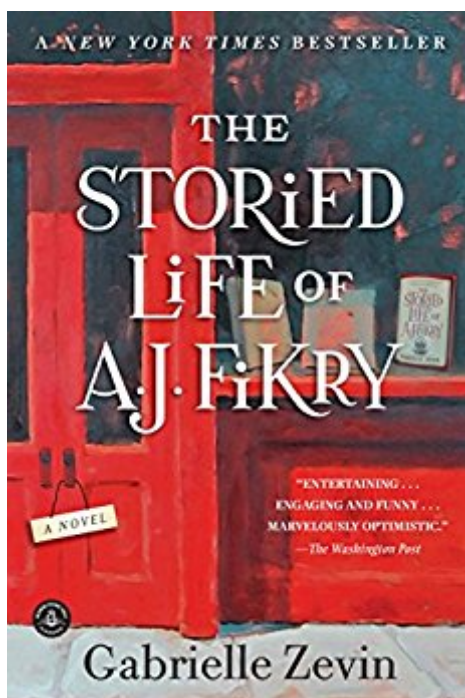


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# The Storied Life Of A. J. Fikry: A Novel



## Synopsis

Don't miss Gabrielle Zevin's new novel, *Young Jane Young*, coming in August 2017.

“Funny, tender, and moving, *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry* reminds us all exactly why we read and why we love.” A. J. Fikry's life is not at all what he expected it to be. He lives alone, his bookstore is experiencing the worst sales in its history, and now his prized possession, a rare collection of Poe poems, has been stolen. But when a mysterious package appears at the bookstore, its unexpected arrival gives Fikry the chance to make his life over--and see everything anew.

“This novel has humor, romance, a touch of suspense, but most of all love--love of books and bookish people and, really, all of humanity in its imperfect glory.” Eowyn Ivey, author of *The Snow Child*

“Marvelously optimistic about the future of books and bookstores and the people who love both.”

*The Washington Post* “You won't want it to end.”

*Family Circle* “A natural for book groups.”

*Richmond Times-Dispatch* “A reader's paradise of the first order.”

*The Buffalo News* “A fun, page-turning delight.”

*Minneapolis Star Tribune* “Captures the joy of connecting people and books . . . Irresistible.”

*Booklist* “A wonderful, moving, endearing story of redemption and transformation that will sing in your heart for a very, very long time.”

Garth Stein, author of *The Art of Racing in the Rain* “Readers who delighted in *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, and *Letters from Skye* will be equally captivated by this novel.”

*Library Journal*, starred review

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I was pleasantly surprised by many turns in this novel. I actually didn't have any idea what the book was about when I started reading - and, at this point - having finished, I think I know what it's about but I'm unsure that I could really describe the "type" of book to anyone who asked. There's a line that stands out (not a direct quote) that says something like - each book hits you in a different way depending upon where you are in life when you read it. This book, although different from my life, still affected me emotionally... yet, not like it did my friend who recommended it. She was in tears at the end of the book. I did feel sad, but she has children and I do not. Maybe, because I am at a little different spot in life than she is, that is why the book was a little different for each of us. Still, it was an interesting read.

I absolutely loved this novel. A.J. Fikry is the owner of a small, independent bookstore on the small Alice Island in the Northeast. He is cynical, cranky, and depressed...and not without reason. The recent death of his beloved wife has left him a widower at the age of thirty-nine. Their shared love of books seems to have died with his wife and A.J. is left behind with only bitterness. Enter an absolutely delightful cast of secondary characters who populate the island and A.J.'s life. You're bound to love at least one - if not all - of them. Next we have the unexpected hope and redemption of A.J. I'm not giving any spoilers here. Yes, it's a feel-good book. But it's more than that: it's a love letter to the power books have in our lives. If you have ever felt changed by a book, this novel will speak to you....you'll "get" it. And if you loved "The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society" or "Major Pettigrew's Last Stand" you'll find lots to love here, as well - not because the plots are similar, but because of the similar feel to the novels that comes from a good cast of eccentric townsfolk, a small community, and a sense of closeness among the characters. So I'll leave you with this: if you love reading books, do not miss this one. (I wouldn't be at all surprised to see it made into a movie!)

I had never heard of this book until it was selected as the August selection for my book discussion group. I had no idea what to expect. AJ Fikry is the owner of the Island Bookstore on Alice Island in

New England. He is a complex character who has very specific tastes in literature. After his wife dies he is wallowing in depression until someone leaves a 2 year old little girl named Maya in his bookstore. He decides to keep her and eventually adopt her. She changes and saves his life by bringing purpose to his life. He also develops a relationship with a publishing company sales rep who tries to broaden his literacy taste and plays a pivotal role in the story. There are a number of well developed and memorable characters that play major and minor roles in the story. There are plenty of twists and turns to keep the reader guessing. The beginning of each chapter names a short story and adds a few sentences to give a clue of what that chapter will involve. It's an interesting device that I enjoyed.

Follow a lovable main character throughout life and just enjoy this book, a book for book lovers about book lovers. It's not groundbreaking but it's fun and positive and heartwarming, when I didn't rush through it but it was one I kept coming back to.

If you need something sweet and uplifting in your life at any point, I strongly suggest you pick up this wonderful little book. While the plot follows the titular bookstore owner over the course of many years of his life, it is really about love above all else. Given the title and the main character's occupation, it is unsurprisingly about a love of reading and writing, but more than that it is about our capacity to love each other, how we can discover it in the most unexpected ways, and the impact that love can have on the lives of those around us. By the end of this book you'll find that you too have fallen in love with the fictional Island Books shop and its accompanying characters, with your sadness at it being over assuaged only by the knowledge that you can restart the story and revisit the shop whenever you want.

What's not to like about this captivating novel about books, bookstores, and a he-grows-on-you bookseller and bookstore owner A.J Fikry? I loved: - his reverence for books; how upset he was when his mother got him an e-reader for Christmas, as he was convinced they would be the downfall and end of bookstores. Hmmmmm.- his love for the three women in his life: his dead first wife w/ whom he went into the bookselling business/ his adopted daughter who was literally dropped onto his doorstep and to whom he devoted his life and imparted to and shared with her the magic of books / and his 2nd wife of middle age who discovered their love for one another through their shared love of books.- the reviews that he wrote of particular books that had meaning to him specifically for his daughter to have when he was gone = how thoughtful and special !- and the

twists in the book involving his daughter, her biological mother and father, and what part his sister-in-law had in solving something you wonder about throughout the entire book, "what really happened...." and- the ending which could have been sad (although I did cry) but would have been just what A.J.Fikry would have wanted for his daughter, his wife, and Island Books, the loves of his life. A satisfying read.

Wonderful book with literary references galore. Loved it. All in book club loved it too

Improbable story, but charming in the telling. Complemented by familiar short stories that frame each chapter. Heartwarming in a non-sentimental way. Read for a positive and pleasurable experience.

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