

1: All My Puny Sorrows

All My Puny Sorrows is a novel by Canadian author Miriam Toews, first published in Heavily inspired by events from Toews' life, it focuses on Elfrieda and Yolandi Von Riesen, the only children of an eccentric family from a conservative Mennonite community.

All My Puny Sorrows. It is narrated by and told from the perspective of her little sister Yolandi Yoli. Yoli is the author of a series of young adult cowgirl novels and is currently working on a serious novel about sisters. Elf is a successful concert pianist who has always struggled with feelings of overwhelming sorrow. As the novel opens Elf is in the hospital after she has unsuccessfully attempted to overdose on painkillers. Her mother, Lottie, found her and called Nic and Yoli immediately pack Lottie off for a Caribbean cruise so that she can get some much needed rest. They figure Elf will be safe in the hospital so it is a good time for Lottie to have a break. While this is going on, Yoli is in the middle of divorcing her second husband, Dan. To try to deal with the divorce she has taken two lovers: Finbar, a lawyer in Toronto and Radek, a violinist in Winnipeg. They never seem to get anywhere, as Nic thinks Elf has to be forced to take her meds and Yoli thinks her survival instinct has to be shocked back to life. Neither has a viable plan to make Elf do anything. Lottie returns from vacation and Elf appears to be getting better as she is talking about doing her concert tour. Yoli is cheered by the news that Aunt Tina is coming to visit and will help Lottie keep an eye on Elf since Nic works full time. Yoli gets home only to find that Nora has moved a boyfriend in while she was gone. Yoli barely has time to settle back into life in Toronto before she is flying back to Winnipeg. This time Tina and Lottie found Elf. She had slit her wrists and swallowed bleach. As soon as Elf can speaking she is begging Yoli to take her to Switzerland because assisted suicide is legal there. This will save Elf from her fear of dying alone. As Elf heals in the hospital, Yoli finalizes her divorces. Aunt Tina has a heart attack and is hospitalized. Though the operation appears to be going well there are complications and Tina dies of organ failure. Before she leaves the hospital the staff assure Yoli that they will keep her sister in the ward. Yoli makes plans with Nic and Lottie to take Elf to Toronto after her release. The hope is that the change of scene will spark in Elf a will to live. Back in Toronto Yoli tries and fails to get a bank loan to cover the costs of a trip to Switzerland. Though Elf has the money, her wish to keep the trip from Nic ties her financial hands, since all her accounts are joint. Yoli pounds out a new Rhonda book in the hope that it will bring in much needed funds. She tries and mostly fails to reach Elf by phone, terrified that the delay in her plans will cause Elf to take matters into her own hands. Elf talks the nurses into issuing her a day pass to celebrate her birthday. After a wonderful lunch with Nic, she sends him to the library for books and throws herself in front of a train. She finally succeeds in killing herself. Yoli packs up Nora, calls Will and they all rush to Winnipeg for the funeral. After the funeral Lottie suffers a heart attack and has to be hospitalized. It is decided that she will move to Toronto when she recovers. Elf has left Yoli her life insurance money. Yoli uses the money to buy a fixer upper in a low rent neighborhood in Toronto. She gets it livable by the time Lottie arrives from Winnipeg. Lottie deals with her grief by becoming an active part of the community, making friends and joining a church group. Yoli prank calls the Winnipeg hospital at all hours asking to speak to her sister and demanding to know why they let her go. Eventually, after her mother confronts her, she moves on. The book ends with Yoli dreaming she and Elf are in Switzerland. This section contains 1, words approx.

2: All My Puny Sorrows (Audiobook) by Miriam Toews | www.enganchecubano.com

All My Puny Sorrows tells the story of Elfrieda (Elf) von Riesen's suicide. It is narrated by and told from the perspective of her little sister Yolandi (Yoli). Yoli is the author of a series of young adult cowgirl novels and is currently working on a serious novel about sisters.

