



Happy Accidents

By Tiffany Murray
ISBN: 9780007183678

Our Recommendation:

Set in Wales, *Happy Accidents* is an hilarious debut novel of family, secrets and dead ancestors in the attic, steeped in the songs, films, TV and food of eighties rural life. Kate Happy is growing up with her grandparents in Wales: her parents are both absent - her mother hasn't been seen since she ran over of her father and her father's ashes may be housed in an empty jar of Hellman's mayonnaise in the attic. Gran dreams of past happiness in Coney Island while busily hating her husband while Granpa wanders around the house shouting sea-faring commands. Into this mix add a couple of quirky friends, a heap of animals and a whole lot of secrets and you'll see why *Happy Accidents* has proved so popular with critics and general readers alike.

What they said:

'Witty, romantic and irreverent ... Inventive, funny and affecting, this is a story that is powerful without being mawkish.' Daily Mail

'She's written a winner - it won't be long before reviewers start turning to Tiffany Murray's books when they're in search of a yardstick' Guardian

'Along with her whip-cracking dialogue, it is quirky images that are Murray's forte - throwing the freewheeling antics of the Happys into hilarious relief.' The Observer

'Woody Allen visits Cold Comfort Farm.' Independent

Starting points:

Kate's favourite books were *Salem's Lot* and *Wuthering Heights*. Can you detect echoes of these throughout *Happy Accidents*? Do you think the books you read as a child have affected you as an adult? How?

The Happy family seem haunted - both literally and metaphorically - by Happys who have passed away. To what extent is this true in every family? How much power do the dead really have in this novel?

If you like *Happy Accidents* you might also like:

Cold Comfort Farm

Stella Gibbons

Lighthousekeeping

Jeanette Winterson

The Stone Diaries

Carol Shields

About the author:

A graduate of UEA's M.A fiction program, Tiffany Murray has had short fiction appear in *Pretext* and *Mslexia*, as well as a series of first-person articles published in *The Independent* on Sunday. She has lived in New York, where she taught Caribbean literature at NYU; she was an actress for a second; and she is now completing her PhD. at UEA, where she teaches Creative Writing with Paul Magrs, Michele Roberts and Patricia Duncker. Tiffany is co-editing *Pretext 8* with Helon Habila.