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# Sorta Like A Rock Star



## Synopsis

Amber Appleton lives in a bus. Ever since her mom's boyfriend kicked them out, Amber, her mom, and her totally loyal dog, Bobby Big Boy (aka Thrice B) have been camped out in the back of Hello Yellow (the school bus her mom drives). Still, Amber, the self-proclaimed princess of hope and girl of unyielding optimism, refuses to sweat the bad stuff. But when a fatal tragedy threatens Amber's optimism--and her way of life, can Amber continue to be the rock star of hope? With an oddball cast of characters, and a heartwarming, inspiring story, this novel unveils a beautifully beaten-up world of laughs, loyalty, and hard-earned hope. The world is Amber's stage, and Amber is, well...she's sorta like a rock star. True? True.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1030L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 368 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 1.2 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 95 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #781,380 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #76 in [Books > Teens >](#)

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#414 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Depression & Mental Illness](#)

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 8 Up  
Surreptitiously living in Hello Yellow, the school bus her mother drives as a part-time job, Amber Appleton is an upbeat Catholic who spreads joy and happiness while keeping her own difficulties at home very quiet. Her dog, Billy Big Boy, is her companion whenever possible. Routinely, Amber teaches ESL to the KDFC, dubbed the Korean Divas for Christ, with Father Chee on the piano; visits Private Jackson, a Vietnam veteran and haiku

specialist; and regularly stops at a nursing home where Old Man Linder backs her corner in her ongoing war of insults with Joan of Old, a Nietzschean cantankerous grump who inevitably smiles in the face of Amber's upbeat humor. The teen and her friends comprise the Franks Freaks Force Federation, ostensibly a school marketing club, but really a place for them to gather. AA's unending optimism in the face of difficult circumstances is well depicted with snappy dialogue and inner musings. When real tragedy hits and Amber is unable to cope, the stark difference between the Amber of the past and the present is delivered in extensive white space and short paragraphs. Amber feels blank. Her reemergence is abrupt, but like a musical, it provides the feel-good ending that rolls on until every bow is tied, every bad guy is given a dose of the Amber spirit, and all of the people in her life are brought together. This book is the answer to all those angst-ridden and painfully grim novels in the shortcut lingo of short attention-span theater. Hugely enjoyable.

—Carol A. Edwards, Denver Public Library, CO (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Although Amber and her single alcoholic mother are currently homeless and have been secretly crashing in a school bus, the 17-year-old remains a self-proclaimed princess of hope. And why not, when she has an adorable rescued dog and fellow socially challenged friends in the Franks Freak Force Federation? She is teaching English after school to Catholic Korean women, the Korean Divas for Christ, through classic R & B music; she is learning the art of haiku from a once-reclusive Vietnam vet; she is the reigning champion in a weekly word battle against a Nietzsche-loving senior at the Methodist Retirement Home; and she lives according to her tremendous faith. Her world and faith shatter, however, when her mother suffers a violent tragedy, and afterward, Amber struggles to reclaim her belief in God. This memorable teen's fresh voice and uplifting spirit will endear readers (word!), while a bring-down-the-house ending will inspire them to find the best in humanity (true!). Sure, Amber may be a little over the top at times, but aren't all rock stars? Grades 9-12. --Angela Leeper

Sorta Like a Rock Star is definitely one of the more fun contemporaries I've read this year, in spite of the heavy issues alluded to in the summary. While it took a couple of chapters to get me settled in properly with this story, it was totally worth it in the end. True? True. Amber Appleton is a girl with unusual circumstances. She lives on a bus with her mother, takes showers and eats what she can at one of her best friend's houses, is part of a school organization with a bunch of oddball boys and volunteers at a local church and a senior center. With that much on her plate, you'd think that Amber

