



How High the Moon

Sandra Kring

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In this tender novel set in 1955 Mill Town, Wisconsin, Sandra Kring explores the complicated bond between mothers and daughters, the pressure to conform, and the meaning of friendship and family.

Ten-year-old Isabella “Teaspoon” Marlene has been a handful ever since her mother, Catty, dumped her with an old boyfriend and ran off to Hollywood. Teaspoon fights, fibs, never stops singing, and is as unpredictable and fearless as a puppy off its leash. Still, Teddy Favors, a man who has taken his share of kicks, is determined to raise her right.

Teaspoon wants to be better for Teddy—even if that means agreeing to take part in a do-gooder mentorship program and being paired up with Brenda Bloom, the beautiful reigning Sweetheart of Mill Town. Against all odds, as the summer passes, this unlikely duo discover a special friendship as they face personal challenges, determined to follow their hearts instead of convention.

It’s while Brenda and Teaspoon are putting together the grandest show the Starlight Theater has ever seen that Catty returns to Mill Town, shattering illusions and testing loyalties. But by the final curtain call, one determined little girl shows an entire town the healing that can happen when you let your heart take center stage.

How High the Moon Details

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Author : Sandra Kring

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From Reader Review How High the Moon for online ebook

Lyn Richards says

So good, lots of fun.

A very quick and easy read. It will make you happy and sad. Great ending. Sweet book. The main character is adorable.

Cathleen says

Even a less than great Sandra Kring book is still sweet and engaging, but this somehow missed the mark for me. The now-required element of a precocious little girl starts out charming and then begins to wear. Many of the characters are caricatures, and I couldn't help but start to worry that Teaspoon's naivete had strained credibility to the point of her seeming dim. OK if you want something cute, but be prepared for manufactured melodrama.

Book Sp(l)ot says

(This book was received as from Goodreads First Reads)

How High the Moon is about a little girl so lovable, so endearing right from the word go, that you think there has to be some fault to the book given that a large part of why 'Teaspoon' is how she is, is because she's been abandoned by her mother. But, of course, little girls aren't left by their mothers through any fault of their own and that's why How High the Moon is so brilliant--and why Teaspoon is so brilliant.

Ten-year-old Isabella 'Teaspoon' Marlene has been raised by her mother's boyfriend for the last five years ever since her mother ran off to chase her dream of becoming a star. Now, Teaspoon (from whose point of view the story is told) is in danger of not passing fifth grade and full of afflictions like saying ain't, singing all of the time-she wants to be a star, too-and getting in fist fights. Her teacher, sure her troubles are the result of a 'lack of feminine influence' in her life sign her up for the Sunshine Sisters program that pairs upstanding teen girls with more troubled younger girls.

And that's how the second character, Mill Town's Sweetheart, Brenda Bloom is brought in--as Teaspoon's Big Sister. Then, of course, there's the question of whether her mother's going to stay gone.

I haven't read any of Sandra Kring's books before, though I have seen them, loved the covers and thought about it, so I'm pretty much overjoyed to have gotten this book from Goodreads First Reads. Set in 1955 and told by a ten-year-old, I was a little worried about this to be honest (it sounded cute but then I wasn't completely sure)--but then I loved it.

There was an amazing assortment of characters (Teaspoon, Teddy, Brenda, Charlie, The Jacksons, and quite a few more) that all had their own purpose within the story and progressed things. I'll admit to having some trouble keeping some of the Jackson kids straight because there were quite a few with same letter names, but that's about all. And all of the characters seemed to fit within the period but were also entertaining and fun to

read about in a modern book.

And I thought the story being told from Teaspoon's view was done really well. It didn't feel juvenile even though it was being told by a child, or too young for teens or adults to enjoy but it also didn't feel too grown up to fit with her. There was that childhood innocence and naivete that kept her lovable and cute and endearing but also brought back memories of when you were ten and didn't quite know what all the adults were talking about. It also worked well to have the kids overhearing conversations because elements of the plot were brought in that there was no other reason for her to know about, but that the reader could then know about.

The relationships between Teddy and Teaspoon, Charlie and Teaspoon, and Brenda and Teaspoon were all strong in their own right and developed well and allowed you to care about all of the characters. And her relationship with her mother (or what she's keeping in her head, too) was also...I want to say bittersweet.

And a good bit of it's set in this fantastic movie theatre with stars on the ceiling...and now I want to have a movie theatre like that.

