



## **M+O 4EVR**

*Tonya Cherie Hegamin*

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There are two constants in Opal's life: her dad's grungy green baseball cap, and her troubled pal, Marianne, whom Opal loves as a best friend . . . and even more. But nothing stays the same forever. When Opal receives the horrifying news that Marianne is dead, she suddenly must live her life and make decisions based on the needs of one person instead of two. Only with the help of her family and the story of Hannah, a runaway slave, can Opal begin to free herself from the weight of her memories, her ghosts, and her own truth.

### M+O 4EVR Details

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Author : Tonya Cherie Hegamin

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## From Reader Review M+O 4EVR for online ebook

### Lauren Ivey says

"She knew she had nothing to give to anyone. She was stealing her own self."

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### Miyuki-isb says

I chose a novel called M+O 4EVR by Tonya Cherie Hegamin just by looking at the book cover. I was wondering what does M and O stand for, and usually teenagers tend to write the word "forever" as "4EVR" which was part of the title, so I could assume that this novel is about teenage people. And I was right. The novel had many serious issues that teenagers face such as suicide, drugs, alcohol etc. The interesting part of the book was that the main characters, Opal and Marriane both liked each other more than friends, so the topic of lesbian came up. This was interesting to me because I do have many best girl friends but I never thought of them more than friends and I just thought it would feel really awkward and strange.

This novel is only 165 pages but covers up many topics and the reading level is not too hard. This book made me really emotional and made me to think about serious topics that teenagers have to face, so I want people to pick up this book and start reading it.

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### vani says

I hope this writer gets lots of love and becomes a fixture in teen collections like Jacqueline Woodson or someone like that. This book is lovely and nostalgic and smartly weaves in history, queerness, insights on race and class in a small mining town, plus so much more. I couldn't quite place it historically, but references to Sheila E. made me think....the early 80's?

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### Tara says

This story was okay. There was an unexpected twist when M died, but there was nothing that made you want to keep reading...the way it was written made you feel that the author only wrote such thing to grab attention. However, I like the story of Hannah it brought a sense of culture and history-I love of yourself and confidence. But that was all I liked.

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### Sarah says

I thought this book was good but not great. I really enjoyed being in Opals head, but I think that this book might have been longer and more satisfying if we had learned more about Marianne's perspective and her recent choices. It is another rich offering to the "love interest dies halfway through the book" subgenre, but it doesn't really shine as queer lit or as a YA book on its own. People who like sad stories or short novels might really love it, but I wasn't personally blown away.

## **Nancy says**

M(arianne) and O(pal) have been best friends forever -- at least until the past year when M decided she wanted to be a cheerleader and found O a hindrance, when accusations of lesbianism flew across the lunchroom at her. M is slowly, but obviously sliding down the steep slope of self-destruction, while O clings to her fantasies of getting into Stanford and taking O to California with her. When tragedy strikes, O must find a path of her own.

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## **Paris says**

I read " M+O 4EVER" by Tonya Cherie Hegamin and To me this book was very sad, as it is heartbreaking losing a best friend that was really close to you. Tonya cherie hegamin did a good job as showing people how the teenage generation is. I personally liked this book myself because it never really loses your attention, and most people can relate to something in it. I believe that can grab someones attention right away.

Tonya Cherie Hegamin wrote this story about how these Two best friends (M)arianne and (O)pal faces struggles between their friendships. As Marianna tries to fit herself into the "popular" kids group, and Opal mostly worried about her grades as she wanted to get into Stanford. As the girls's friendship took different paths, it always remained strong. As the relationship had different paths, Opal actually started to believe she wanted something more just a "best friend" with Marianne. As the girls decided to go to this place they called the Ravine, as they were told by Opal grandma a girl named Hannah (a runaway slave) had died there. Marianne decided to bring drugs to the place and offer them to Opal. Opal denied them and left that night and the next morning Opals grandma told her, Marianne had died.

