



I Need You More Than I Love You and I Love You To Bits

By Gunnar Ardelius

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When Morris meets Betty, love is unavoidable. In short prose passages, we follow the course of their passionate first love. A confident debut written in a surprising form, which gives the story intelligence and depth.

Morris feels like Betty can see everything he's thinking. Betty believes Morris understands her like no one ever before. She tells him everything, even about the dried-up worm that she saw on the sidewalk on the way to school. But sometimes the darkness closes in on Morris. His father is manic-depressive and his mother is always talking about dreams and poetry and her new boyfriend. Morris begins to wonder if crazy people are drawn to each other. Betty points out that he is like his father. As their love grows, it almost consumes them. Soon it's as if they are always trying to escape themselves until they ask, "How do you know when it's over?"

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I Need You More Than I Love You and I Love You To Bits By Gunnar Ardelius Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1515239 in Books
- Published on: 2008-11-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .60" h x 5.20" w x 7.30" l, .45 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 118 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up—Ardelius follows the frenetic course of an all-consuming teen love affair from first chance sexual encounter to inevitable atrophy as everyday insecurities encroach. Told through short conversational passages, the narrative is comprised largely of dialogue between Morris and Betty and glimpses into the couple's quiet, intimate moments. Such scenes are interspersed with their inner thoughts (mainly his) and snapshots of Morris's mother and father, who are respectively flighty and manic-depressive. It is these parental weaknesses that feed Morris's own fears about the attraction between two people and indirectly spur the downward trajectory of the relationship. Ardelius's prose, translated from Swedish, poetically bottles the universal delirium and unsustainable pace of first love. American readers expecting a typical teen love story, however, will not find it here. Certain aspects of the story, such as the nonchalance of Betty's mom when her daughter's boyfriend walks downstairs in the morning for breakfast, have a distinctly European ring. This sophistication, both in style and content, may alienate some, but will speak volumes to more worldly teenagers.—*Jill Heritage Maza, Greenwich High School, CT*

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From [Booklist](#)

In this verse novel translated from the Swedish, Morris meets Betty, and the two quickly fall under the sway of an all-encompassing passion. In brief chapters that hover halfway between prose and verse, Ardelius captures the fairly universal feeling that one's love is absolutely unique. With a heightened emotional sensibility tethered to a knack for pinpointing revealing details, Ardelius maneuvers the quick story through the wide-eyed, simultaneously painful, joyous, and consuming aspects of first love: marveling at what life was like before meeting someone; trying to imagine the emptiness you'd feel without that person; wondering if there are limits to what you can say or do; arriving at the scary point where you define yourself entirely against the other; and then the slow, descending fog of doubt. Passages are intentionally oblique at times, but the emotional resonance is sweeping. Teens struggling through their own issues of identity and codependency in relationships will find much reflection in these surprisingly sophisticated yet accessible passages that show that love is often one of life's hardest trials. Grades 9-12. --Ian Chipman

Review

"Teens struggling through their own issues of identity and codependency in relationships will find much reflection in these surprisingly sophisticated yet accessible passages that show that love is often one of life's hardest trials." --*Booklist*

"The passages exude beauty, poetry and powerful emotions that translate well." --*Kirkus Reviews*

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Sandra Birk:

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