It wasn't the least predictable book ever (but it didn't need to be) but there were also some parts that were really, really not predictable and it really has a whallop of an ending. One part of the ending of this book made me cry, actually.

I think How High the Moon is a book the sort of book that a lot of other books are trying to be, one with characters you can really love, a story you won't forget, and a great conclusion. I know I'm recommending this to a lot of people (and not just on here).

Though this is not a YA book, I see very little if not nothing at all stopping YA readers from reading it.

10/10

thank you to Goodreads First Reads program for this book

Diane says

It's 1955 in Milltown, Wisconsin, where ten year old Isabella "Teaspoon" Marlene lives. She is a sweet but outspoken little girl, who misses her mother and wonders when she will be coming home. Teaspoon's mother left her with her boyfriend Teddy, telling her that she had "dreams to chase", and she then took off for a career in Hollywood.

Teddy is man who care deeply for Teaspoon. She tells people, "Teddy is the boyfriend Ma left me with", but "Teddy is as good as Jesus". Poor Teddy has his work cut out for him. He learns that Teaspoon has let her school work slide, and that she might not get promoted to the sixth grade. She also starts getting into fights, so something has to change. She reluctantly joins a group called The Sunshine Sisters, a mentoring program, aimed at changing the direction in life of wayward children. Her role models to date have been the Taxi Stand ladies who stand on the corner by the drug store, wear too much makeup and perfume and dress in skimpy, flashy clothing. To make matters worst they have taken a liking to Teaspoon.

Her Sunshine Sister experience pairs Teaspoon up with Brenda Bloom, and an unlikely bond is formed. A summer performance at the Starlight Theater Group, where Teaspoon gets to sing, has made a positive impact on her. She even hires the Taxi Stand ladies to do the makeup of those performing. Now she dreams

about a possible singing career in her future.

MY THOUGHTS - There is so much more I could say about this wonderful story, but I don't want to give away too much detail. However, if you love coming of age stories set in small town America, with characters you will grow to love and care about, then this book will appeal to you. Not only for baby boomers like me, but people of all ages will fall in love with the memorable Teaspoon, the precocious narrator, of this beautifully written, bittersweet story. There are also other sweet characters (not mentioned in this review) that will hold your interest as well. This is one novel that I was sad to see end.

I have read every novel that Sandra Kring has written, and she has become one of my favorite writers. If you have not tried this author ---you must. There are other wonderful coming of age stories by Kring as well. Most take place in the 1950's-60's, *The Book of Bright Ideas*; *Carry Me Home*; and *Thank You for All Things*. I highly recommend this author, and look forward to her next novel, which I am hoping will be a sequel to my favorite: *The Book of Bright Ideas*.

Barb says

Enjoyed this book. Sad, mom leaves daughter with boyfriend to go and follow her dream. Isabella (Teaspoon) tells it like it is.

Stephanie Weitzman says

Wonderful book with colorful characters. My heart hurt for this little girl and I cheered for the people who helped her to become her best self! I know so many children who have experienced what she did and love the way Ms. Kring describes their stories! Thank you for another beautiful book, I look forward to the next one.....

Linnae says

Teaspoon is a girl with music in her bones. One of her many afflictions is humming or singing just about all the time. Her mom left town for Hollywood back when she 5 (she is now 10), and ever since she has lived with her mom's ex-boyfriend Teddy. Teddy is good and respectable and trying really hard to raise her up right, but he has to work long hours, and she has a lot of time to herself.

Then she unwillingly becomes a part of the Sunshine Sisters program, paired up with town sweetheart Brenda Bloom. The two form an unlikely friendship and manage to teach other a thing or two about life. Then her Mama blows back into town and everything may change forever.

Though it's written from the perspective of a 10-year-old, this is not a kids' book. A couple of the minor characters use bad language frequently, 2 of Teaspoon's friends are the Taxi Stand Ladies (prostitutes), and there's quite a bit of talk about the Juicy Jitterbug (sex), though none onscreen.

Teaspoon herself wormed her way into my affections, though I found myself rolling my eyes at some of her longer speeches. With her, what you see is what you get--she tells it like it is, even when it makes others

uncomfortable. The ending was pretty predictable.

Ariel says

If I could I would give this book more than 5 stars. I absolutely adored everything about it.

Cori says

I won this book through Goodreads First Read Giveaway.