Overall I enjoyed this book. As it was confusing at first because it was hard to understand what was going on and what the character were to each other. Once I figured it out, I started liking it a lot more. I would recommend this book to teens and parents of teens. I recommended this to teens, because almost can relate to one of these actions/doing from these certain situation. I also would recommend this to teens of parents because it could give them a better perspective of how the older generation is to the new generation.

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## **Terry says**

I think Lee Wind has some of the most thoughtful, dead-on review of YA. Just like other times, he seems to channel his audience in this review.

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## **Alyssa says**

I am so glad I stuck with this book until the end. I was close to giving up and discarding it because I first found it hard to follow as it starts in the middle of an issue that the readers don't know about yet, and the

lead-up was a bit confusing. Plus interwoven was this random story about a slave named Hannah. I do believe the author meant for a deeper meaning and lesson with that, but at first it's hard to see what that meaning is. Hopefully it'll come to me later but as of now I feel the story could have done without. It just seemed to be "not my cup of tea" kind of book. What made me give this book five stars though was its ability to keep me reading and ending with that feeling of love and hope. Not many books do that and I love how it redeemed itself in those last couple chapters. Maybe not a top recommendation from me, however definitely going in my forever favorites list.

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## **Erynn Dehler says**

### Personal Response:

Overall, this book was great. The book, M+O 4EVR, was a short book and did not take long to read. The book switched from the actual book to a story that her grandmother told her when she was a little girl. It confused me in the beginning because I thought the book was switching characters. Once I found out that that the other story in the book was a story she was being told, everything made sense after that.

### Plot:

M+O 4EVR was a book about Opal's grief. M+O stands for Marianne and Opal. Opal only remember a little portion of Marianne's and her life together as friends. Marianne and Opal have been best friends since they were only a couple years old. Opal has had a stronger connection towards Marianne but Marianne did not see it right away. They were homeschooled by Opal's grandmother until they went to a public school and the administrators split them up into different classrooms. They did not like that very much. They screwed around and screamed until the administrators put them in the same room.

Marianne decided to try some new things and went out for the cheerleading team at their school. Opal was very mad because she did not want things to change. Marianne then decided to go for the homecoming crown and Opal did not like that idea either.

One night the two girls, Opal and Marianne, ventured out into the woods into a ravine. Marianne decided to bring drugs out to the ravine. Opal did not want anything to do with the drugs so she left Marianne out in the ravine. The next morning, Opal is awoken by her grandmother and hears that Marianne is dead at the bottom of the ravine. Opal is flustered because if she had stayed Marianne would most likely still be alive. Opal then brings back the stories that Opal and Marianne had listened to from her grandmother when they were younger. The main character in the stories was about a young slave girl, named Hannah, and tried to escape the camp. Opal tried to forget about all the memories of her and Marianne.

### Characterization:

Opal was one of the main characters in the book. Throughout the story she grows older and becomes more wiser. Opal was just like any teenage girl, except she was not in the popular crowd at school. She is usually with Marianne, her grandmother or by herself. Marianne is the same age as Opal. She tries to fit in with the popular athletic crowd, but it does not last very long.

### Setting:

This book takes place in a more present/modern day setting. I know this because Opal had feelings for Marianne and back in the day a girl liking a girl was not allowed. The book takes place in a smaller town inside Pennsylvania, not sure what the town name is. Everyone who lives in this town knows everyone.

### Theme:

There was multiple themes throughout this book. One major theme in the book was death, or tragedy. I thought this was a pretty big theme because one of the main characters die in the story and Opal gets very upset about it. Tragedy was the main purpose of this book because the main character has to deal with her friends loss.

Rate/Audience:

I would rate this book a 3 out of 5 stars because it was good but very confusing. I think anyone that is almost 16 or already 16 and older. This book was confusing and hard to understand so anyone younger might have a difficult time reading and understanding this book. I also think that girls will like this book more than boys because the main characters in the book are female.

