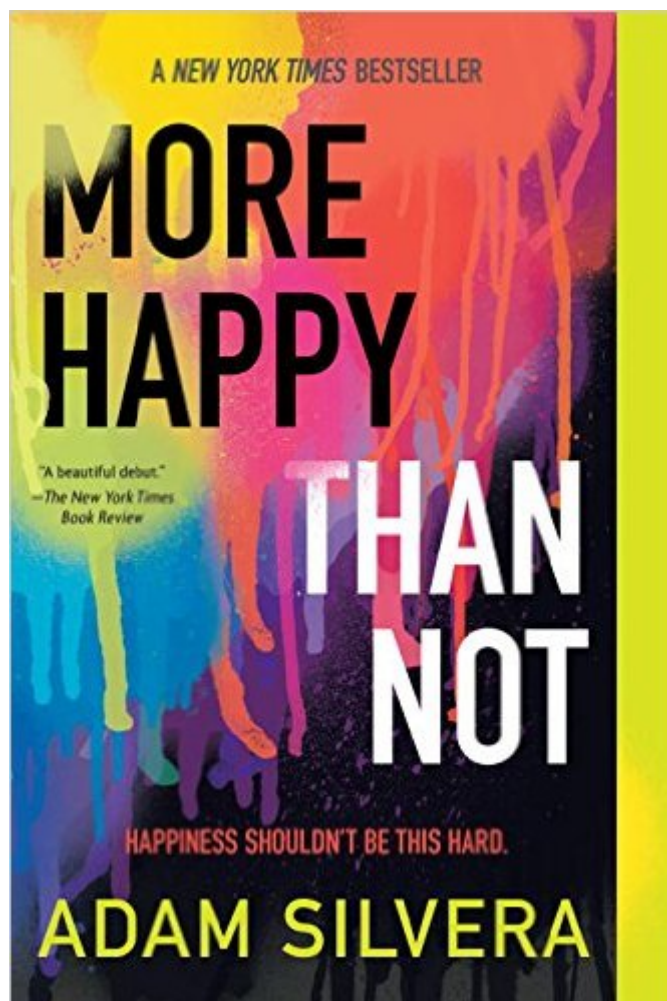


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# More Happy Than Not



## Synopsis

In his twisty, gritty, profoundly moving New York Times bestselling-debut *Adam Silvera*—also called “mandatory reading” and selected as an Editors’ Choice by the New York Times—Adam Silvera brings to life a charged, dangerous near-future summer in the Bronx. In the months after his father’s suicide, it’s been tough for sixteen-year-old Aaron Soto to find happiness again—but he’s still gunning for it. With the support of his girlfriend Genevieve and his overworked mom, he’s slowly remembering what that might feel like. But grief and the smile-shaped scar on his wrist prevent him from forgetting completely. When Genevieve leaves for a couple of weeks, Aaron spends all his time hanging out with this new guy, Thomas. Aaron’s crew notices, and they’re not exactly thrilled. But Aaron can’t deny the happiness Thomas brings or how Thomas makes him feel safe from himself, despite the tensions their friendship is stirring with his girlfriend and friends. Since Aaron can’t stay away from Thomas or turn off his newfound feelings for him, he considers turning to the Leteo Institute’s revolutionary memory-alteration procedure to straighten himself out, even if it means forgetting who he truly is. Why does happiness have to be so hard? “Silvera managed to leave me smiling after totally breaking my heart. Unforgettable.” —Becky Albertalli, author of *Simon vs. The Homo Sapiens Agenda* “Adam Silvera explores the inner workings of a painful world and he delivers this with heartfelt honesty and a courageous, confident hand . . . A mesmerizing, unforgettable tour de force.” —John Corey Whaley, National Book Award finalist and author of *Where Things Come Back* and *Noggin*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up • Debut author Silvera pulls readers into the gritty, (near-future) Bronx world of 16-year-old Puerto Rican, Aaron Soto, with a milieu of tight-knit, sometimes dysfunctional relationships. Aaron struggles to find happiness despite the presence of his mother, older brother, and girlfriend, as well as a set of childhood buddies and a new, intriguing friend, Thomas. He is haunted by painful physical and emotional scars: the memory of his father's suicide in their home, his own similar failed attempt with its resulting smiley face scar, not to mention his family's poverty and his personal angst at an increasingly strong attraction for Thomas. This first-person narrative raises ethical, societal, and personal questions about happiness, the ability to choose to eradicate difficult memories (through a scientific procedure), and gender identity. The protagonist is as honest with readers as he is able to be, and it is only after Aaron is brutally beaten by friends attempting to set him "straight," that he remembers the entirety of his life story through shocking, snapshotlike revelations. More surprising is the knowledge that his family and girlfriend have known his backstory all along. VERDICT A gripping read-Silvera skillfully weaves together many divergent young adult themes within an engrossing, intense narrative. • Ruth Quiroa, National Louis University, IL --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Praise for *More Happy Than Not*  
A New York Times Bestseller  
A New York Times Editors' Choice  
A Paste Magazine Best Young Adult Novel of All Time  
A Booklist Best First Novel of 2015 and a Booklist Editors' Choice of 2015  
A Kirkus Best Teen Book of 2015  
An ABA Indie Next Selection  
A Best Young Adult of 2015  
A Refinery29 Best Diverse Young Adult Book  
A Popsugar.com Best of 2015  
A Bustle.com Best Young Adult Book of 2015  
A New York Public Library Top 10 Young Adult Novels of 2015  
A Los Angeles Public Library Best Teen Books of 2015  
The Latinidad List Best Young Adult Novel of the Year  