would collapse into a ball and die of exhaustion (physical or emotional), but the girl is a ball of energy, optimism and strength. She has an unusual way of thinking (which takes some getting used to), but it fits right in with who she is. But then, the great tragedy strikes. A tragedy that turns Amber's world upside down. It's almost as if a switch is flicked, and Amber becomes a robot. She goes through the motions, even as despair and doubt threaten to drown her. My heart completely broke for her, and it was no hardship to understand where her anger, sorrow and doubts were coming from. Her situation, as viewed through her eyes, is hopeless. And yet, as I've said before, *Sorta Like a Rock Star* is hopeful. How so, you might wonder, after reading the previous paragraph. Well, turns out that Amber has a great support system in her best friends, her favorite priest and the Korean ladies from church, her friends at the senior center and many, many more. Just seeing how much people were willing to reach out to Amber and help her in a time of need spoke volumes of her impact on them and their lives, and I loved that. The latter parts of the novel keep on building up the good and the hope until it spills out into the awesomeness of the ending. I've not felt so positive or hopeful while reading in a long time, so that's definitely a bonus! *Sorta Like a Rock Star* might sound like your usual contemporary fare, but it's not. Amber Appleton is an unusual character, surrounding herself with unusual people (who you will get to meet and fall in love with in this novel). While it might take some time to get used to everything, I promise you this: Amber Appleton's story is worth a read. True? True.

I'm reading this on kindle. I think the ebook has some editorial errors that need to be corrected. After everything the narrator says, there is the word "word". I guess this was an editor's note to come back and add something, but the ebook left those notes in. Also, there are notes to fact check like "True? True." I don't understand why it needs to be fact checked if it's a novel. Those things need to be taken out of the ebook version. I'm going to try reading the physical book from the library. Hopefully that won't have the editing errors.

I started reading this because I was a fan of Quick's other books, and when I first started it, I hated it. I thought Amber was a condescending and cheesy immature girl, and I was not at all interested in the book. Then when her life takes a turn for the worse, I realized how deliberate Quick made her and everything she did. I've learned to fall in love with Amber and all her friends (Ty and PJ!!!) and I absolutely recommend this book for anyone who might be feeling pessimistic about their life situation right now. This book really makes me see life in a whole new light.

It took me a long time to get into this book. The first half or so was pretty boring to me and I didn't know how long I could put up with the terrible slang. I kept hoping the language would get better and go away but it mostly didn't. However, when the plot actually thickened and peaked I became immediately more interested. I found the haikus really interesting and the characters quirky. The ending was a little unbelievable and it flattened because of that. When I finished the book though I kept thinking back to the characters and the story so Quick must've done something right. I would say don't abandon it, because whether you love or hate it, something from this book is bound to stick with you.

When I read a book by an author and really enjoy it, I start looking for other books by the same author! I read *Silver Linings Playbook*, by Matthew Quick, because I was deeply interested in how it feels to be considered "mentally ill" and thought it was wonderful! That was my baptism into Mr. Quick's writing style. Next I chose to read *Sorta Like a Rock Star*, merely because it was the earliest book I could find on .com by him. What a pleasant surprise! I've never read anything like this book! At first I wondered if it were for teens, but actually I think it's absolutely for adults. This beautifully written main character, Amber, grew me. As the book progressed, I began to love her. She made the most out of her situation and when doing so, did not even realize how grown up her decisions were, at the tender age of 17! I think only an adult could realize fully how "grown up" she was. The way Mr. Quick slowly painted the other characters in the book, letting them grow on us as Amber did, was so artful! I had no idea, as I read along, what direction Amber's life would take. Turns out that Mr. Quick was drawing me in, pulling all the characters together, priming me for the wonderful ending!! Thank you Mr. Quick! Now I have to decide which book of yours to tackle next. And listen, I hope you are already writing more books for me to enjoy! Don't stop!!

It was an ok book, I read it because I loved the author's book 'silver linings playbook' but I did not enjoy this the way I enjoyed silver linings playbook. I liked the writing style, but the actual story itself was kind of weird. I think maybe it's because I didn't really love the main character. I found her to be really awkward by doing all sorts of socially unacceptable things. She was always invading other people's personal space...like when she visits the vietnam vet at his house without even knowing him! She was always doing really weird things and I really thought the book was going to take a turn and she would be stolen or raped or something because she was always being risky in her behaviors. But that issue was never really addressed...I was supposed to think it was acceptable that she visited older men and put herself in dangerous situations.

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