Share via Email Antic requiem â€¦ Miriam Toews reveals humour in private pain. Toews has acknowledged its autobiographical source: Can a work of mourning be a comedy? Nevertheless, as I read, I laughed aloud even as tears rose in my eyes. The novel is a kind of harlequinade. Elf, smiling, says it makes her sad. Yoli says it makes her sad, too, but happy. In this whirligig of ecstatic kinesis, negatives tumble head over heels into positives, only to flip into new negatives: The worst that can happen has already happened: He had 77 dollars on him at the time and we used the money for Thai takeout because, as my friend Julie says about times like this: You still have to eat. Both sisters are lovable, exuberant, quirky, in many respects mirror-opposites. I was trying to be like you, [Elf] said. It was all I had. Yoli asks, and the reader asks, why Elf wants to die. A friend confides to Yoli that he heard Elf playing in Prague. By her suffering, he said. When I listened to her play I felt I should not be there in the same room with her It was a private pain There were no words.

3: All My Puny Sorrows | Literary Hub

All My Puny Sorrows Overview. All My Puny Sorrows by Miriam Toews is a fictional novel told in the first person by Yolandi von Riesen. It tells the story of her sister Elfrieda von Reisen's overwhelming sorrow.

One is our narrator, Yolandi, a moderately successful author of rodeo-themed young adult novels. The other is Elfrieda, or Elf, a world-class concert pianist known for her Rachmaninoff, in much demand in the capitals of Europe. Yolandi lives in Toronto; Elfrieda lives in Winnipeg. Yolandi has two children; Elfrieda has none. Elfrieda wants to die so desperately that, at one point in the novel, she cuts her wrists and drinks bleach. AMPS, as Elfrieda abbreviates the Coleridge line that lends the novel its title, has been called a book about suicide. It is one of the most moving and accurate representations of that complicated situation I have ever read. You just are, alongside that other person. Even as you grow up and grow apart, you are connected by what you shared. But what happens when that bond matures into adulthood? Often, it softens and blurs into nostalgia. Throughout AMPS, we are reminded that childhood was an ideal and idealized state "I remember perfectly" or should I say I have a perfect memory," Yolandi relates, highlighting how we reshape our past "and that that ideal state has been degraded: In adulthood, the whole world has backslid: Was every seemingly happy moment from her past, every smile, every song, every heartfelt hug and laugh and exuberant fist-pump and triumph, just a temporary detour from her innate longing for release and oblivion? In this sense, and all others, for that matter, AMPS is her most accomplished novel yet. Story continues below advertisement Story continues below advertisement But even in the many moments of lightness, there is a dangerous undercurrent of sadness. At one point Yoli buys "Vaseline Intensive Care lotion, which had recently been renamed Vaseline Intensive Rescue lotion by the company to reflect the emergency atmosphere of current life on earth. And not just the sadness embodied in Elfrieda. Yolandi suggests that sadness such as hers lives within us all, a shared consciousness of sorts. When her mother asks her why the teenage heroines in her rodeo novels are all so sad, if their struggles are because Yoli has so much sadness in her, she has a simple answer: In a world where everyone has that sorrow in them "which is to say, a world like ours "we find permission to embrace that sadness, rather than a rallying cry to escape it. And we witness the possibility of making a life that can accommodate incredible intimacy without denying the fundamental bleakness of existence. There is no need to choose relief over violence, or love over pain. In this devastating novel "as in life itself "tenderness and tragedy are, like siblings, forever bound. Follow Jared Bland on Twitter [jaredbland](#).

4: All My Puny Sorrows - Wikipedia

All My Puny Sorrows takes its title from a line in a poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (-), who is considered by many to be the founder of the Romantic Movement in poetry. He is most famous for the poems *Kubla Khan* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