A Magill's Literary Annual 2016 Selection  
"A beautiful debut novel [that] manages a delicate knitting of class politics through an ambitious narrative about sexual identity and connection that considers the heavy weight and constructive value of traumatic memory . . . Aaron's Bronx universe [is captured] with a precision that feels at once dreamy and casually reportorial . . . Mandatory reading."  
• The New York Times Book Review  
"[Silvera] throws in a hugely rewarding, whiplash-worthy twist in the last third of the novel. A bold, inventive, raw look at male sexuality in an irresistible sci-fi package."  
• The Globe and Mail  
"[An] important addition to speculative fiction for young adults . . . Silvera's tale combines the best features of science fiction with social justice in this engaging read, as Aaron finds a place where he belongs."  
• Los Angeles Times  
"Heartfelt . . .

The futuristic twist, with its poignant repercussions, drives home a memorable, thoroughly contemporary theme: who you are inside is not something that can or should be erased . . . Lose your memories, lose your pain, lose yourself." [Chicago Tribune](#) "A gut-wrenching story telling of race and sexuality." [The Guardian](#) "This is definitely at the top of my YA list. There's a realness to its main character, Aaron Soto, and his struggle to be who he really is. It confronts race and sexuality in a way I haven't seen in the genre before." [Latina Magazine](#) "Smart . . . Sensitively told." [Good Housekeeping](#) "Poignant . . . So engrossing that once you start it, you won't be able to put it down. Don't say we didn't warn you." [TeenVogue.com](#) "This is a cry-on-the-subway book, so watch out." [MTV.com](#) "This is a beautifully written book that seems to get sadder with every page, but never feels hopeless." [Refinery29.com](#) "Silvera's debut is equal parts gut-punch and warm hug, not to mention sweet, funny, creative, and a really welcome entry to YA with regard to having characters coming from a lower socioeconomic background." [BN.com](#) "Silvera, like [Benjamin Alire Sáenz], is a beautiful writer. Aaron's story is heart-wrenching, funny, inspirational, and eye-opening. This is a really special novel from an extremely gifted new writer." [Bustle](#) "A compassionate read that you'll want to pass on to everyone you know." [Metro US](#) "One of the most heartrending YA reads you'll ever pick up. And despite the slight sci-fi twist, everything in the novel feels so very real. More Happy Than Not will leave you shaken for days, if not weeks." [Paste Magazine](#) "What to expect if you read this unique story: complete and absolute heartbreak, probably tears (unless you're heartless, that is), and moments that will make you smile ear to ear." [PopCrush.com](#) "[Silvera] explores the possibilities of a world where death, and life, can be forgotten, roles rewritten and broken hearts mended. This is a story not just of a young man coming out, but a dramatic and heart-wrenching story of first loves, first heartbreaks, grief and the quest for happiness." [Shelf Awareness, Starred Review](#) "For its explorations of sexuality, poverty, and race in the Bronx along with its subversion of the traditional hero's journey, More Happy Than Not is one of this summer's most anticipated YA debuts. And if you're hesitant about its 'YA' distinction, the novel is also an absorbing, thought-provoking, and timely read for people of all ages" [perfect for a day on the beach.](#) [NEXT Magazine](#) "[A story] of love and expectation and self-discovery, and of declaring yourself to a world that will never give you a soft landing." [B&N Teen Blog](#) "A dark and deeply affecting book, More Happy than Not asks young readers to reflect courageously on the value of memory and self." [The Monitor](#) "Throughout the story, the reader will find herself wanting to hug Aaron,

