

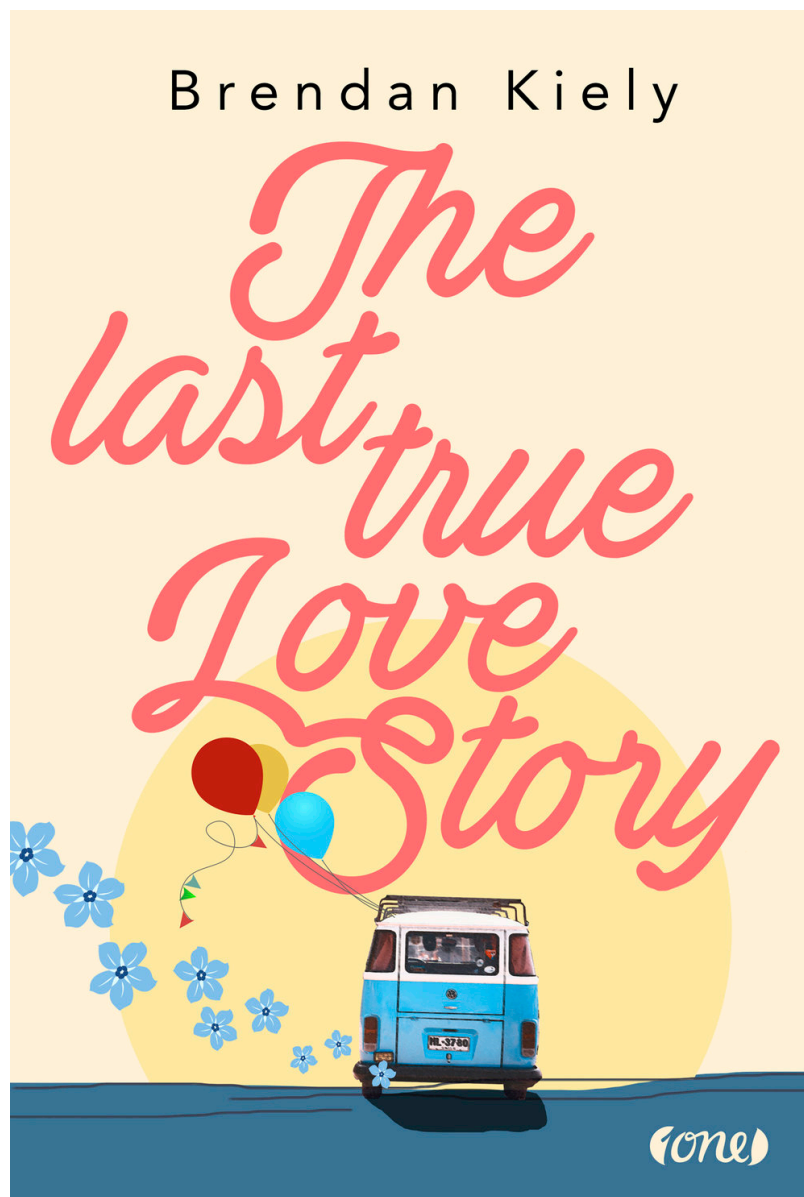
Jonathon Cabello

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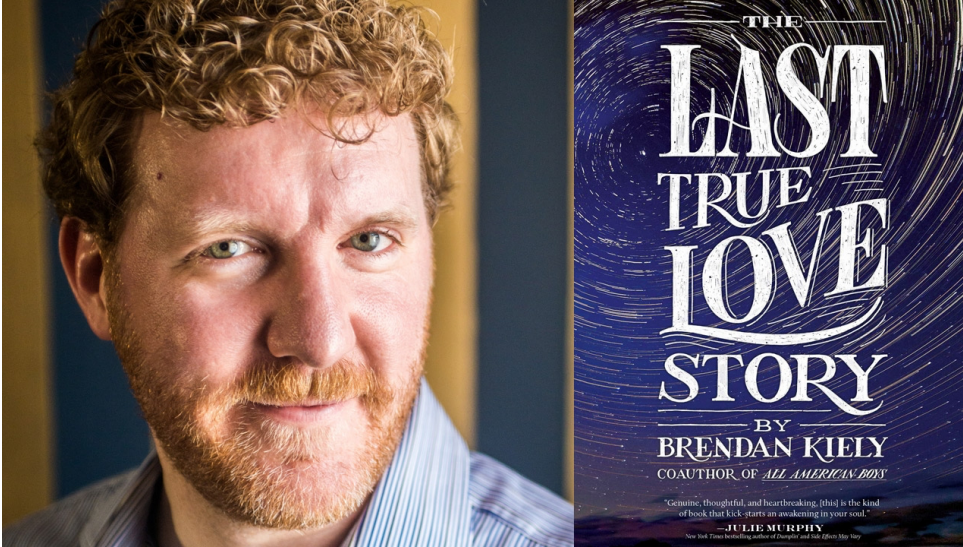
English 112B

Prof. Mary Warner

The Last True Love Story by Brendan Kiely



About the Author



<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&src=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ab>

Brendan Kiely is a Boston born New York Times best selling author. He currently has four books out: *The Gospel of Winter*, *All American Boys*, *The Last True Love Story* and his latest book *Tradition*. His novels have been published in ten languages and he holds a few awards under his belt such as the Walter Dean Meyers

Award, the Amelia Elizabeth Walden Award and Best Fiction for Young Adults in both 15' and 17'. He currently resides in New York City with his wife. For more information on Kiely visit his website <https://www.brendankiely.com/about-menu/>.

Synopsis

The Last True Love Story follows Teddy Hendrix, a 17 year old boy who cares for his grandpa whose battling Alzheimer's and Corrina a laid back punk rocker whose consistently suffocated by the world around her. "Gpa" desperate not to let the memories of his dead wife slip from his mental grip wants the opportunity to visit Ithaca, New York, and relive the memory of where they had their first kiss; before it's gone forever. One evening Teddy and Corrina decide to put it all on the line. They steal Hendrix's mom's car, bust Gpa out of his assisted living center, stuff old Humper (Hendrix's dog) in the back, and begin their cross-country journey from LA to New York, so Gpa can live out his wishes before the disease takes over. Running from parents, the law, and the senior living center, this unlikely trio takes an exploration into music, family, and themselves.

Major Quotes

“No. No, it isn’t nothing,” he said. “I have this awful feeling that people are looking at me, as if they just spoke to me, just asked me a question, and I don’t know the answer. I don’t even know what question they asked.” His face was red. “I don’t want to lose everything. That’s why I want to go home.”

