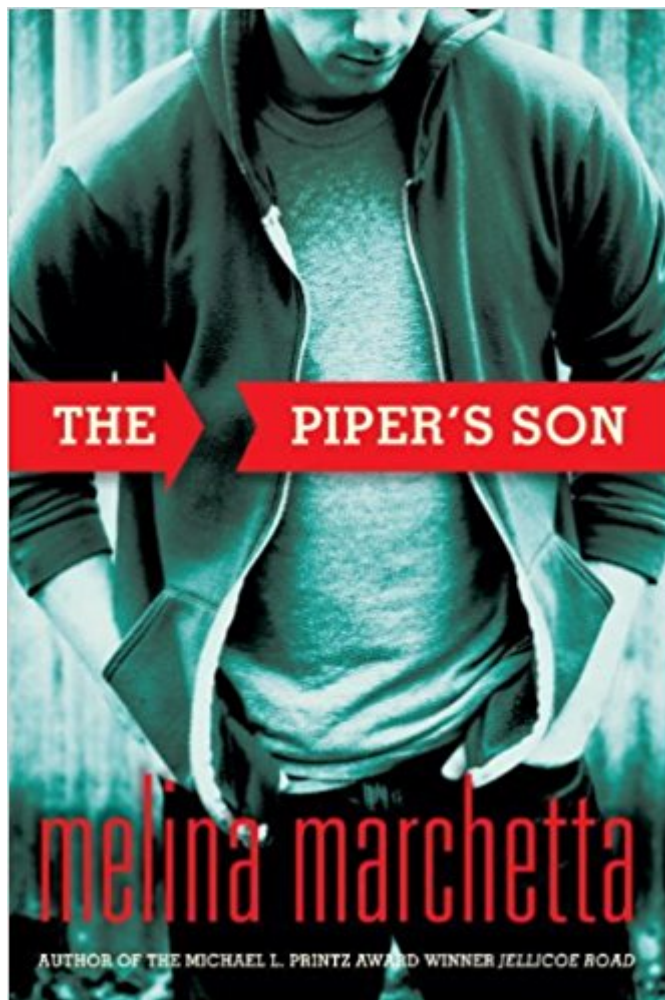




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# The Piper's Son



## Synopsis

The award-winning author of *Finnikin of the Rock* and *Jellicoe Road* pens a raw, compelling novel about a family's hard-won healing on the other side of trauma. Award-winning author Melina Marchetta reopens the story of the group of friends from her acclaimed novel *Saving Francesca* - but five years have passed, and now it's Thomas Mackee who needs saving. After his favorite uncle was blown to bits on his way to work in a foreign city, Tom watched his family implode. He quit school and turned his back on his music and everyone that mattered, including the girl he can't forget. Shooting for oblivion, he hit rock bottom, forced to live with his single, pregnant aunt, work at the Union pub with his former friends, and reckon with his grieving, alcoholic father. Tom is in no shape to mend what's broken. But what if no one else is either? An unflinching look at family, forgiveness, and the fierce inner workings of love and friendship, *The Piper's Son* redefines what it means to go home again.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Australian author Marchetta follows her Printz Award-winning *Jellicoe Road* (2008) and the high-fantasy *Finnikin of the Rock* (2010) with this realistic, stand-alone companion to *Saving Francesca* (2004), set five years later in the same urban neighborhood. After the death of his beloved uncle Joe in an overseas bomb blast, Tom dropped out of the university, and his family spun apart. After a rock-bottom moment leaves Tom homeless with a head full of stitches, he moves in with his aunt Georgie, who is pregnant at 42 and navigating a fraught relationship with a

sometimes-estranged partner. Marchetta draws in familiar faces from *Saving Francesca*, including the title character, as Tom begins to reclaim his life and reach out to the girl he can't forget. Readers may find that the narrative loses focus in frequent switches to Georgie's point of view, but the multidimensional adult characters add to the story's deep flashes of authenticity. A memorable portrait of first love, surviving grief, and the messy contradictions and fierce bonds that hold friends and family together. Grades 9-12. --Gillian Engberg --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Tom's aunt Georgie spoke to me first, and Tom found me through her. At the time, I didn't actually think Tom was a big enough character to carry a story. If it had to be anyone from *Saving Francesca*, I thought, it would be Will Trombal or Tara. But the line in *Francesca*, 'I want to be the first male in the Mackee family to reach 40 and still have a liver stuck with me, and in the end, Tom has been one of the biggest surprises. I'm glad I didn't kick him out of my head.'" - Melina Marchetta • Quote

