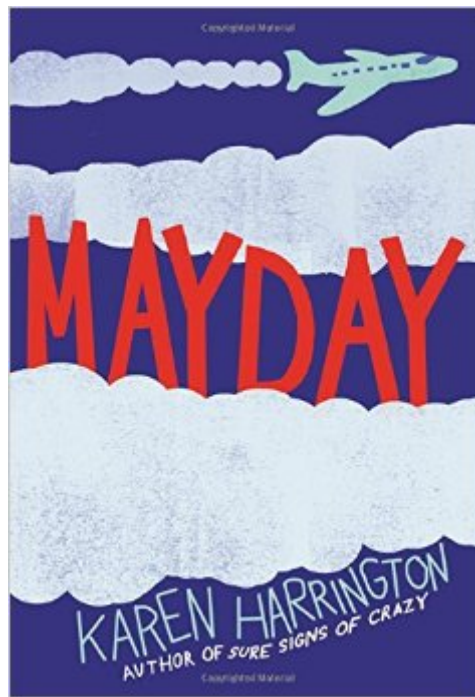


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# Mayday



## Synopsis

A powerful coming-of-age story about the importance of finding your voice Wayne Kovok lives in a world of After. After his uncle in the army was killed overseas. After Wayne and his mother survived a plane crash while coming back from the funeral. After he lost his voice. Wayne has always used his love of facts to communicate ("Did you know more people die each year from shaking a vending machine than from shark attacks?"). Without his voice, how will he wow the prettiest girl in school? How will he stand up to his drill-sergeant grandfather? And how will he share his hopes with his deadbeat dad? It's not until Wayne loses his voice completely that he realizes how much he doesn't say. Filled with Karen Harrington's signature heart and humor, Mayday tackles an unforgettable journey of family and friendship.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (May 24, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0316298018

ISBN-13: 978-0316298018

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 1.2 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (11 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #344,278 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #162 in [Books > Children's Books > Cars, Trains & Things That Go > Planes & Aviation](#) #273 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Illness](#) #394 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Death & Dying](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Did you know that the emu is a flightless bird like an ostrich but is a fast runner and a strong swimmer? Did you know that the average tree consumes fifty to one hundred gallons of water a day? Did you know that the international distress signal "Mayday" comes from "m'aidez," the French for "help me"? Seventh grader Wayne Kovok knows all of these facts and many more. He's practically a walking encyclopedia. Random facts help him navigate the awkward, the painful, and the difficult situations in life. When he doesn't know what to say,

he throws out an interesting fact "to dispel uncomfortable silences, to make people laugh, and to forget troubling things. But after he and his mom survive a plane crash on the way home from his uncle's military funeral at Arlington National Cemetery, Wayne discovers that he has lost his voice. Without the ability to spout facts out loud, how will he distract his mom from her grief for her brother and the honor burial flag she lost in the plane crash? How will he stand up to his army drill sergeant grandpa, who never runs out of things to criticize Wayne for doing wrong? How will he tell his sort-of girlfriend Sandy that he still likes her? And how will he get his deadbeat dad to understand that empty promises hurt? It seems like Wayne's life can't get much worse. Little by little, though, rays of sunshine begin to peek through the clouds. Positive change happens. He makes a new friend, he learns to appreciate his family in a way he never has before, and he develops the courage to express what's really on his mind, underneath all those random facts he loves to spout. There's a lot of pain and sadness in *Mayday*, but there are also many bright and funny moments.

MIDDLE GRADE FICTION  
Karen Harrington  
*Mayday*  
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers,  
978-0-316-29801-8, hardcover (also available as an ebook), 352 pgs, \$16.99  
May 24, 2016  
Twelve-year-old Wayne Kovok is an anxious seventh-grader who uses facts (Did you know that chickens can run up to nine miles an hour?) to protect himself from awkward silences and uncomfortable emotions. "A fact is like a shield," Wayne says, "You can hide behind it. Then you can make a run for it if you need to. Or make someone laugh so that they aren't laughing at you. Or distract your mom if she is sad." Wayne's life is pretty normal "Spanish homework and does Sandy Showalter really like me?" until his Uncle Reed is killed in action in Iraq. As Wayne and his mother are flying home from Arlington National Cemetery with Uncle Reed's burial flag ("There was a waiting list for the honored dead," Wayne observes. "That might be one of the saddest facts I'd ever heard."), an unseasonal storm forces their plane into an emergency landing. Author Karen Harrington's imagery is vivid as the plane begins to fall. Wayne's mother has been cradling Uncle Reed's burial flag when a hole is ripped in the side of the plane and the flag "unfurled and sailed up into the fuselage like a patriotic kite." Wayne and his mother survive but many passengers do not. Wayne leaves the hospital with one eyebrow, a large "L"-shaped ("the sign of a loser") wound stitched together across his face, and a throat injury. The boy who uses his voice to protect, distract, and fill, now has none. Harrington's characters are diverse and genuine. There's Grandpa, a retired army drill sergeant, who moves in with Wayne and his mom to help out during their recovery, quoting Napoleon and issuing

commands.

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