



## Field Notes on Love

*Jennifer E. Smith*

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Having just been dumped by his girlfriend, British-born Hugo is still determined to take his last-hurrah-before-college train trip across the United States. One snag: the companion ticket is already booked under the name of his ex, Margaret Campbell. Nontransferable, no exceptions.

Enter the new Margaret C. (Mae for short), an aspiring filmmaker with big dreams. After finding Hugo's spare ticket offer online, she's convinced it's the perfect opportunity to expand her horizons.

When the two meet, the attraction is undeniable, and both find more than they bargained for. As Mae pushes Hugo to explore his dreams for his future, he'll encourage her to channel a new, vulnerable side of her art. But when life off the train threatens the bubble they've created for themselves, will they manage to keep their love on track?

### Field Notes on Love Details

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Author : Jennifer E. Smith

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## From Reader Review Field Notes on Love for online ebook

**Tam\_ the\_ med\_ bookie** says

Wasted my time.

First let me explain about the 2 stars.

One star for the unbelievably -happy -unrealistic- young -adult -romance books' perfect characters. We all wish for people like these in our lives.

Another star for those 2 perfect pages on what the book is supposed to be. Those pages when Mae actually interviews a woman in the train about life and love.

Otherwise the rest 99% of the book is pure cheesy, young adult insta love, all over each other, we-cannot-live-without-each-other kind of stuff till the last page of happily-ever -after -of -two -18 -year- olds -who -met -each -other -by -chance!

What are the odds?!

Mae is someone who knows what she wants. Yet she is in a relationship with someone who she knows she doesn't want to be with at the beginning of the story. She is judgemental and pessimistic and really unlikable. And just like that when she knows she is going on a trip she left him just like that. With no explanations!

And then there is Hugo, one of the sextuplets.

He wants to be somewhere alone, exploring things, needs to stay away from his siblings for a while and see how life is different apart from being as one of the sextuplets.

He gets dumped by his girlfriend at the beginning of the story.

The thing is that they booked tickets with her name. And all he has to do is to find someone with a similar name to make the trip happen.

So that's how they meet.

Then insta love happens.

Then nothing much happens.

Then cheesiness happens until the 100th something page.

And I actually thought the story is about to change for good.

Those two pages on actual 'Field Notes On Love' happened when Mae interviews a couple they meet during the train ride.

The questions asked and the answers given are truly life endearing. And I really started believing that this book is going to be one of my fav reads.

BUT...

PISS.....

It goes back to being cheesy.

Then being too cheesy...

And nothing much than only being more cheesy till the last line.

Damn, those two pages were so valuable and perfect.

Had it gone that line for the rest of the book, it would have been so damn good.

Had it been a little different how it ended and actually have moved towards how the characters viewed their lives as they had At the beginning it would have been better.

But nothing changed.

It is all about meeting a good looking boy for the girl. And a good looking girl for the boy.

And just insta love happened and last for them till the end of the story. Sadly, that's all.

The characters were fun to begin the book with. But they were like all high, rather too happy and pumped up, too desperate for finding a love interest for the main characters.

I tried my best to like this one. But meh! I have read enough YA books to last a lifetime for such rerepeats.

I appreciate the understanding parents and the siblings, the respective confidantes of each, the supposedly strong independent characters who have a different dream of their own; having two guys as parents and how a family with sextuplets struggles.

But it seems like it is trying too hard to be sweet and good that I cannot bear it at all. I kept on reading with the single hope of reading another 'Field Notes On Love' towards the end but...sadly, it never happened. And trust me you wouldn't miss out on much if you don't pick up this one.

A repeat of 'When Dimple Met Rishi' I want to say. But that book seems a lot better than this one.

The cover looks so good though?

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## **temi ★ says**

4? STARS.

I feel disgusting for saying this, but after reading this book, never have I wanted to fALL iN LoVE wITH sOMeOne MORE. Period! This book was SO cute and I've never actually felt this gushy about a fictional couple. Also, I absolutely LOVE this cover and I'm going to be able to have the pleasure of meeting the author this Saturday!1!!!