shake him, and ultimately her heart will break for him. This reporter finished the book as though Aaron's life depended on it." Planet Jackson Hole "No matter who you are, More Happy Than Not is almost impossible not to enjoy." Bucks County Courier Times "A mind-blowing story . . . A story about love, and acceptance that will absolutely break your heart." PopCrush.com "This is not like any story you've ever read about self-discovery and acceptance. This is the story about self-discovery and acceptance." YA Books Central "Revolutionary . . . strikingly poignant . . . It is a stunning examination of why we make the choices we make." BookBrowse.com "On top of the fact that More Happy Than Not is a great young adult novel and a great debut novel, this is just a good book. It's heartbreaking, funny and hopeful, and I don't think I'll be able to forget it." The Spencer Daily Reporter "Many readers will identify with Aaron, whether or not they are dealing with issues of orientation . . . Silvera draws wonderfully complex characters and deftly portrays the relationships among them. The true beauty of this book is the way Silvera subtly reveals the plot . . . readers find Aaron coming out to them in a gradual way." VOYA "Vividly written and intricately plotted: a well-executed twist will cause readers to reassess what they thought knew about Aaron's life . . . Beyond gritty . . . Silvera pulls no punches." Publishers Weekly, Starred Review "A fresh spin on what begins as a fairly standard, if well executed, story of a teen experiencing firsts . . . first love, first sex, first loss . . . and struggling with his identity and sexuality . . . Prejudice is illustrated with gut-wrenching brutality and its effects are scarring, but Silvera tempers it with the genuine love and acceptance Aaron receives from a few important friends and family members . . . Ingenious." Booklist, Starred Review "Places a straightforward concept . . . what if you could erase unwanted memories? . . . squarely within an honest depiction of the pains of navigating the teen years and upends all expectations for a plot resolution . . . A multifaceted look at some of the more unsettling aspects of human relationships. A brilliantly conceived page-turner." Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review "A gripping read . . . Silvera skillfully weaves together many divergent young adult themes within an engrossing, intense narrative." School Library Journal, Starred Review "The novel takes an unexpected, complex turn . . . In the end, readers are left with a gripping story about one memorable teen, and it also leaves them pondering how his life might have been different if various elements had been improved, that is likely the exact takeaway intended." The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books "[Silvera is] a phenomenal talent and is destined to be a star." James Dawson, author of This Book Is Gay "Adam Silvera explores the inner workings of a painful world and he delivers this with heartfelt honesty and a courageous, confident

