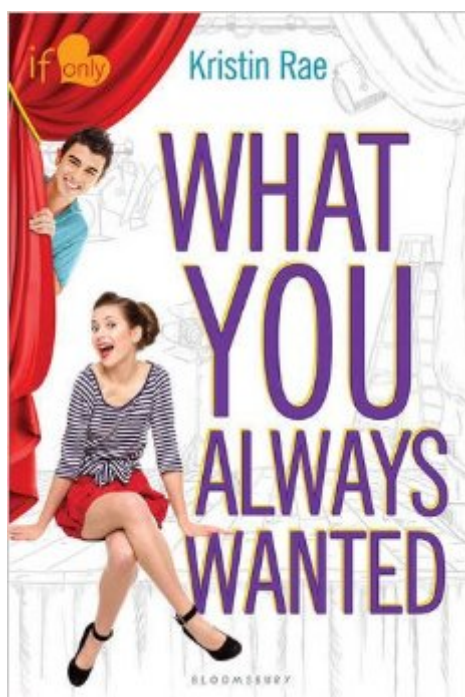


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# What You Always Wanted: An If Only Novel



## Synopsis

Enjoy *What You Always Wanted* and the other standalone titles in Bloomsbury's contemporary If Only romance line centered around an impossible problem: you always want what you can't have! Maddie Brooks has always had high standards for guys. But she has yet to find one who can live up to the romantic, classic Hollywood heartthrobs, especially the dreamy song-and-dance man Gene Kelly. When Maddie begins to carpool with Jesse Morales, her new neighbor and star pitcher of the high school baseball team, she's immediately struck by his wit, good looks, and love for his family--but a guy so into sports is definitely not her style. Then Maddie discovers that Jesse was raised a dancer and still practices in the community theater dance studio to keep in shape. Perhaps her perfect dream guy exists after all. But when it becomes clear that baseball--not dance--is Jesse's passion, can Maddie find a way to let her dream guy go and appreciate the charms of the amazing guy in front of her?

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (14 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

My knowledge of Gene Kelly is mostly limited to his appearance alongside Olivia Newton-John in *Xanadu*. But the main character in *What You Always Wanted* knows all of his movies by heart. In her world, no guy can live up to her perception of Gene Kelly. Then she meets Jesse, a hunky baseball player who has hidden talents. Kristin nails the sexual tension between Maddie and Jesse and creates two characters you can't help but fall in love with.

Grade: A-An e-galley was provided by the publisher in exchange for review consideration. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Gah, I just love cute, swoonworthy contemporary YA. I love characters with substance and friendships and genuinely nice love interests. And let me tell you - Kristin Rae writes great love interests. Darren from *Wish You Were Italian* is so adorable, and I loved that Jesse was just as fleshed-out as Maddie. I also enjoyed that Maddie wasn't as snobby as I expected - Angela and Tiffany, her first two friends, aren't drama geeks; in addition, they don't end up being her only two friends. Maddie befriends one of the nice girls in the drama program, Sarah. I appreciated that Ms. Rae didn't only give Maddie two friends AND that it wasn't like Maddie, as the new girl, joined the friend group. Instead, she made her own. Still on the subject of Maddie, one of the things that kept me from completely loving *What You Always Wanted* and giving it 5 stars was that I wanted to see a little more character growth for her. She's a bit opinionated and she was rude to her parents and I wanted to see her grow and become more mature. However, she acted like a teenager in a lot of ways, which I did appreciate since so many YA protagonists seem way older than they actually are. I liked how not everything went the way Maddie wanted it to, and she had to work for things. I would've liked to see the build-up to and her audition for the musical, though. As for the romance, I appreciated that the problems weren't based on communication issues, as so many YA romances are. It was such a relief that there was no love triangle. And Jesse was definitely swoonworthy, y'all. He's an athlete and he dances and he's interested in Maddie. He makes an effort with her and even though he doesn't like old movies, he likes that she does and she's so passionate about her interests. Language was mild - if there was any because I don't remember much. Kissing and making out were as far as it went. The Verdict: So, so, so cute and sweet. If contemporary romance is your thing, then I'd be surprised if you didn't like *What You Always Wanted*.

I saw this one popping up along the blogosphere and at the time I needed a light, fluffy romance so I grabbed it up as soon as I could. And this book gave me exactly what I was looking for. There's flirting, romance, drama, and laughing. All that you need in great chick-lit. Maddie has just moved to Texas and she is NOT excited about it. She has no friends and she's sure the house they've moved into is about to fall in. But things get more interesting as she meets her neighbors from across the street. Then she meets Jesse who is super cute and awesome, but not exactly what she was looking for. But what happens when they both think outside the [theater] box? I loved the theater aspect. I'm a huge theater geek and even appeared in some plays in college. But my love for them was nothing like Maddie's. To be honest, she seemed a bit much at times. More like annoying

really. She wanted everyone to conform to her standards, but she didn't think to maybe compromise and mold to theirs. It just seemed that she was trying to change the entire world to do what she wanted and that never works. Coming from someone who's tried, all it does is get annoying. As for Maddie, I found her to be annoying and selfish. She was always crying when things didn't go her way and sometimes I just wanted her to say "Ok Maddie, time for you to stop crying." She was like a kid throwing a tantrum when she didn't get her way. Then there's Jesse. I was so happy when he said those things to her. I know how hard it is to make someone think the way you want them to. It doesn't work and she needed to understand that. But the romance was really cute. I liked the accidents that happened between them along the way. The meet cute and the dates with other people made this a contemporary romance more of a rom com and I couldn't have liked that more. There was so much to swoon about and then right after there was so much to laugh about. Rae did a really good job on the balance. I really enjoyed the light, fluffy, atmosphere of this book. It was just what I needed at the time. "If Only" this could happen every time I read! Real rating was 3.5 but I rounded up!

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