Mae is this confident New Yorker who loves watching and making film. Hugo's a kind-of-famous sextuplet from the U.K. who does great in school but doesn't really know what his passion is.

When Hugo's girlfriend Margaret dumps him soon before they we're supposed to go on the train trip in the

U.S., she lets him keep the tickets. He realizes that he still needs a travel partner—someone with the same exact name as his ex. That's how he meets Mae.

In *Field Notes on Love* we follow Mae and Hugo as they go on a road trip across America.

### THE CHARACTERS? LOVEABLE | ★★★★★

**Mae** is great. She says what she wants. I love her. She comes into the book with her own idea of what love is and leaves saying, *oh, so it's actually way better than that.*

But I love **Hugo** even better. He's extremely relatable and everything he did had me [heart emoji, air puffing out nose emoji]. Both he and Mae are pretty likable people.

Other notable characters:

- Mae's grandmother: Cool old person.
- Alfie: One of Hugo's siblings. I love his banter.
- Mae's dads: Cool and relatable fathers.

**There's nothing off about the pacing**, so five stars again.

Everyone's choices seemed pretty reasonable, and **I couldn't imagine anything happening in any other way**. So five stars.

### THE ROMANCE? GREAT | ★★★★★

This is the first couple I've read about where I wasn't like, *this is fine I guess*, or, *these people should hate each other, wtf*, or, *is this freshman year of high school?? because there's no chemistry*. Mae and Hugo are a natural pair. They're, like, *fresh* or something. They're *clean*. "Exquisite" is a word that comes to mind. For some reason.

My point is that their relationship is in no way forced. Besides, it's the whole plot of the book, so it would be embarrassing to miss.

But they were just really cute. I'm here for it. I'm very sure I'd give up my trust fund for them. No question.

The book was pretty luring. I always wanted to read it. **So how interesting was the book? Very**. Five stars.

### My only problem with the book was the writing. | ★★★★★?

There were two things off about it.

One thing: There were two or three times where something kind of dramatic happened, and I just didn't care. At these moments, I wanted to be like [D':], but I could only manage a [\: okay]. I think the writing was too impersonal at times and I couldn't feel anything.

The other thing: I can't even confidently pinpoint it. It might've been the sometimes-rapid change in perspective. I'm not sure. There was just something else in the book getting on my nerves.



In conclusion, **I want to go on a train ride with some British dude I've never met.** Thank you.

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### **Monica Fumarolo says**

A longtime fan of Jennifer E. Smith, I was eager for her latest novel, a return to the kind of travel story that made me initially fall in love with her writing (I adore *The Statistical Probability of Love at First Sight!*). Hugo is a sextuplet, recently dumped, and supposed to be going on a trans-continental train trip from New York to California with said ex-girlfriend. Problem is, she made all of the nonrefundable, nontransferable reservations in her name. Enter Mae, a New York aspiring film maker with the same name and a desire to live more after more than a few people imply her films are lacking that certain \*thing\* (including USC film school).

I inhaled this novel, starting one evening and finishing the following morning. Though I had a hard time getting into the sextuplet aspects of the story, I eventually accepted it and enjoyed the unique bond (and sometimes, necessary lack thereof) Hugo has with his siblings. Mae's chapters were similarly insightful, striving for so much and yet hard on herself while also unable to understand the criticisms of others. At times I would have enjoyed a bit more from the supporting cast (I LOVED Mae's grandma, and would have liked similar attention given to other secondary characters), but the two protagonists at the heart of the story hold the narrative together. This pulled at my heart strings and had a tear or two trickling down my cheek towards the end. I think my 8th grade girls especially will adore this!

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### **celine (celinereads) says**

It's been a hot minute since I've been able to get back into the YA Contemporary genre, but this book definitely intrigued me!

I really enjoyed the characters, and I appreciated the diversity in this book. The main reason why this is not a 5-star book is because I do feel as if some parts were predictable and the instalove was a tad bit too much; however, I do still recommend this book to anyone who wants a cute, road trip/travel read!

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### **Samantha (WLABB) says**

Rating: 4.5 Stars

I wasn't sure about this one, because Smith's last book fell a little flat for me, but I loved it!

