



My Heartbeat

By Garret Freymann-Weyr

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Ellen loves Link and James. Her older brother and his best friend are the only company she ever wants. She knows they fight, but she makes it a policy never to take sides. She loves her brother, the math genius and track star. She is totally, madly in love with James, his face full of long eyelashes and hidden smiles. “When you grow out of it,” James teases her, “you will break my heart.”

Ellen knows she’ll never outgrow it. She’ll always love James just the way she’ll always love Link. Then someone at school asks if Link and James might be in love with each other. A simple question.

Link refuses to discuss it. James refuses to stay friends with a boy so full of secrets. Ellen’s parents want Link to keep his secrets to himself, but Ellen wants to know who her brother really is. When is curiosity a betrayal? And if James says he loves her, isn’t that just another way of saying he still loves Link?

My Heartbeat is a fast, furious story in which a quirky triangle learns to change its shape and Ellen, at least, learns the limits of what you can ever know about whom you love.

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My Heartbeat By Garret Freymann-Weyr **Bibliography**

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Narrator Ellen learns about love, family and "society's unwritten rules" in this sophisticated but gentle novel set in Manhattan. Ellen adores her older brother, Link, and has had a crush on Link's best friend, James, since seventh grade. But at 14, when she starts high school, popular classmate Adena, who really likes Link, mentions to Ellen: "They're like a couple, aren't they?" Freymann-Weyr (*When I Was Older*) subtly and authentically follows Ellen's thought process as the question triggers a series of responses: "I resolve never to ask them. Ever. I resolve to put it out of my mind. There is no reason for me to know." Yet Ellen reviews their past behavior for clues. When Ellen finally frames the question to Link and James ("I spear a cherry with an unused fork... and ask if they are a couple"), Link denies it, avoids James and gets a girlfriend. Ellen and James, meanwhile, grow closer. As their relationship becomes physical, some inconsistencies surface (e.g., why, if Ellen is so loyal to her brother, would she "date" James?). But the sensitivity with which the author handles the issues of whom one loves and complexities more far-reaching than sexual concerns outweigh these minor matters. Ellen relates telling details about herself and those around her with humor and compassion, exposing the many dimensions of her parents as well as the three featured teens. A thoughtful approach to the many confusing signals that accompany awakening sexuality. Ages 12-up. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

From School Library Journal

Grade 9 & Up--In this tightly constructed novel about love, family, and the ambiguities of sexual identity, Ellen, 14, idolizes her brother, Link, and his best friend, James, who are seniors. When she enters their private Manhattan high school, she is surprised when some girls assume that Link and James are "a couple." Things begin to unravel when she puts the question to them: Link avoids James, starts dating Polly, and drops out of a special college math program to pursue his interest in music. James tells Ellen he has slept with men, but that he is also attracted to women; the two of them spend time together alone for the first time and, after much thought and discussion, she has her first sexual experience and he his first with a female. Ellen desperately wants to understand her brother, and realizes that her parents do not know him the way they think they do. They are well-respected, educated professionals who place high expectations on their children, hoping to shape their lives into models of themselves. Ellen begins to try to relate to them honestly so that they will really know her, and attempts to understand the dynamics of her family and of her relationship with James. The author provides some profound insights to help readers understand the motivations behind the characters' actions but ultimately young people must come to their own conclusions about the choices made and their consequences.

Susan Geye, Crowley Ninth Grade Campus, TX

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Gr. 8-12. This beautiful novel tells a frank, upbeat story of teen bisexual love in all its uncertainty, pain, and joy. Ellen, 14, has always been very close with her brilliant older brother, Link, and since seventh grade she's been "totally madly in love" with Link's gorgeous best friend, James. She hangs out with the boys as they watch classic foreign movies and talk and argue about books and art and everything. Unlike the teen characters in many recent YA novels, Ellen isn't shocked to discover that the boy she loves is gay. She's always known that James loves her brother. When the rumors start at school that Link and James are a "couple," Link breaks away, won't talk about it, starts a relationship with a girl, and deliberately scuttles his college-entrance exams. Finally Ellen has James to herself. He has had sex with men and he loves Link, but he also loves her. There's some contrived interweaving of the classics Ellen is reading--*Pride and*

Prejudice ("boring!"), *Jane Eyre* ("the best ever")--but readers will appreciate the connections. The fast, clipped dialogue will sweep teens into the story, as will Ellen's immediate first-person, present-tense narrative, "curious, careful, kind, and intense." The family dynamics are just as compelling as the love and friendship drama, especially Ellen's bewilderment about the unwritten laws that can make people strangers even within the family they love. See the Read-alikes column, opposite, for more books about the confusion and complications of sexual identity. *Hazel Rochman*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ashley McKay:

The book *My Heartbeat* can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. Exactly why must we leave the great thing like a book *My Heartbeat*? Several of you have a different opinion about e-book. But one aim which book can give many details for us. It is absolutely appropriate. Right now, try to closer with your book. Knowledge or facts that you take for that, you may give for each other; you are able to share all of these. Book *My Heartbeat* has simple shape however, you know: it has great and massive function for you. You can appear the enormous world by open and read a book. So it is very wonderful.

Lila Dixon:

My Heartbeat can be one of your nice books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort to put every word into delight arrangement in writing *My Heartbeat* yet doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource details that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can easily drawn you into fresh stage of crucial contemplating.

Jay Blanchard:

In this era which is the greater man or who has ability to do something more are more treasured than other. Do you want to become certainly one of it? It is just simple method to have that. What you should do is just spending your time very little but quite enough to possess a look at some books. On the list of books in the top collection in your reading list is definitely *My Heartbeat*. This book which can be qualified as *The Hungry Mountains* can get you closer in growing to be precious person. By looking upwards and review this e-book you can get many advantages.

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