The story is somewhat autobiographical, Miriam Toews having lost both her sister and father to suicide. Out of such unimaginable pain, comes a hopeful book. Now that is lighting a candle rather than cursing the darkness. Thank you, Eleanor Roosevelt. See previous rationalization for borrowing. This morning, as I sit by the fire listening to Mr. Finding light in the darkness, joy in pain, sun behind the fog. The weather has been stormy in the past month. Many days in November served up a big helping of wind, rain, and darkness. I needed some sunshine and the forecast was promising plenty. A whole row of those beautiful little sun symbols on the week-long forecast page. My eyes blurred with tears just to see it. I got out of bed yesterday morning, eager to work. I ran to the window and threw open the curtains expecting to find this: But someone promised me sun and that was what I anticipated as I pulled back the curtains. Somehow, knowing the sun is there, just on the other side of the fog, is almost worse. I got out of bed this morning, eager to work. I ran to the window and threw open the curtains. So, I sat right down in this chair and started thinking about the stupid fog. Then, I remembered last summer, swimming in the beautiful lake on a perfect day and confidently telling my dear friend that joy is a practice. My worries are minor, and I have not knock on wood dealt with depression in my life. Ergo, there is no reason why I cannot be happy today. The practice of joy is a three-step program: The first step is to look for joy in every ordinary moment of the day. Small diamonds of joy are scattered across our paths, if we would only watch for them. But it is easy to be distracted by our daily lives, our worries, our fast-paced world. To find joy, you sometimes have to seek it. Secondly, once you find some joy, soak it up. Immerse yourself in the moment. Slow down and be present for it, however insignificant it might seem, however brief it might be. Say thank you to the nine-year-old with the quirky sense of humour, to your pet, to your partner. Say thank you to your deity. Even science acknowledges that gratitude is a positive factor in a long and healthy life. Seek it, soak it up, say thanks! My plan is simple and some days, impossibly difficult. But, when I do the work, it works for me. Particularly in light of the fact that million people were undernourished last year. My aches and pains are nothing when I think of the approximately million people who lack access to at least one of seven essential health services. Did you know that The tally comprises No more whining today! Now, any of you who know me will attest to the fact that I do not handle tech glitches with any aplomb whatsoever. Glad I decided to leave them in the complaining chair, all my puny sorrows. Reply Your comment will be posted after it is approved.

5: All My Puny Sorrows Summary & Study Guide

All My Puny Sorrows is a tragedy that uses humor to convey a deep sense of humanity. That a novel with suicide as a theme can be rich with meaning. During a tearful eulogy at a funeral service, a toddler boy wobbles up to the altar and begins to eat his great-grandmother's ashes from the memorial urn.

Rose Jul 07, What a sad book! Once I got to the ending I felt a little confused. It appears to have a double ending or a sort of alternate ending within itself. The first ending is that her sister takes her own life and the fall out of all that. Her attempt at moving on and so on. The second starts with a letter that she wrote to her sister, likely a goodbye letter? And they are on their way to Switzerland together, presumably to allow her sister to say Goodbye. My question is, what do you think happened? How do you interpret 2 endings? Or did I by chance miss something altogether!? My theory - the author, Miriam Toews, lived through a similar situation as the story. Her sister approached her to aid her in killing herself and she declined. I think the book is semi-biographical and the 2nd ending is the outcome that she wishes she had. The author regrets her choice not to help her sister die and this is her processing it and her explanation as to why. She wishes she chose ending 2. What do you all think? Jennifer Aug 01, I interpreted the ending as a dream she had about Elf. I think she alludes to it beforehand about a guy she is seeing recently who when he wakes up he immediately writes his dreams

6: All My Puny Sorrows by Miriam Toews review – “darkly fizzing tragicomedy” | Books | The Guardian

3 results for all my puny sorrows. 3 results for "all my puny sorrows" Sort By: Plot Summary, Chapter Summaries & Analysis, Characters, Objects/Places, Themes.

