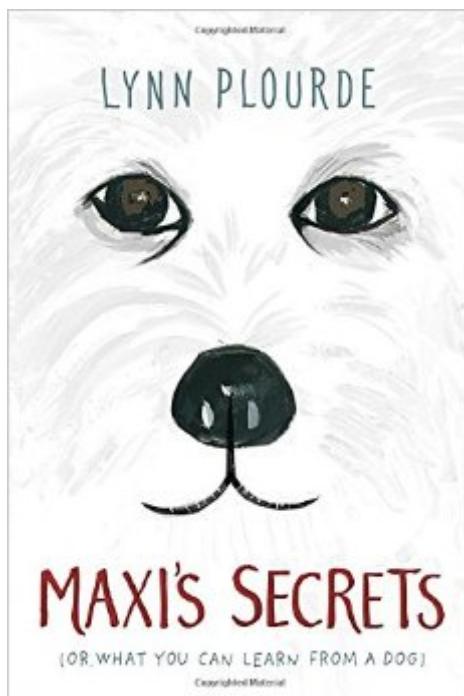


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# Maxi's Secrets: (or What You Can Learn From A Dog)



## **Synopsis**

When a BIG, lovable, does-it-her-way dog wiggles her way into the heart of a loudmouth pipsqueak of a boy, wonderful things happen that help him become a bigger, better person. With its diverse cast, authentic narrator, and perfect blend of spot-on middle-grade humor, drama, and wisdom, this powerful debut is relatable, funny, bittersweet, and full of heart. Timminy knows that moving to a new town just in time to start middle school when you are perfect bully bait is less than ideal. But he gets a great consolation prize in Maxiâ "a gentle giant of a dog who the family quickly discovers is deaf. Timminy is determined to do all he can to help Maxiâ "after all, his parents didn't return him because he was a runt. But when the going gets rough for Timminy, who spends a little too much time getting shoved into lockers at school, Maxi ends up being the one to help himâ "along with their neighbor, Abby, who doesnâ "t let her blindness define her and bristles at Timminyâ "s â œpoor-meâ • attitude. It turns out thereâ "s more to everyone than whatâ "s on the surface, whether it comes to Abby, Maxi, or even Timminy himself.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 0650 (What's this?)

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Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 1 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #7,827 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Special Needs #66 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Animals > Dogs #296 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Friendship

Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Timminy is not looking forward to starting a new school, particularly one where his father is Assistant Principal. Now he wonâ "t be able to disguise from his parents how bullied he has been

at school due to his small size. But his parents try to make the move more palatable by giving him a puppy, Maxi, who is a huge white furry ball of energy and love. Eventually, they discover that Maxi is deaf and have to figure out how to keep her safe in their woodsy new home. Meanwhile Timminy is busy worrying about school, dodging bullies who put him in lockers. When he meets his neighbor, Abby, she doesn't put up with his whining about his size. After all, she doesn't let her blindness slow her down at all. It is up to Timminy to realize that his size doesn't define him any more than Abby's or Maxi's disabilities do. It's time for them all to stand tall. Plourde has created one of those dog books. You know, the ones where the dog dies. But at least she admits it right up front, warning readers that Maxi is one to be adored and loved but that she will be gone before the story is done. The book happily is about much more than that. It is about bullying and the ability to keep strong in the face of being different and unique. It is also about everyone being more than they seem on the surface, even those who may appear to be bullies at first. The writing here is heartfelt and fast. Timminy is a great protagonist and though he can whine at times, it is always justified. The fact that he learns a lot from those around him is to his credit. He is also someone who offers second chances to others and seeks them himself when he does something wrong. This is a book about friendships and allowing people into your lives even if they are different in ways other than hearing and sight and size. A tearjerker of a book, this is one with a huge heart to go along with the huge white dog. Appropriate for ages 8-12.

I don't read dog books, ask any of my students, and yet this year there have been an incredible slew of dog books to prove me wrong. Lynn Plourde's Maxi's Secrets steals your heart from the very first chapter. Just like Maxi quickly brings love and life back into the lives of the characters of the books, so does he for us. I gave this book 5 stars when I read it and it still stands out as a 5 star book to me. This is one of those books that make us thankful that there are writers out there that so gets what it means to be new, what it means to try to fit in and what it means to love something like a dog.

Maxi's story is one I know readers are going to love so much. I loved the friendship between Timminy and Abby, as well as the unlikely friendship found with Rory. All three of those characters are so multidimensional, giving readers a lot to think about as they navigate their own friendships during the difficult middle grade years. I appreciated a story that includes supportive parents in a strong family unit. That's not something that's easy to do in a middle grade novel but this story found a perfect balance of depicting children handling problems on their own with parent support sprinkled

in. And then of course there's Maxi. I'm really not an animal person. I don't always get the bound. But Maxi tugged at my heart from the very beginning, and I loved the way she brought so much joy to the story...and of course her secrets. You really CAN learn a lot from a dog!

Timminy moves away from the big city to a small town. Not only being the new boy in town, Timminy is also very short for his age, causing Middle School to be quite a challenge. Timminy talks his parents into getting a dog. They soon discover Maxi is deaf. As Timminy struggles with middle-school life, Maxi, and his neighbor, Abby, help Timminy find his inner strength. Author Lynn Plourde writes a loving tale that will tug at your heart. Who could not love a story about the *underdog* • and root for them the whole way? The main characters teach the reader to believe in themselves and a whole lot more. Maxi's Secret # 22 • better to focus on what you can do instead of what you can't do. • If you choose to read this book, plan on falling in love with it and completing it in one sitting. You will not regret it! Best for grades 4 and up.

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