

Anything But Mint (Wszystko, tylko nie mięta)

by Ewa Nowak

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This is a fictional book for young people aged between 12 and 20. It is humorously written, and thereby discreetly promotes such values as loyalty, love, imagination, sense of humour and self-awareness. The main characters of the novel are the *Gwidosz* family, who live in a small, two-bedroomed apartment in the district of *Bródno*, Warsaw. There are three children in the family, of whom the two elder ones are teenagers.

The oldest is the only son, *Kuba Gwidosz*, a charming and attractive flirt, spoiled by his girl-friends. One day, during the evacuation of his school caused by a false bomb alert, he meets *Magda*, a handicapped girl. She is intelligent, well-read, obviously aware of her handicap but far from self-pitying about it. The story of their developing love makes up one of the two main plots of the novel.

Kuba's younger sister, *Malwina Gwidosz*, is the second teenager and she is facing the typical problems of her age, a moodiness and disillusionment with the world of adults. She is on the verge of anorexia, when she becomes infatuated with an artist, to whose concert she goes by chance. We are witness the beginning of her first romantic feelings.

The youngest child in the family is the cute five-year-old *Marysia*. Since she inherited her father's intelligence and commonsense, she often turns out to be the most reasonable person in this family and is the cause of many a humorous event.

Ups and downs of the *Gwidosz* family are entirely representative of modern life and therefore engross the readers: Ewa Nowak returns to these characters in her other books.