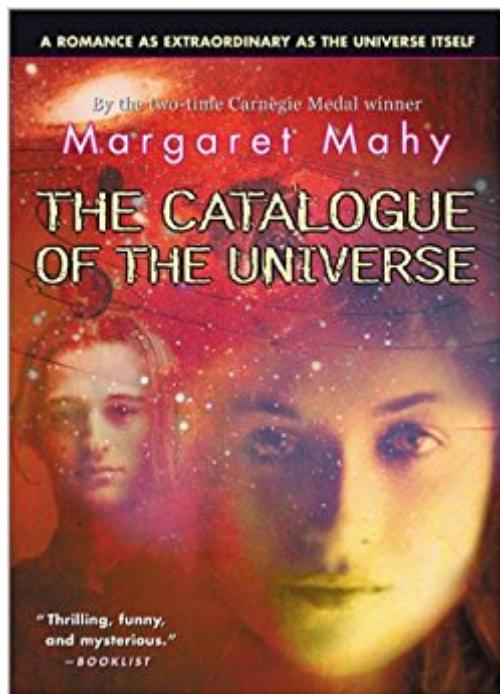


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# Catalogue Of The Universe



## **Synopsis**

Opposites attract...? Angela May and Tycho Potter couldn't be more different: she is tall and beautiful, confident and carefree; he is short and serious, plain and self-conscious. Angela is popular and sexy, with many boyfriends; Tyke prefers the company of his books and watching the skies through his telescope. Tyke has a huge crush on Angela, yet these two 18-year-olds are unlikely best friends. He loves and is mentally tortured by her in roughly equal measure. Angela acts out her burning desire to find and confront her father, whom her mother describes as having been the love affair of her life, but the truth is a very different story which shatters all her childhood imaginings. After a dramatic confrontation it is to Tycho she turns for support, and as their very different worlds collide they begin to understand the unpredictability of life as the repercussions touch everyone around them. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In this exuberant, thoughtful story, Angela finds romance in an unexpected place while she searches for her unknown father. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 9 Up Both Angela and Tycho had romantic notions: she about her unknown father, whom her mother had never married, and he for beautiful, sensual Angela. As Angela locates her father and

plots a course to make him discover her, she learns that commonsense is a neat, symmetrical, misleading circle whereas truth is slightly elliptical and wobbly. As short, homely, brilliant Tycho contemplates the stars and planets to understand his family problems and hopeless love, Angela's confrontation with her father precipitates the emotional trauma of rejection. Through this turmoil, she recognizes her romantic feelings for Tycho, and the two have their first sexual encounter. Other stories of daughters searching for fathers deal with inner turmoil and search-for-self as here, but Mahy's is unique due to the distinct, unusual personalities; the New Zealand setting; the teenagers' fascination with the components of the universe and Mahy's use of analogies with fresh descriptions conveying sharp, vivid images. This story is brightly lit with perceptions and the universal inscrutability of finding one's place. The occult shivers in previous Mahy books don't occur here, but the atmosphere is electrically charged with the uncommon tone, eccentric characters and meshing of circumstances with feelings that should both appeal to and challenge YA readers and leave them pondering the center of their universe. Julie Cummins, Monroe County Library System, Rochester, N.Y. Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book was very odd. It's intelligent and well written, which is unusual in itself. It illuminates a love story between a beautiful girl and a "loser" guy. But there's nothing explicit, and it is discreet with pulling the curtain across. The characters are all a little strange, which is always good. Recommended.

My friends, I have been tricked. Throughly fooled. Utterly led astray. In short, Margaret Mahy may well be having a good laugh at my ineptitude. Having known her to be considered perhaps the greatest young adult fantasy writer in the known world, I picked up "The Catalogue of the Universe" with my typical snotty snobby snitty opinions of what the story would entail. Actually, since I like to read books without knowing ANYTHING about the plot ahead of time, my opinions of this book totaled one in number. I was convinced that this was a fantasy book. I mean, the title of the book is "The Catalogue of the Universe" for pete's sake. The cover shows planets and young swimmy faces. And it's written by the woman who wrote the illustrious "The Changeover". So I picked up, read it through, and kept stopping at the end of each and every chapter to wonder where the magic was. Let this be a lesson to all, you foolish reviewers like myself who prefer to infer storylines rather than, oh say, read the summaries on the backs of the books. If you leap to conclusions, you're liable to make a fool of yourself. And I adore telling the world when I've been silly, so it worked out

