



## Saving Francesca

By Melina Marchetta

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Before there was Eleanor and Park, there was Francesca and Will.

A compelling story of romance, family, and friendship, with humor and heart, perfect for fans of *If I Stay*, *The Spectacular Now*, and *Looking for Alaska*.

Francesca is stuck at St. Sebastian's, a boys' school that pretends it's coed by giving the girls their own bathroom. Her only female companions are an ultra-feminist, a rumored slut, and an impossibly dorky accordion player. The boys are no better, from Thomas, who specializes in musical burping, to Will, the perpetually frowning, smug moron that Francesca can't seem to stop thinking about.

Then there's Francesca's mother, who always thinks she knows what's best for Francesca—until she is suddenly stricken with acute depression, leaving Francesca lost, alone, and without an inkling of who she really is. Simultaneously humorous, poignant, and impossible to put down, this is the story of a girl who must summon the strength to save her family, her social life, and—hardest of all—herself.

Melina Marchetta is the Printz-winning author of *Jellicoe Road*, as well as *Looking for Alibrandi* and *Finnikin of the Rock*.

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## Saving Francesca By Melina Marchetta Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

"This morning, my mother didn't get out of bed." So begins the saga of Francesca Spinelli, the hilarious and achingly real creation of Aussie author Melina Marchetta. Francesca used to think her biggest problem was transferring to St. Sebastian's--a school only recently turned coed: "What a dream come true, right? Seven hundred and fifty boys and thirty girls? But the reality is that it's either like living in a fish bowl or like you don't exist." But now there's this matter of her usually vibrant and annoyingly optimistic mother Mia refusing to get up in the morning. Her taciturn father doesn't have much to say on the subject, her beloved little brother Luca is anxiously looking to her for answers, and her so-called friends from her old neighborhood seem to have abandoned her. So, Francesca keeps it all inside--her frustration with school (there aren't enough girl's bathrooms and no girl's sports teams); her fear making new friends (with the few girls who do go to St. Sebastian's); and her overwhelming hatred of the smug Will Trombal, who despite being completely infuriating, is also incredibly cute. Keeping this to herself when all she wants to do is spill it to her mother is killing Francesca, but with Mia trying to make herself well again, Francesca will have to figure out how to save herself.

What makes *Saving Francesca* an exceptional standout in a vast field of mediocre teen chick lit is Frankie's painfully nuanced characterization. It has been ten years since high school teacher Marchetta's break out hit, *Looking for Alibrandi*, came out in her native Australia, and the care and precision she took in getting Francesca's voice just right is evident. As a result, there isn't a girl alive that wouldn't feel right at home in Francesca's skin. Her frank observations about boys, with their hygienically-challenged habits and their ineptitude in dealing with the opposite sex, are dead-on and riotously funny. Marchetta deftly balances Francesca's humor with a sympathetic depiction of Mia's struggle with clinical depression, creating a well-rounded novel that will prompt both laughter and tears. Fans can only hope that they won't have to wait another decade for Marchetta to gift them with another of honest and moving story. --*Jennifer Hubert*

### From Publishers Weekly

Sixteen-year-old Francesca's compelling voice will carry readers along during a transitional year in her family and school life. The narrator's vivacious mother falls into a deep depression soon after the teen narrator starts "Year Eleven" at St. Sebastian's, a Sydney boys' school now accepting—but not particularly accommodating to—girls (a teacher refers to the class as "gentlemen"; Francesca describes being outnumbered 750 to 30, as "either living in a fish bowl or like you don't exist"). Slowly, she begins to put down roots at her school, bonding with the girls from St. Stella's (her former school) whom she had considered misfits, and with some unlikely guys. She even finds herself falling for Will, whom she originally called "a stick-in-the-mud moron with no personality." Francesca also lets out her own personality, which she had kept hidden at St. Stella's because of her conceited friends. Her mother's illness takes its toll, though. Marchetta (*Looking for Alibrandi*) beautifully depicts the pain experienced by Francesca's whole family (at a wedding without her mother, Francesca observes while dancing with both her father and brother that even "combined, we feel like an amputee"), and Francesca's anger towards her father starts to escalate ("You think you can fix everything by forgetting about it but you just make things worse," she tells him). Readers will applaud the realistic complexity in the relationships here, the genuine love between the characters, as well as Francesca's ultimate decision to save herself. Ages 12-up.

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### From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up—There have been lots of changes for Francesca as she starts Year Eleven at St. Sebastian's, a

formerly all-boys school that has grudgingly admitted 30 coeds. She misses her old friends, but mostly she misses her mother, a strong vocal communications lecturer at the University of Technology, Sydney, who has slipped into a severe depression and can't get out of bed. Francesca is also facing challenges at school. Suddenly, she's hanging out with new friends, girls who were so uncool at St. Stella's, and it's impossible to talk things over with her mother as she once did. Life gets more complicated when she develops a crush on Will Trombal, who can't seem to make up his mind whether he wants to be with her or his current girlfriend. The trials continue throughout the year, and a conflict with her father brings everything to a head. At that point Francesca begins to understand what really matters, who her friends are, and, most importantly, who she is. This is a complex, deliberately paced, coming-of-age story. It is only through a long, hard climb that Francesca eventually begins to have hope again, but there is still a long way to go at the story's closing. Despite the seriousness of the subject and some occasional strong language, the book also has great characterizations, witty dialogue, a terrific relationship between Francesca and her younger brother, and a sweet romance. Teens will relate to this tender novel and will take to heart its solid messages and realistic treatment of a very real problem.—*Roxanne Burg, Orange County Public Library, CA*  
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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **John McDole:**

In this 21st century, people become competitive in most way. By being competitive right now, people have do something to make all of them survives, being in the middle of typically the crowded place and notice by simply surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated the item for a while is reading. That's why, by reading a e-book your ability to survive enhance then having chance to remain than other is high. For you who want to start reading some sort of book, we give you this particular Saving Francesca book as basic and daily reading reserve. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

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