It was so much fun traveling cross country with Mae and Hugo. Both of them were fabulous, and their personal journeys were really interesting and sometimes, really moving. It was beautiful watching Mae opening herself up and Hugo's struggle with his love and loyalty to his family, but also wanting to be his own person was done so well. Some of those interviews with the other passengers really hit me in the feels, and everyone knows I have a thing for grandmas, and Mae's grandmother was a really special lady.

I laughed, I cried (there are even a few tears right now as I write this), and I was left feeling really happy at the end of this book. This is the JES I adore!

## Laura says

Once again I find myself in awe of the book gods. And grateful! I was going to pass on this book. Last week my head and heart were swimming with indecision on what to read next. On a whim, I picked this one up from my “read later” pile and BOOM! I was swept into a beautiful, made-my-heart-thump-and-flip, romantic read. Field Notes on Love is a journey. One we all take to discover who we are and what we want to be in this world. A path that is different for all of us. I am SO happy I jumped aboard. It brought back memories and inspired new dreams in me. Come see where this journey takes you...

### ALL ABOARD!!!

Field Notes on Love by Jennifer E. Smith tells the story of two individuals about to set off for college. For one, that path is not going as planned and for the other, unfortunately, the plan is going exactly according to plan. Both are in need of a detour though. Hugo, a charming and adorable British lad, is about to head off to university with his five brothers and sisters. Yes, I said FIVE. Hugo is a sextuplet. Quite famous across the pond actually for that very reason—for being in a pack. He loves his family, but right now he just wants to see if he can do it on his own. It’s hard to find yourself when you’re always surrounded. Hugo is definitely in need of an adventure away from his family. But plans for a train trip across America with his girlfriend, Margaret Campbell, have suddenly derailed. She dumped him! And all of the reservations and nonrefundable tickets were made in her name. So what Hugo really needs right now is another Margaret Campbell.

This is where Mae, full name Margaret Campbell, enters the picture in a fate is oh-so funny kind of way. Her dreams of attending film school have just been shattered. Well not completely shattered. Mae got into USC, but not in the film program. A movie she thought was perfect for getting her noticed and accepted fell flat. Why? She needs something new to shake up her film making and her heart. Sooo...she answers a crazy ad looking for a Margaret Campbell travel buddy for a cross-country train trip. A trip with a stranger. A boy. A cute British boy! Haha....Let the fun and romance begin!

I loved this book. Ms. Smith put two strong, likable characters in a small, cozy train compartment and let the magic whirl, stir, and inspire. I liked and connected and felt for Mae and Hugo at first sight. All the characters found a home in my heart actually—Priyanka, the dads, Nana, and all the siblings (especially Alfie and his big mouth). But the star and focus of this book was the chemistry and warmth between Hugo and Mae. It was immediate. You’ll feel that connection click at word one between them! The way they talked, touched, trusted and allowed themselves to fall so completely was beautiful. I was swept right in! As the train moved across the land, Hugo and Mae created a sweet, cozy bubble where they talked through the night, held hands, laughed, snored, counted freckles, and shared so much of each other. I adored watching these two fall in love. You have to meet Hugo and Mae and their fellow travelers. There are so many love stories here!

The train plays a huge part of the love actually. The train’s movement, schedule, and people all added to the magic. It swayed, rocked, rattled and charmed its way into my heart along with Hugo and Mae. I could have stayed in that train bubble forever!

**“In the hallway, a door opens and voices call out to each other. But in here, it’s quiet, just the sound of their breathing and the roar of the train underneath it all. They could be anywhere and nowhere, but they’ve somehow found themselves here, and she’s suddenly grateful for it, all of it, for the extra ticket**

**and the way it brought them together despite everything, the bigness of the world and the unlikeliness of a moment like this.”**

And even though Hugo and Mae spent much of the book in an enclosed train or hotel room, this story felt BIG. Their journey opened their eyes to new places and people and feelings. And dreams! I loved how these two pushed each other to ask the hard questions and fight for what they want. The world is a big place and Mae and Hugo are just getting started. Their excitement and energy moves through this story with force and magic. Pure magic! It's the best word for what I felt here with Hugo and Mae. I cried and swooned and rooted for Mae and Hugo and the love they found. But can they hold on to that love? Are they meant to? Some love stories are short and sweet.