“I can’t bring you home, Gpa. Mom won’t allow it.”

“Not here,” he said softly. “Not your home. Mine. I want to be home in Ithaca, back where all my memories of her are. I want to be there before they’re all gone.” I rubbed his back, but he glanced at me and his face softened. “Don’t let me forget her. Please.” I wasn’t sure if he was talking to me or just thinking out loud now; his eyes were glassy and distant. “What I would give to walk down Mulberry again with her, and up the steps of St. Helen’s, just like we did when we got married. Please don’t let me forget her. Not her.”

“I won’t.”

“Promise me.” He gripped me tighter, and I knew what a promise meant to Gpa.

“I promise.”

“You are your word, Teddy.” (Page 21-22, this and all other quotes come from *The Last True Love Story*.)

This quote is pulled from a conversation between Teddy and Gpa in the beginning of the story. This is a major quote because it pretty much sums up why the rest of the story takes place. Here we get an insight on Alzheimer’s and how nasty the disease can get. Gpa is trying to hold on to what memory he has left of his dead wife, trying to preserve what’s left before it all goes away forever. Here we get a good insight on one of the major themes that surrounds *The Last True Love Story* which is that sense of belonging. Each character is trying to find there Ithaca, a place where they feel free and happy, somewhere to call home. The protagonists deal with issues that cause them to feel trapped in their everyday life. Have it be Teddy needing to consistently babysit his grandpa. Corrina not feeling like she’s supposed to be anywhere because she’s a Hispanic adopted into a white family. Or Grandpa, just trying to get back to where all his happiness is. I feel like this quote does a great job in both introducing the theme and also illustrating the type of character traits Teddy has and the love he has for his grandpa.

