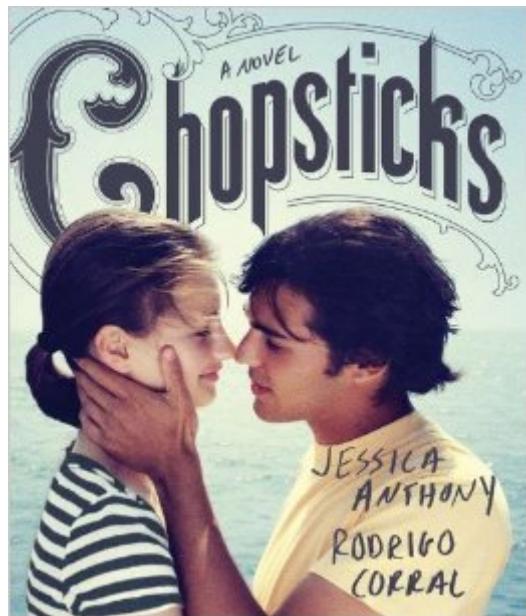


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# Chopsticks



## **Synopsis**

After her mother died, Glory retreated into herself and her music. Her single father raised her as a piano prodigy, with a rigid schedule and the goal of playing sold-out shows across the globe. Now, as a teenager, Glory has disappeared. As we flash back to the events leading up to her disappearance, we see a girl on the precipice of disaster. Brilliant and lonely, Glory is drawn to an artistic new boy, Frank, who moves in next door. The farther she falls, the deeper she spirals into madness. Before long, Glory is unable to play anything but the song "Chopsticks." But nothing is what it seems, and Glory's reality is not reality at all. In this stunningly moving novel told in photographs, pictures, and words, it's up to the reader to decide what is real, what is imagined, and what has been madness all along....

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I've always love mixed media novels like Cathy's Book or Hugo that tell unique captivating stories through pictures and hidden clues. While Chopsticks excelled in the visual department, the story felt lacking. Truth be told though, the more I think about it after reading, the more sense it makes. The main problem I think Chopsticks suffers from is that it takes for granted what can be inferred visually. This is a case where "a picture is worth a 1000 words" doesn't hold true. And that's pretty much evident from all the conflicting interpretations found on GoodReads. I kinda feel like the authors used the intro statement of "We must decide what is real, what is imagined, and what has been madness all along" as a copout to mask that they have constructed a completely incoherent

story. Books are a medium where inference is hard and sometimes fewer words are not better. Now normally I don't try to divulge too much of the books I read but in this case I feel like I need to explain my interpretation of this story.[spoiler alert: For the first 9 chapters you think Gloria is an overworked child prodigy being pushed to insanity by a controlling, over-bearing father. Then you begin to realize she has an 8 year history of mental instability, having spent much time in a "rest home" with the same logo as the school Francisco supposedly attended. A school that in fact shares the same name as the administer of Gloria's "home". This is one of the first indications that Gloria was making things up. Then you see a scene where she is sewing the boxing robe that was supposedly Frank's years before. It wasn't until the Police investigation of Glory's room where my suspicion was confirmed. Every art piece formally signed by Frank actually has her signature. These and many other clues lead to the conclusion that the whole relationship was figment of her imagination and inspired by her mother's wine collection. But then things get really confusing in the the last few pages where a "happily ever after" is painted with Glory and Frank in Argentina. So what's the truth? Well Lucy Clevenger points out in her review that the last letter from Francisco is really in Glory's handwriting. This is the last clue that he wasn't real and didn't invite her to Argentina. But here is where my opinion differs from most people. Many think she ran away to Argentina anyways to be with the guy she imagined. But I can't agree. Glory is only 17. So as far as I am concerned no one is going to allow her to travel out of country without a parent's connect, even a cruise line like "Entertaining Seas." So I actually think this book pulls a "Virgin Suicides" twist and the end is just a metaphor for her mental peace in death. Earlier in the book Glory is reading Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar which chronicles a woman's decent into mental illness and whose writer committed suicide a month after publication. And for me the ticket stub to Ushuaia, Argentina is the last clue in the puzzle. Ushuaia is known as "The End of the World" since it is the southernmost city in the world. What is a more poetic way of saying someone has killed themselves than saying they have gone to the end of the world?] Even after all that, this book left me very dissatisfied :-/ I feel like it could have done so much more in clearly telling it's story. Maybe the app or movie will be better. I do not know. But for me the only "haunting" it will be doing is in how incomplete it felt. Fortunately it's only an hour read if you want to give it a try. But if you want a true haunting story with amazing writing, read Meg Rosoff's How I Live Now.

Glory and Frank are now neighbors. Glory is a piano prodigy with a dead mother and a demanding father. Frank is a Mexican immigrant doing poorly in school. They fit together though and everything is okay. Until Chopsticks. They both become obsessed with the song and Glory accidentally plays it

when she's not supposed to. Over and over again. They need to find their sanity. They need to find their place in the world. All they need is to be together. It's a little tricky reviewing a book with hardly any words in it, but I can say that this was breathtaking. Much like a book written in verse, so few words hold volumes. The pictures and illustrations were well done and told a story of struggle and love. They seem like such a sweet couple. The only problem with this storytelling, is you feel very outside the loop. It's almost like finding someone's journal and looking through it. You are completely engrossed and don't want to stop until the end, but you know that it's not your life, and that it has all already happened. The story has already been played out. I did love it though. I took my time, but read it all in one sitting. This is definitely a book you'll want to purchase, that way you can look through it again and again. I would love to see more books like this, their better than graphic novels because they are so much more intimate. It just feels like you're seeing someone else's private moments. Pick this book up, you have no excuse, it's such a quick read.

Chopsticks is a novel where the written story is very much secondary to the format. I read this story via its iPhone app, which is such a unique way to experience a book! The story is told with pictures, notes, letters, music, instant messaging conversations, and YouTube videos laid out scrapbook style. The book app is interactive, but you can simply flip through the pages in order or randomly if you'd like. Or, you can do what I did, and slowly explore each page (in order) - tapping the page to move things to discover what's underneath, listening to the music, and watching the videos. Chopsticks is both a love story and a mystery. I think readers could look through it a second time and experience it differently; and it would have a different ending. Glory is a teenage piano prodigy who falls in love with Francisco, the boy who moves in next door. Her father is both her piano teacher and manager, and forces her to go on a European tour - partly for her career, but mostly to separate her and Frank. While on tour Glory begins to mentally spiral and starts only being able to play chopsticks at all her performances. Frank is the only one who can calm her, but the more intense their relationship becomes, the worse Glory gets... and the lines between real and imagined become blurred. Chopsticks is one of the most interesting books I've read in a while. I've already gone back through it again, trying to gleam more from all the material. The only reason I didn't rate this book higher is because though I loved the scrapbook style of the novel, I didn't feel as emotionally tied to the characters as I usually do with books you read. I could sense Glory's ups and downs, happiness and sadness, but I didn't feel connected to her. Instead I felt like a detective, trying to solve her mystery - which was great in its own way. I really enjoyed exploring this book, and highly recommend both the paperback and iPad/iPhone app editions, for the experience and the

story! 3.5 stars. Review originally posted on A Book and a Latte - bookandlatte (dot) com

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