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## **Jennifer Wardrip says**

Reviewed by Jaglvr for TeensReadToo.com

Marianne and Opal have always had a special connection. Home schooled for a time, when they were separated their first day in a real school, neither girl was the same. They screamed and only relaxed when they were together in the same room holding hands. As they grew up, there was always the unique bond. But Marianne often wanted to test her wings and try to fit in with the popular crowd. She tried to join the cheerleading team. And she made up her mind to go for the Homecoming crown.

Opal was happy with the way things were, and would've been perfectly content had her world consisted of only her and Marianne. But one night, the entire world changed. The two girls ventured out towards the ravine where they had their own world. Marianne brought drugs with her and proceeded to get high. Opal, wanting nothing to do with the drugs, and having obligations back home with her grandma, left Marianne at the ravine.

The next morning, Opal is awakened by her grandma. Marianne was dead. Found at the bottom of the ravine. Hearing the news, Opal is in shock. And it brings back the ghost stories of Hannah that the girls were told growing up.

M+O 4EVR tells the story of Opal getting past her grief. Opal remembers bits and pieces of her life with Marianne. As she recalls their history, a second story of the ghost, Hannah, is revealed. Hannah was a young slave girl that attempts to escape the horrible life that awaits her as she grows out of her young years.

M+O 4EVR is not an easy story to read. The grief and sadness is evident throughout the entire story. But even with the bleak outlook Opal has, there is a hint of hope throughout. Reading about Hannah's dream of a better life as well as Opal's struggles to decide upon a future leaves the reader feeling stronger by the end.

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## **Jennifer Lee says**

“Laughing and screaming, we finally broke out of the woods into a huge meadow, the stiff yellow grass up to our waists. She collapsed, pulling me down beside her, and we panted in unison like puppies. What I wouldn’t have given to stay like that forever – the dry, whistling grass towering protectively around us, just us.”

But nothing lasts forever.

M + O stands for Marianne and Opal, two friends since childhood who share a unique bond. They were once inseparable, but now as seniors the girls seem to have taken different paths. Opal has focused on her studies and expects a scholarship from Stanford soon. Marianne, however, has explored the party scene and is experimenting with drugs. She seems to be on a downward spiral. Although they hardly see each other anymore, the bond of friendship is still evident. For Opal, however, there is more to this bond. She cannot remember when she began thinking of Marianne as more than a friend, when sexual feelings developed. She is agonizing over whether these feelings will ever be returned, and she fears Marianne is slipping from her grasp, everyone's grasp.

When the girls were young, Opal's grandmother used to tell the story of a distant relative who escapes slavery, embarking on a grueling journey towards freedom. Along the way, she meets a Native American who helps her, and they eventually marry. Bits and pieces of their story are interspersed throughout the book, as Marianne and Opal's relationship unfolds. You find yourself getting caught up in both stories, seemingly different, but both about escape, independence, and healing.

Although a quick, easy read, this book is full of emotion and is very moving. The author skillfully weaves history with modern day drama, and is a rich story of love and friendship appealing to older teens.

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### **Kelly says**

Opal and Marianne are best friends, and have been their entire lives. Where they live in rural Pennsylvania, they are the only people "like them": Marianne is mixed race black and white, and Opal is black. Marianne has trouble finding her place in the world, and at times she abandons Opal to "pretend to be white," as Opal puts it. Opal is in love with Marianne, and dreams of moving to California with her when they graduate high school, to a city where no one will care what they are and Marianne can be herself. I thought the book was brilliantly written, and the story heartbreaking.

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### **Robin says**

Wouldn't work for curriculum due to drug use, etc., but maybe as bibliotherapy in upper high school. I like Hegamin's use of the history of racism within contemporary teen experience -- difficult, necessary, and appropriated. Set in Pennsylvania and a little bit in Maryland.

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### **Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says**

While I found this story interesting, and I was compelled to read on to find out how it ended, I don't understand what the story of Hannah the slave meant in relation to that of Opal. Was it supposed to teach her something? I actually would have liked it better if the story of Opal and the story of Hannah were two separate books. I would have particularly liked to hear more about Hannah. Not a bad read, but confusing.

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