You are going to have to climb on board to find out! You'll be happy you did. You might find yourself falling hard & fast, daydreaming of faraway places, and in need of a pizza ASAP! Haha....You'll see.

Highly recommended.

\*\*Quote taken from ARC\*\*

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## **Mandy says**

Disclaimer: I received this ARC courtesy of Delacorte Press through advanced distribution at YALLFest. I am grateful for the opportunity to review an ARC for my readers, but this will not influence my final rating. All opinions expressed in this review are my own and based solely on the book.

I received this book at the Get Underlined tarot card reading session during Yallfest, and I don't think I read my future right. We were allowed to pick 2 books out of the 4 that was there, and I immediately snatched up Come Find Me by Megan Miranda 'cause we know I'm Miranda trash. However, I flopped over the other 3 on what to pick, and I finally went with this one because the cover was really cute. I didn't put it together until much later that it was by Jennifer E. Smith, whose *The Statistical Probability of Love* I really enjoyed.

This book was...I just...it was just so MEH? There was not much to it. It was just...fluff? filler? fluffy filler? I'm 200% down for fluff, but it has to have actual things behind the fluff. I felt like this book just sat there the entire time, and I just looked at the words, and they tried to make some sense, but they just fell so flat.

The entire plot was Hugo and Mae on a train. Mae was trying to find who she was after she was rejected from film school for a film that wasn't her. Hugo was trying to escape the life of being forever surrounded by his famous sextuplet family. They find their paths colliding after Hugo puts out a request for a Margaret Campbell online, since his train trip across the United States required one after his Margaret Campbell drops out.

There was a LOT of potential. I mean, a LOT. I love me some travel stories, some fluffy romance, some emotional depth and reflection. I mean, this characters were going on a JOURNEY - both physically and mentally and emotionally and I was down! I down was down for the train ride.

However, every chance this book got it, it just...stalled. The train never started on the track. It just sat there, and I was the car that was needed to get on the other side, and it blocked my way and even looping around it DID NOTHING.

The characters were blah. Hugo and Mae were both extremely bland. I didn't connect with either. I had hopes for the family, but I felt like Hugo's family just blended together into one big blob. I did like Mae's dads and her grandmother, but I also felt like Mae's grandmother became into a bit of a cliché? I had hopes AGAIN that maybe they would run into some cool eccentric characters on their train ride that would be fun and quirky, but everyone felt like the next one. I don't even remember Mae's best friend's name.

The romance was...well, it was there. They were...I just...THEY WERE SO EH. I never felt any tension between them. It was very fast and abrupt and SO FAST. I will admit that I can get behind instalove occasionally if done right, but this was just...they were trusting each other fully on the first night and feeling deep feels. I just.

And the romance felt like really the only plot? I mean, they were focused on Hugo setting off on his own and Mae doing movie things, but they didn't do much to me. There were all the parts together, but I never really connected with them. The best part was the premise of Hugo trying to find Mae, and that only lasted like 40 pages. There was a plot twist that was entirely predictable, and I was just 200% done with it at that point that it made zero impact.

Just...I...I don't even know. The cover is really cute, though?

This book gets 1 crown from me and a Merida rating. I don't hate it with a fiery passion, and there wasn't anything extremely wrong or problematic with it. It just...it just sat there. It would sit there, and I would look at the cover, and that was at least goodness. But it just didn't have a flow or deep connection for anything.

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## Larry H says

4.5 stars.

Sometimes I need a break from brooding thrillers and mysteries, where everyone is a suspect (at least in my mind) and the subject matter can be heavy at times. I saw a friend recommend Jennifer E. Smith's newest book, *Field Notes on Love*, and it definitely seemed to be what I was looking for—a good YA rom-com.

Two hours later I finished the book and I'm so glad I read it. Such a sweet, fun, engaging story—it totally hit the spot!

"Do you ever feel like you need to shake things up? Or just step outside your life for a minute?"

