



The Key to the Golden Firebird

By Maureen Johnson

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The funny thing about stop signs is that they're also start signs.

Mayzie is the brainy middle sister, Brooks is the beautiful but conflicted oldest, and Palmer's the quirky baby of the family. In spite of their differences, the Gold sisters have always been close.

When their father dies, everything begins to fall apart. Level-headed May is left to fend for herself (and somehow learn to drive), while her two sisters struggle with their own demons. But the girls learn that while there are a lot of rules for the road, there are no rules when it comes to the heart. Together, they discover the key to moving on – and it's the key to their father's Pontiac Firebird.

This critically acclaimed, totally compelling book is perfect for readers looking for both a fun ride and a life-changing journey from one of today's best new YA writers. And it fits perfectly in the glove compartment.

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The Key to the Golden Firebird By Maureen Johnson Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1954221 in Books
- Brand: Harper Teen
- Published on: 2005-07-26
- Released on: 2005-07-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .68" w x 5.31" l, .50 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

When Mike Gold has a heart attack and dies in his 1967 Firebird, the car sits in the family garage untouched for a year. May, Brooks, and Palmer Gold--all teenage girls in what May calls the "Tall, Blond, and Wonderful Family"--suffer from neglect as well when their mother goes to work overtime at the hospital to pay the bills. The three girls deal with their father's death in different ways: Brooks quits softball and starts drinking, Palmer ferociously focuses on pitching and TV, hiding her panic attacks from everyone, and May tries to keep the family together. As the family unravels, the Firebird endures. Palmer uses the back seat as a place to escape, Brooks takes it out for a spin when she's drunk (and gets arrested), and for the grand finale, the three girls take the battleship-sized car to Camden Yards to throw their father's ashes on the pitcher's mound. Fortunately, this is the act that allows the girls to start anew, like the phoenix rising.

Readers will appreciate the character of the only really steady force in this novel--the frizzy-haired, wonderfully goofy Pete Camp, May's one-time nemesis who ends up helping out the family and ultimately winning her heart. As engaging, wryly funny, and issue-rich as Ann Brashares's *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, Maureen Johnson's *The Key to the Golden Firebird* will no doubt appeal to a similar audience of teens dealing with their budding sexuality, peer pressure, and much, much more. (Ages 12 and older) --Karin Snelson

From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up--Poignant and laced with wry humor, this novel follows the Gold sisters as they cope with their father's sudden death from a heart attack. While their mother works overtime to keep them afloat financially, the three teens cope in their own way--often with disastrous results. The focus is on May, the studious, steady middle sister, who tries to hold the family together even as she is going to pieces on the inside. She is falling for Pete, a neighbor she has grown up with, but is afraid to admit it even to herself, so she watches in agony as he dates her coworker at a coffee shop. Palmer, the youngest, begins to have panic attacks. Brooks, the oldest, quits the softball team, gets drunk on a regular basis, and makes plans to have sex with her not-quite-boyfriend. Set in a suburb of Philadelphia, the novel revolves around baseball and the father's Pontiac Firebird, which serves as a haven for one of the girls, a means to rebel for another, and an important part of the healing process for all three. This is a wonderfully moving and entertaining novel full of authentic characters and emotions.--Miranda Doyle, *San Francisco Public Library*

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Gr. 7-10. May is the middle sister, intelligent and responsible, surrounded by her two beautiful, athletic sisters, Brooks and Palmer. All three girls were named after baseball players by their larger-than-life father. Then their father suddenly dies, and the girls' lives are forever changed. Brooks quits baseball and begins to hang out with Dave, who introduces her to alcohol and sex. Palmer becomes sullen and more baseball driven. And May tries to hold herself and her siblings together as their grieving mother supports the family. Told alternately by all three girls, with May as the primary narrator, Johnson's novel will pull readers in with its quietly complex story. May, Palmer, and Brooks each respond in separate but absolutely authentic ways, and Johnson takes readers beyond the predictable coping story by beautifully articulating each daughter's pain, gradual healing, and acceptance. The romantic subplots are deftly handled as well. One sister is disillusioned by her foolishness at "giving it all up for a man," while another slowly realizes that her antagonistic friendship with a boy has the potential to be so much more. A very special, unexpected coming-of-age novel. *Frances Bradburn*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sam Grimes:

This The Key to the Golden Firebird book is not really ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you receive by reading this book is definitely information inside this e-book incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. This The Key to the Golden Firebird without we realize teach the one who looking at it become critical in pondering and analyzing. Don't end up being worry The Key to the Golden Firebird can bring if you are and not make your carrier space or bookshelves' become full because you can have it in the lovely laptop even phone. This The Key to the Golden Firebird having good arrangement in word as well as layout, so you will not truly feel uninterested in reading.

Paul Erdmann:

Often the book The Key to the Golden Firebird has a lot info on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of profit. The book was authored by the very famous author. Mcdougal makes some research prior to write this book. This kind of book very easy to read you will get the point easily after perusing this book.

Dominick Tran:

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Billy Smith:

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