.

Bea was an okay character, and it was noble of her to try and help her friends to become more popular and avoid bullies, I could understand why none of them really understood her mathematical formula though.

The storyline in this was about Bea trying to find a solution to a bullying problem by reinventing herself and her friends to be the sort of people that would be valued more. She also tried to reinvent herself to become a manic pixie dream girl to try and win her boyfriend back, but she was kind of clueless when it came to romance really. The book was entertaining, if a little cringe-worthy in places, and it was nice to see Bea change as the story progressed.

The ending to this was okay, and things seemed to work out fairly happily.

6.5 out of 10

Mindy says

I thought this would be a subversive, feminist look into manic pixie dream girls, but it was the exact opposite. Bea is Not Like Other Girls and is the world’s most unlikable protagonist. Everyone was unlikable in this book, actually.

I also loooved how Bea used fun insults like “pussy” and “skank.” A super fun feminist read for the whole feminist family. Not.

Colleen Houck says

I loved that the heroine is a math wiz. You just don't see enough of those in YA literature. This was a fun journey with the heroine and I admire her bravery. Don't think I could have pulled something like that off. I related to her on so many levels.

Josiah (bookishfanboy) says

Actual rating: 3.7 stars

It's started so slow, and I'm not really interested on what was happening at first. I'm glad that it got better and I got hooked after 100 pages. I thought that this book was funny and so pleased that it involves awareness especially in bullying. Full review to come!!

Special thanks to Harper Collins International for sending me a review copy of this book