Hugo's life has always been tremendously routine. The youngest of a set of sextuplets, he's always been surrounded by people, and while things can be chaotic, his future path is all but determined, since a generous benefactor provided scholarships for all six children to attend college in Hugo's hometown of Surrey, England. But as much as he loves his family and wants to be close to home, he longs for something more, although he doesn't know what that is.

He and his girlfriend have the perfect plan before she heads off to college in California: they'll travel across the U.S. by train, from New York to California, stopping in a few major cities along the way. And then she breaks up with him, although she gives him the tickets to use. But of course, there's a catch: because she handled the details, all the reservations are under the name of Margaret Campbell. And the tickets are non-refundable and non-transferable.

So, he conducts a search for another Margaret Campbell to make the trip with.

Enter Mae Campbell (Margaret is her full name). Mae has known her entire life that she wanted to be a filmmaker. Yet when she is rejected by USC's film school, she starts to wonder if an adventure is what she needs to stir up her creativity and inspire her next film, so she can convince the film school to let her in. When she sees Hugo's ad searching for another Margaret Campbell, she feels that this is the opportunity she has been looking for, something her adventure-seeking and romance-loving grandmother agrees with.

While Hugo and Mae begin traveling together simply out of necessity and convenience, it isn't long before the two are drawn to one another, and begin to see that adventure—and perhaps even romance—is what both were needing. But along the way, they'll learn a lot about themselves and their plans for their future, as both find inspiration to do things differently than they always have.

A few years ago I read Smith's *The Geography of You and Me* and absolutely loved it. I had forgotten just how much I enjoy her writing style, how warm and approachable it is, and how well she draws her characters. *Field Notes on Love* is exactly the same way—nothing in the plot is particularly surprising, but that doesn't matter, because I couldn't get enough of this book and these characters.

With "love" in the title, you can expect there is lots of talk about what love is and what it means to different people. As a self-professed sap, I enjoyed the exploration of that topic, but found the characters' journeys of self-discovery equally enjoyable. Plus I never felt like Hugo and Mae were too clever and precocious for their own good, which is all too common in YA fiction.

If you're looking for a light read to charm its way into your heart, *Field Notes on Love* may be just what you're looking for. All aboard!

See all of my reviews at [itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blogspot.com](http://itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blogspot.com).

Check out my list of the best books I read in 2018 at <https://itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blogspot.com/2019/01/the-best-books-i-read-in-2018.html>.

You can follow me on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/yrralh/>.

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## Melissa says

I can't help but want to grab my book and hug it after I finish a Jennifer E. Smith book. I just love them so much. They are sweet and a bit heartwarming, and they just tug on my love for the human experience. I love how she manages to throw two people together and take them on a journey, literally and figuratively, while examining the things that make us human. Frankly, it surprises me that I haven't already read everything that she's written because I can almost guarantee that she'll cause me to smile a lot, swoon a little, and just end the reading experience feeling content. *Field Notes on Love* was another winner.

It's almost strange to think that this story works. Hugo and Mae come from two completely different worlds and enter the story with two completely different problems. Their lives are totally divergent, except for the weird coincidence that Mae shares the exact same name as Hugo's ex-girlfriend ... the girl who became "ex" suddenly when she broke up with Hugo right before the two of them were heading off on a cross country train ride across the United States. She bought the tickets in her name but doesn't want to go, so she gives them to Hugo. The tickets are useless since his name is not on them, so he makes a ridiculous plan to find another Margeret Campbell somewhere in the world who can tag along with him so that he can use these tickets. It's crazy. Crazy to ask a stranger to travel with him for a week on a train and crazy for Mae to take him up on his offer. But she does, and off they go. Mae has just been rejected from USC's prestigious film

school and is devastated, but she is planning to go straight to the top to ask them to reconsider. She is looking for something outside of the usual life she has led and so heads on this trip toward college as an adventure. Hugo is the youngest of a famous British set of sextuplets while Mae is the only child of a gay couple in New York. There shouldn't be much of a connection. But there is, and it is lovely. Along the way as this couple travel across the United States on a train they interact with others, learning about their lives and their dreams and what love means to them. Mae starts it all as a film project, but the unintended consequence is that both Mae and Hugo discover a deeper understanding of who they are and what they want from life.