hand. Combine these with a one-of-a-kind voice and a genius idea, and what you have is a mesmerizing, unforgettable tour de force." — John Corey Whaley, National Book Award finalist and author of *Where Things Come Back* and *Noggin* "Adam Silvera is a voice missing in YA fiction. The honesty of his words and his ability to tell a story make you realize that we've been waiting for him. I'm blown away." — Holly Goldberg Sloan, author of *Counting by 7s* and *I'll Be There* "An important new voice in YA literature, in *More Happy Than Not* Adam Silvera has created a passionate, searing narrative with characters who feel unique and totally familiar. I found myself rooting for Aaron Soto and his family from page one. *More Happy Than Not* is an unforgettable read." — Alex London, author of *Proxy* and *Guardian* "A debut as deft as it is sharp, as honest as it is assured, and, above all, extremely moving. Silvera pulls his punches with an energy, daring, and intensity that left me spellbound and reminded me why I love to read." — Adele Griffin, author of *The Unfinished Life of Addison Stone* "Inventive and daring, Silvera's gritty debut kept me turning pages until 2 A.M. His writing crackles with challenging questions, searing and timely." — Aaron Hartzler, author of *Rapture Practice* "Aaron is one of the most interesting, authentic teen narrators I've met, and his story is told with incredible courage and unflinching honesty. Silvera managed to leave me smiling after totally breaking my heart. Unforgettable." — Becky Albertalli, National Book Award nominee and author of *Simon vs. The Homo Sapiens Agenda* "Adam Silvera's *More Happy Than Not* is a fantastic magic trick I haven't stopped thinking about since I finished reading and suspect will stay with me for some time to come." — Jasmine Warga, author of *My Heart and Other Black Holes* "Adam Silvera harnesses a certain reckless energy and unleashes it through the voice of Aaron Soto. Aaron Soto is astounding, full of heart, wit, youthful energy, and a deep desire to be honest about who he is in the world. He sinks into your skin so you can't stop thinking about him even when you aren't reading. High on story, character, and some perfectly executed twists, I loved this book." — David Arnold, author of *Mosquitoland*

This book was so good. And I can't stress that enough. Aaron Soto is such a great main character and he made me feel so many things. This book made me laugh, cry, gasp, and even chew my fingernails off from worry. I finished this book on a flight back home and I think the girl next to me thought I was insane because of my reactions to this book. The ending is just so heartbreakingly and emotionally spectacular. Isn't it weird how the more a book breaks our heart the more we tend to love it. Us booknerds, we

masochists. Adam Silvera is an insanely talented writer, and very witty. There are lines in this book that I need printed on a shirt or a tote bag. I can already picture this book being turned into a movie and having a director like Jason Reitman or Josh Boone with just a really talented no-name cast, and that would be absolutely amazing. Early reviews that have been saying this book is a modern YA *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* are correct, it is. But it's also so much more. Not saying *ESotSM* isn't amazing, because it is, but this is just like it enough that we can compare the two, but so different that they are their own story, and I love that. If you couldn't guess I'm giving this book 5 happy stars, and I encourage everyone to pick up a copy on release day and devour this book. I originally wrote this review back in March 2015 on my book blog *Polished Page-Turners*, and I stand by every word of it today. Do yourself a favor and READ THIS BOOK! And then hop on social media to say hi to Adam, because he's just the fricken best.

I LOVED *More Happy Than Not*. I am not typically a fan of contemporary, but the sci-fi twist to this novel really drew me in. *More Happy Than Not* tells the story of Aaron, a New York City teen who is gay, and living in a community where he knows that he will not be accepted the way he is. Enter the Leteo Institute, a company that promises to erase painful memories so people can move forward. Aaron has led a hard life, and survived multiple traumatic experiences, and he therefore decides that if he can just forget that he is gay, life would be so much easier. Let's talk about the plot twist in this book for a moment. HOLY. COW. It was like a plot twist within a plot twist and it totally threw me for a loop. From about the halfway point of the book straight through to the end, I didn't stop crying. I was just a big puddle of tears. AND THEN THE ENDING. What are you trying to do to me, Adam? I thought we were friends? Why'd you have to go breaking my heart like that? The ending was beautifully written, but it tore my heart to pieces and I am still recovering. I think it is going to be a while before I am ready to pick up another cry-worthy book - I'm still too vulnerable right now. What a poignant message this book sends. It takes the notion that being gay is a thing that can be "cured" and throws it right back in our faces in such a beautiful way. It shows us that no matter what you do, you are who you are, and that's ok. This book brings LGBTQ issues to light in particular, but I can see this message affecting people in all different walks of life; those suffering with depression, mental health issues, disabilities of any kind - to a certain degree, everyone has felt at some point that everything would be better if only this was different, or that could be fixed. *More Happy Than Not* shows us that there is always something to smile about and someone who loves us just the way we are.