Toews is the author of five previous novels: She lives in Toronto. Elfrieda is so thin, her face so pale, that when she opens her eyes it is like a surprise attack, like one of those air raids that turns night to day. Elf played it on the piano and I sat next to her and we both sang our hearts out to our bewildered audience who sat around in wheelchairs or stood leaning hard on canes and walkers. I thought the memory would make her laugh but it makes her ask me to leave. She realized before I even did that I was spinning out this anecdote because it represented something else and more than the sum of its parts. Please go now, she says. Article continues after advertisement I tell her I could read to her the way she used to read to me when I was sick. How about I sing? Or I could dance. I could do impersonations. I could stand on my head. I sit down and then stand up again. I sit down next to her again and then put my head on her stomach. What was that quote on your wall? On your bedroom wall, when we were kids. Article continues after advertisement You put the fist in pacifist? No, no – that other one, about time. Something about the horizon of being. Be careful, she says. She puts her hands gently on my head and keeps them there as though she is resting them on a pregnant belly. I can feel their heat. I hear her stomach rumble. I smell the Ivory Snow scent of her T-shirt that she has on inside out. She massages my temples and then pushes me off her. She tells me that time is a force and we must allow it to do its work, must respect its power. I consider arguing that she herself is disrespecting that power by attempting to sidestep it but then realize she might already have made note of that and is talking to herself as much as she is talking to me. There is nothing to add. I hear her whisper yet another apology and I begin to hum a Beatles song about love and need. My sister says she appreciates being compared to Dylan Thomas but apologizes and asks me again to leave, she needs to think. Maybe, she says, but not according to some bourgeois notion of time compartments. Actually, I am okay with leaving right now after all, I say. I knew I could get you to leave, she says. Before I have to be elsewhere. A text from Nora, my fourteen-year-old: Will broke the front door. Nora told me her curfew is four am. Give Elf a hug from me! And a text from my oldest friend, Julie, who is expecting to see me later that evening: Give my love to Elfie. It was a furtive attempt to disappear by starving herself to death. She asked me what I was doing there. I told her I was there to call a doctor. Our mother stayed in the dining room. She had her back to us. Elf pleaded with me not to. She put her hands together in supplication and begged. She promised to eat. Our mother stayed sitting at the dining room table. I told Elf the ambulance was on its way. The screen door was open and we could smell the lilacs. You have to, I said. She called to our mom. Our mother said nothing. She used what little strength she had left to give me the finger as the paramedics loaded her into the back of the ambulance. That was the first time I met Janice. Her broken backpack hung on the IV unit next to her. I was sliding my hands back and forth on the steel railing that held her in and I was crying. Elf took my hand, weakly, like an old dying person, and looked deeply into my eyes. Yoli, she said, I hate you. I bent to kiss her and whispered that I knew that, I was aware of it. I hate you too, I said. It was the first time that we had sort of articulated our major problem. She wanted to die and I wanted her to live and we were enemies who loved each other. We held each other tenderly, awkwardly, because she was in a bed attached to things. Janice – she had that furry creature hanging from her belt loop even then – tapped me on the shoulder and asked if she could talk to me for a minute. That feeling can be broken down, she said. She hates that you saved her life. I know, I said, but thanks. A close, hard hug from a stranger is a potent thing. She left me alone in the beige room. I tore away at my fingernails and cuticles until I bled. When I went back to Elf she was still in Emergency. We are very much amazed at what little intelligence there is to be found in Ms. She pointed at a doctor who was scribbling something at the circular desk in the middle of all the dying people. Who the hell did he say that to? That other nurse, said Elf. Asshole, I said, did he talk to you? Yeah, sort of, said Elf, it was more of an interrogation. Equating intelligence with the desire to live? Yeah, she said, or decency. Head here for a chance to win a copy of All My Puny Sorrows. Used with permission of McSweeney's.

ALL MY PUNY SORROWS CHAPTER SUMMARY pdf

7: All My Puny Sorrows review – a raw tale of a pianist's death wish | Books | The Guardian

Rated 4 out of 5 by Kristal from Toews Does it Again All My Puny Sorrows was an excellent read, and in my opinion, comes second only to A Complicated Kindness. Another heartbreaking story that makes you laugh and cry at the same time, but still offers hope.

8: All My Puny Sorrows | Quill and Quire

In a sense, All My Puny Sorrows is the story of those sisters, or women strikingly similar to them, now in their forties and still trying to figure out how to navigate life's hardships. It is a heartbreaking illustration of unselfish love that transcends illness and death; it is also a critical commentary on the treatment of suicidal patients.

9: All my puny sorrows

All My Puny Sorrows is based on the author's own experience of her sister's suicide, in , 12 years after their father killed himself, explaining the novel's urgency and rawness.

ALL MY PUNY SORROWS CHAPTER SUMMARY pdf

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