The book is set in 1955 where the narrator is a 10 year old girl whos 'ma' left to achive her dream of being a Hollywood actress. Teaspoon is left with the boyfriend for 5 years where she suffers come 'afflictions' and joins a group called the Sunshine Sisters where she hopes to learn how to be 'respectable' by Brenda, her Big Sister.

The book was cute in its own way. Teaspoon was a little bundle of energy that you could feel radiating through the pages. Many of the characters had personalities that jumped right out at you. The story was very predictable which made me not want to stop three-fourths of the way through. There were no interesting plot twists, just a cute story.

One thing that got really irritating was the constant use of 'afflictions', 'respectable', and 'Juciy Jitterbug' If I never read or hear those words ever again it will be too soon.

I liked the book but not enough to highly recommend it to my friends. I will probably pass on my copy to a friend that might want to read it because there isn't anything I can do with it.

Brenda says

Cute.

Dianna says

How High the Moon is told through the eyes of the precocious 10-year old, Isabella "Teaspoon" Marlene, in small town Wisconsin 1955. Right from the get-go, she is both annoying and endearing at the same time, but you can't help but fall in love with her. Abandoned by her ma (in search for her Hollywood dream), Teaspoon is left with ma's boyfriend, Teddy. Teaspoon is a handful - cussing, fighting and fearless. The incessant talking alone would break even the most patient; but not Teddy, a kind soul with a soft heart, he tries to raise her proper.

With the threat of repeating 5th over her head, Teaspoon agrees to enroll in the Sunshine Sisters mentoring program for the summer so she could learn to become 'respectable'.

This was the summer of how life is never what it seems or what we expect. I laughed and cried over this

delightful tale because its those insignificant little things done by others, are what help us through our low points. And we miss those if all we have in our sight are our dreams.

I highly recommend this one. 4.5 stars!

Shannon Arehart says

Would give 3.5 stars if I could. This book had several things I typically find annoying in a book - a precocious child. Several characters with extraordinary talent or luck and HUGE coincidences. Sometimes an author throws all of that in a book and I feel like it becomes so unrealistic it's unenjoyable. Sometimes they throw it all in and it ends up being a sweet book with some fun characters and nice messages. Fortunately for me, this time the precocious kid + wild coincidences + gifted cast of characters = a quick, fun read that I liked. The timing was perfect for me, I just finished reading something pretty grim and we've been having a Walking Dead (TV show about surviving - or not- a zombie apocalypse) marathon over the last few weeks to catch up to the current season. A light, funny, feel-good story was just what I needed - if you need one too, give this book a try.

Steve says

How High the Moon: A Novel, by Sandra Kring, was the first book I received from Goodreads' First Reads. Initially, when I started to read the book, and became aware that the story is told from a 10 year old's point of view, I was somewhat skeptical; adult authors generally have trouble portraying the vocabulary, mannerisms, and observations of youngsters, either expressing them too simplistically or with too much of an adult view, but I was very pleasantly surprised. Ms. Kring captured perfectly the life, times, thoughts, and wonder of a young girl's tumultuous summer in a small town in 1955, and through her eyes, the lives of a number of residents of Mill Town, Wisconsin. In a way it reminded me of Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town*. The style of the book was reminiscent of the non-judgmental observations of Steinbeck, mixed with the wit and wisdom of Twain. Though the story was fairly low-key, with no major dramatic upheavals, it did cover the entire gamut of emotions: I laughed, cried, and in the end came away with the reminder that life is, after all, quite the wondrous thing. How High the Moon: A Novel will possibly not go down as one of the all-time "great" books, but it was better than many I've read. All in all, a very enjoyable read.

Shel says

I won this in the first-reads giveaway - my first ever ARC, I felt so special :)

Unfortunately I wasn't blown away by the book, though I did enjoy it in the moment. It was entertaining, but extremely predictable and didn't break any new ground. I see this as one of those YA books that teens will love, but I wouldn't necessarily recommend it to adult readers, because the story has been done before, and better.

Teaspoon was an engaging narrator, though, and it was fun to see the world through her somewhat naive eyes (loved the "Taxi Stand Ladies"!). I was moved by her relationship with Teddy, her mom's boyfriend, and the friendship she built with Charlie, who moves in next door. Brenda, her Big Sister, I found less interesting.

All in all, I think teenage readers would certainly find a lot to love in this book, and it would be a great candidate for a mother/daughter book club.

Kevin Kern says

I am not going to write a new review. Goodreads disappeared my last one. Sweet book, lively characters and lots of music. Highly recommended.