Review: 4.5 / 5  
“Every mistake I’ve made, every wrong I’ve repeated, every unhealed heartache: I feel it all and more as the weight of my old world crushes me. If you looked inside me, I bet you’d find two different hearts beating for two different people, like the sun and the moon at the same time, a terrible eclipse I’m the only witness to.”  
• Adam Silvera started this book with the expectation that it would be as good as people said it would be. While reading the beginning part of the novel I could not see what the hype was even about. I found the characters unreliable, I felt unattached to the story, and I guess that I can say I just felt like I was reading a book, looking from the outside in. Then... part two happened, then part zero happened (yes, part zero, and no, no spoilers). I was finding myself flying through the novel and getting absorbed by the story, characters, and just everything. I saw why people praised this novel. The LGBT section of YA literature is growing, possibly even growing enough to form its own section of the bookstore, or at least a nicely set display. This stands out from the rest of the books in that section because believe it or not, this has shades of science fiction. (I know that you are thinking: YA LGBT contemporary + science fiction = a book????) I can attest and say that it totally works. Adam Silvera amazingly pulls off a genre bending romance that I didn’t instantly fall in love with, but slowly fell for as the story played out.  
“No, I wasn’t happy. I mean, sure, I thought I was, but I found happiness in the wrong person and that doesn’t count.”  
• Adam Silvera  
The characters were insanely realistic and I really wasn’t expecting what really happened as the story played out with them. I really don’t want to go into much more for fear of spoilers, a reader does not want to go into this with more than is written on the back cover. I don’t want to be responsible for ruining a beautiful novel for someone, so let’s talk about the plot in broad terms: this isn’t your average YA romance. The idea I had going into this was that it was going to be sad, because that was what people said, but what they didn’t really say was all the other emotions that come out of that sadness. The book is practically built on emotion, from the title, to the words formed inside the pages, feeling just seeps through this book. It is bold, beautiful, and something totally unexpectedly different. Adam Silvera is an author on the rise. I know that other bloggers were obsessed and became good friends with the author, now I feel like I can be a part of the hype because he is going to be a powerhouse.  
“The boy with no direction taught me something unforgettable: happiness comes back again if you let it.”  
• Adam Silvera-----SPOILER ALERT PLEASE DO NOT READ ANY FURTHER. I think that having Aaron becoming an unreliable narrator was the best trick



that the book pulled because it was so unexpected in the genre. I was definitely not expecting all that to happen. I want to go back and comment on the Collin relationship before Aaron unwound. That was just the most brilliant gloss over that I have ever seen (the scene in the comic store). I have read many YA contemporaries and it seemed so normal to just pass over this character in passing, but then never really give any information about them. I can't really explain this well if you have not read that many contemporaries, but what the authors like to do in the genre is have the main character just mention someone (either someone they went to school with or are no longer friends with, or just someone that doesn't really offer anything to change the arc of the story) and then that is it, that is the only scene they are in. What makes Silvera's writing different from most of the authors I have seen is that he is able to craft a story so well that when the reader is done with the narrative, the reader feels like they know the characters inside and out, but when the reader first starts the book it feels like they have just been dropped into the story during the middle of a party where they know no one. At least that is how I see the book. Brilliantly crafted and so thoughtful that I think anyone could relate to.

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