I felt like there was so much more that I wanted to know about Mae and Hugo at the end of this story. The whole thing felt like more of a beginning than a complete story arc. But it was a lovely beginning. I loved both Hugo and Mae. I loved both of their families, even though I wish I could have known all of them more. The characters they meet on the train are brief characters in the story ... barely a blip on the pages. But wouldn't that be the way it would be when you meet people while you're on a train together? It felt right in the framework of this story in a way that it wouldn't in another book.

There was a quote that one of the passengers shared that I loved:

**"Reality is all well and good. But sometimes you just want to pretend the world is a better place than it actually is. That great and wonderful things can happen. That love triumphs everything."**

I loved that quote. Although I don't have quite that bleak of a view of what reality is like, I do think that that encapsulates why I love to read romantic stories so much. I love love, and I love to immerse myself in worlds where love triumphs over all. Our world needs way more happily ever afters and swoon-worthy moments, don't you think?

And, boy howdy!, did this book make me want to plan a cross country train trip!!! I'm sold. So beautiful and romantic and relaxing. Four stars for this lovely book. I really liked it!

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### **Katie (Lost in Pages) says**

I just don't think anything can be better than Statistical Probability for me. I made the mistake of reading that one first, and the rest haven't been as good. I still did enjoy this story, it was cute and adventurous, and I liked seeing both Hugo and Mae's journeys.

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### **Alexa says**

(Rounded up as of 3/18!) I was looking forward to reading a new Jennifer E. Smith novel, but I didn't expect to love this as much as I did. From the cross-country train journey, to the personal journeys both Mae and Hugo go on (which really resonated with me), I just genuinely fell hard for this story.

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### **Jessica says**

I love a cute YA romance, so when I saw that Jennifer E Smith was coming out with a romance that took place on a train ride, I was so intrigued and knew I had to pick it up.

The summer before leaving for college, Hugo and his girlfriend decided to go on a cross-country trainride to California before they're separated for school, her in California and him home in England. But when Hugo's girlfriend dumps him and tells him to still go on the trip, Hugo finds himself in need of a girl with his girlfriend's exact name, seeing as her tickets are all non-refundable and non-transferable. Mae has wanted to be a filmmaker for as long as she can remember, so when she is rejected from her dream film school, she is devastated. Lost and unsure of how convince the admissions board that she really is good enough, Mae answers an ad to go on a train trip with a complete stranger. Mae and Hugo embark on a journey together where they learn more about themselves than they could ever have known.

From the start, I absolutely adored Hugo and his family. Hugo's parents are so adorable and I loved how Hugo was a sextuplet. His entire family was so quintessentially British and quirky that my favorite scenes were of Hugo interacting with his five siblings. I definitely remember the weird in-between state of the summer before freshmen year of college and I think Jennifer E Smith embodied that state so well with both Hugo and Mae's characters. They really didn't know what path was right for them and were trying to find a little self discovery along the way of their train journey.

While this book does take place in a short amount of time, I never felt like the romance was insta-lovey. I really liked how Hugo and Mae felt kind of awkward with each other at first since they had never met, but how they opened up to each other because of the fact that they were strangers. There was an inexplicable trust that grew into something more. I can only think of the word "adorable" to describe this romance because that's exactly what it was.

If you're in the mood for a cute romance about two people who are just trying to figure out who they really are as individuals, you really need to pick up Field Notes on Love. I loved the backdrop of a cross country train ride to this romance with quirky characters and supportive, lovable family members that give the story more to love.

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### **Brittany says**

This was a delightful throwback to a classic romantic comedy. You have two characters who are meeting under unlikely circumstances and setting out on an adventure. It is only natural that they may fall in love along the way! This was a quick, fun read and I really enjoyed it.

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### **Jen Ryland says**

lol this is actually something that happened a few years back - I remember reading the story online and thinking "that would make a great rom com."

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### **Emma says**

why did i cry so much while reading this one? SO CUTE!! just what my spring contemporary craving heart needed.

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