Major Quotes

“As she stood there, catching her breath, staring out over the ripple of light in the city below, I couldn’t help but think of Gpa staring out over the Pacific, fearing his disease was wiping him out too, making him and Gma nobodies, but they weren’t, because every nobody is a somebody—a person with a story that proves he is alive.” (Page 64)

Just before this is said Corrina and Teddy are on top of a hill in LA talking about why they feel like they’re nothing in this world. All Teddy really wants throughout the story is the world to remember Gpa Hendrix’s. Everyone has a story and Gpa’s story was slowly deleting itself. Teddy created a little journal called the Hendrix Family Book where he wrote all the stories his grandpa had told him, preserving proof that was alive. The same type of concept is also apparent throughout the story as Teddy trying to piece together the puzzle of what his dead father was like. His mother and Gpa never said much about Teddys father, but Teddy knew that he was more than “Just a deadbeat dad who died too early”. He wanted to learn his dad’s story as he helped save Gpa’s. This is a really big concept Teddy holds on to throughout the whole story. No matter how powerless or small you feel in the world, you’re always going to be something to someone. I think this quote does a great job in getting that across.

Major Quotes

“I think about CC raising Rose on her own and I think about Mom raising me. All those years she could have gone on dates, but instead sat on the couch with me, reading aloud, or later, asking me to read aloud to her—date night with her ten-year-old son standing on the ottoman, shouting lines from an old, worn copy of *The Hobbit*. Mom worked her ass off, and mostly for my sake, and she might have been a pain in the ass back home, but in the real world, out where the armies of moms and dads marched on through the boredom and sadness of discarded dreams, she was one of the heroes. I think: *I came all this way to find him, but maybe I just found her—my mom, Penny Weaver, someone else whose story should be remembered, the mother who’s been struggling to keep it all together and has.*” Page 320

This quote pops up towards the end of this book. We already know that Teddys father had died in a car accident, but by this point we learn that on the night of the accident his father was coming home from visiting a woman he was having an affair with. I feel like this is a pivotal point in the character development of Teddy. Though theres the physical journey from LA to NY theres also mini personal journeys each character deals with internally. Teddy spent this whole time trying to piece together who his dad was. Now realizing that he never thought about what his mom had to deal with. All the emotions and extra workload she had to put on herself in order to keep things running. It took meeting the other woman and hearing her side of the story for him to understand his mothers side. I think this was a very heartwarming, eye opening moment for the main character.

How and Why Would I Teach This?

How:

I would want to put away a chunk of time of class to talk about common themes throughout the story. This book is full of simple and complex themes that both young and older readers can pick apart. I'd assign this story as an outside read while we read *The Catcher in the Rye* as a class. I feel like both stories deal with teenage angst and trying to find yourself. So as a class we can find parallels of themes between both books. This way the students get the wheel turning on how they can connect literature with other literature. As a fun little activity each of the kids can bring pictures of their friends and family and make their own little Family Book.

Why:

This book is a great example of a not-so-typical love story. I think students will get a better understanding of the different types of ways you can write a kind of genre. Even if the readers are younger there's so much more to pull from this than just the love story. *The Last True Love Story* also deals with a handful of problems young adults can relate to such as feeling alone, losing a loved one, being raised by one parent, not fitting in, etc. It's also a super fun read and it's extremely easy so this wouldn't be too much for a student to handle.

Category of book according to Chapter 6 in *Adolescents in the Search for Meaning: Tapping the Powerful Resource of Story* would be Identity, discrimination, and struggles with choices.

Text Complexity

Lexile Score: 900L (approx. 9th grad)

ATOS Book Level: 5.3 (9-12 grade)

Ages: 14-17

Ages 14-17

I completely agree with both scores. The book was a simple fun read that students shouldn't have an issue with. There is some mature content but besides that no crazy language or anything like that. So that's why it would be more suitable for ages 14-17.