

Book Review: Great Big Beautiful Life
By Emily Henry

Emily Henry is often referred to as a “best-selling American author of romance novels.” That’s primarily why I’ve never previously read any of her books. It’s not that I’m a cold-hearted person who’s anti-romance. But I’d rather read a book where romance may occur, but it’s not the thrown-in-your-face focal point of the story.

Nevertheless, the premise for “Great Big Beautiful Life” where two writers compete for the privilege (and subsequent payday) of writing a famous media heiress’s memoir, intrigued me. So, I bit.

Unfortunately, not my taste.

Margaret Ives, the 80-something heiress, comes across more annoying than mysterious, despite having been a recluse for the past few decades. She asks two writers to devote a month to meet with her and prepare drafts (during which time she agrees to pay them), and at the end of the 30-day period she’ll decide who she wants to work with.

Really? C’mon lady, stop being so pompous. Meet with a few writers, then pick someone. It’s not rocket science, but I guess being a multi-millionairess has its privileges.

The two writers, Alice Scott and Hayden Anderson, are completely unremarkable. Scott is way too perky and upbeat, often coming across like an annoying little sister, with little understanding of why her personality is such.

Anderson is this brooding, frowning, self-absorbed journalist who feels the competition is way beneath him – though he goes along with it anyway.

Somehow, these two polar opposites are attracted to each other – and I could live with that. But it happens *way* too early in the story, with little rationale presented for why the passion suddenly came out of nowhere.

And in my opinion, the story goes downhill from there. Nothing that made me eager to learn more about Margaret's family history. Nothing to anticipate in the relationship between Scott and Anderson.

So, now I know why I've never read any of Emily Henry's prior novels. I must have known this would be my reaction.

But, at least I tried.

Two stars (I'm being generous here) for "Great Big Beautiful Life." Unless you are some crazy romantic, I'd steer clear.