4.5 Super Stars  
Melina Marchetta is the only author I've found that can break and squish my heart more times than I can count in a book and make me love every minute of it and ask for more. The stories she tells about families that are strong and loving but have been broken by a tragedy and are trying to pick up the pieces again draw you in to the point you never want to leave. The only thing wrong with this book is that it ended.-- "But grieving people are selfish. They won't let you comfort them and they say you don't understand and they make you feel useless when all your life you've been functional to them."•When you lose someone in an unexpected and sudden way it can affect everyone who knew that person it ripples and radiates out like a pebble throw on still water or more like a dozen pebbles each creating their own ripples that crisscross and distort as they touch one another. The Piper's Son explores that from the perspective of two pebbles Tom and Georgie.Georgie's younger brother and Tom's Uncle Joe died in a terrorist attack in London two years ago. Since then their lives have been turned upside down and inside out. This is the story of the point when everyone starts to put things back together.-- "Love is easy. It kind of comes with the territory. But liking is another story."•I found so many great insightful lines about family and love. You always love your parents, spouse, kids and friends but sometimes it is really hard to like them, especially when grief is eating you inside. But for as many moments that are hard in this book there

are all those others that are funny and hopeful and I spent the entire time rooting for Tom, "last bastion of patriarchal poor taste, arrested development and mental retardation" and Georgie. I rooted for people who would be the villain of another story. Sam, poor freaking Sam, who made a terrible mistake once upon a time. I see Sam and Georgie as a less funny version of Ross and Rachael from friends, but we were on a break, and I ache for Georgie to forgive him. The way the story was pieced together with moments of the past and present added to the overall emotion I felt for the people involved. I liked Tom but I really connected with Georgie and loved her relationship to Tom. I really don't want to give too much of the story away because Marchetta is infinitely better at telling a story than I am and I don't want to diminish how this can affect you if you go into it blind. I will say that I was so happy to get glimpses of the friends from Saving Francesca again. To see where everyone was at five years later and how most of their lives were still intertwined. Reading about Will and Francesca down the road really gave me warm fuzzy feelings.-- "Come here," she says. "No, you come here." "I said it first." "Rock paper scissors." "No. Because you do nerdy calculations and work out what I chose the last six times and then you'll win." Will pushes away from the table and his hand snakes out and he pulls her toward him and Tom figures that Will was always going to go to her first. "Some of the banter between Tom, Justine and Francesca make me laugh out loud. True friends you can fall out of touch with for long periods of time sometimes and then just pick back up like almost no time has passed. I got to the end of this and wanted more so much more. Thank you to Danielle who told me that there will be another book about Jimmy that will eventually be done and set two years after this. I will forgive that there was no epilogue since the story of these people I've grown attached to will continue on otherwise I would have thrown a tantrum comparable only to Annabel Mackee.

The thing I loved about this book was the complicated plotline. Think about it. If she wanted to, Melina could have had this be a simple love story between a boy and a girl, and it wouldn't have been half as good. (Although, this is Melina Marchetta we're talking about, so it wouldn't be too bad either.) Instead, it's a love story about all of the characters. A love story between the Mackees, a love story between Tom and his true friends who he hang out with in high school, a love story between Georgie and Sam, Dominic and Jacinta, Francesca and Will, Tom and Tara. Let me take a moment to quote from the book. "He taught me the chords to that song, you know," Tom says. "It's a

love story, Tommy', he told me. 'It's a love story between Dan and Joe and every member of their family.' "There are so many raw moments in this book that made me want to cry. \*\*\*SPOILERS AHEAD\*\*\*" "Take care of Bill,' Nanni Grace said. 'Take care of Bill because he's falling apart without his boy.' "Because five minutes before he rang Tara Finke, he had made a call to London. To his dead uncle." "Those poor bastards never got over leaving Tom Finch behind. Tom had met them. They'd told him to his face when he was twelve years old that you never leave your mates behind." "He'd be angry with us, Tom, for crying so much when all he did was laugh." \*\*\*NO MORE SPOILERS\*\*\* I loved the main character, Tom, even though he was so different than who he was in high school. It made me a little sad to see how far he had distanced himself from his real friends. My favorite side characters were probably Dominic, Ned, and Callum. Oh, and Moshin the Ignorer. And of course Anabel Georgia Finch Mackee. I loved how close she was with Tom. Actually, the whole family was really close, except for Tom and Dominic. Two complaints. First of all, WHERE WAS JIMMY? He "Doesn't want to be found just yet"? Whaaaat? Jimmy was one of my favorite characters in SF, and I really wanted to know what happened to him. I did like that Tom tried to contact him, and that Jimmy's story could definitely be a third book. Hint, hint. My second complaint was that it ended too soon. One more thing. Did anyone else notice that a) Tuba Guy is out of the picture and b) Ben the violinist sounds a lot like the character Ben in Jellicoe Road, who also plays the violin and is named Ben. Is that a coincidence, or does Melina often use characters from her other books in writing? Anyway, I recommend this to anyone who has a pulse, especially if you have read Saving Francesca.

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