perfectly for me. In short (har har), "The Catalogue of the Universe" is a romantic, emotional, humorous, philosophical tale of two teens and the different ways in which they try to sort out the mysteries of the cosmos/their lives. Angela is beautiful and she knows it. She's the kind of girl who attracts men with relative ease and lives life exactly as she would like to. Of course she has a crazy single mom and she lives in a house with an honest-to-goodness outhouse, but that's fine with her. It's the fact that she's never met her biological father that stings. All at once charming and impulsive, Angela decides to enmesh her best friend Tycho in her plans to meet her pop for the very first time. Tycho has his own set of problems, however. As a particularly romantic and philosophical young man (in no little part due to his name), Tycho's in love with Angela. They both know this and they both know it's a hopeless situation. Plus he has a crazy family to deal with and some serious self-esteem issues. Still, in a series of wild confrontations, escapes, and rescues the two friends begin to learn a little more about themselves and their relationship with the Catalogue of the Universe. Mahy places herself at a disadvantage right from the start. She's placed her book squarely in the palms of a beautiful female protagonist. Many otherwise well-written books have faltered with this kind of character (most notably the oft banned, "Blood and Chocolate"). When a teen girl is beautiful and knows it, it's incredibly difficult not to make her a conceited little cur. Mahy tries her best to keep Angela under control, but the character is a little too headstrong and wild. She's likable once in a while but thoroughly detestable others. You begin to wonder why it is that fabulous Tycho (who I am personally nominating for the Best Datable Young Adult Novel Character Award of 1985) even hangs around her. Sure she's pretty. But she's also high-strung and insensitive to others. In the hands of a lesser writer this would be a distinct problem. Fortunately, Mahy's clever enough to split Angela's story with Tycho's. You get an even look at the goings on in both their families. It was with great relief that the reader leaves Angela's nutty adventures in the wings while Tycho takes the center stage. It's funny, but I haven't even mentioned the scientific, sociological, anthropological, and philosophical discussions that pepper this book. This is the perfect young adult novel for that kid who thinks about the big questions constantly. The ideal reader of this book is a teen who understands why Tycho sticks sentences he likes over his bed so that he'll see them first thing in the morning. Honestly, sometimes the discussions of the universe between Tycho and Angela went a little over my head. I liked that. It's a rare feeling to pick up a YA novel and feel left behind. It makes you want to read the book over and over again. It makes you want to (gasp, shudder) BUY the book. This is a feeling I rarely have. I have it now. Just in case my mention of philosophy scared you off, I'm going to reel you into the I Love The Catalogue of the Universe Club by mentioning its humor. This book is hee-larious. Witty banter galore. If you're a fan of fast-paced conversations

containing biting wit, this book is also for you. Tycho's discussions with his brother, if read aloud, would probably baffle some. In a conversation with their mother about their older (and over adored) sister Africa, Tycho and his brother Richard discuss their parents' preference: "Of course I'm jealous," Richard said, "and so is Tycho, aren't you, Tyke? You often wondered why he was so short. Well, I'll tell you now: it's jealousy that's stunted him". "I tried to grow," Tycho said, responding immediately. "I did my best, but I was weighted down hour after hour by..." That's a common conversation. Fast dialogue and smart characters. So smart, in fact, that you'll wish you were in the kitchen with them enjoying the full extent of their humor. So the book has it all. Mind-blowing theorems, romance, likable characters (on the whole), and funny passages. In short, it's frighteningly well-written. There aren't enough books in the world to compare to this brilliant little number. If you know of any teen that wants a book that doesn't talk down to them or patronize them in the least, "The Catalogue of the Universe" is ideal. It isn't a fantasy (as I discovered). It's better. It's reality in its finest light.

Ever since he first saw her, in kindergarten, Tycho has been madly in love with Angela. However, he was always small and funny-looking and at first she didn't notice him at all. Later, when she did notice him, she made him into a best friend instead of a boyfriend as he would have liked. She reserved that position for better looking and more confident guys in their class. As her best friend, though, Tycho does hold a special position in Angela's life. He knows things about her she doesn't share with her boyfriends, and he is the one she often turns to when she has a serious problem. Now that she is a senior in high school, treading water until the end of the year, there is something bothering her. Angela has never known her father. Her mother is her best friend and greatest protector and over the years has told her stories about the wonderful man who was her father, but Angela has never met him. Now she has managed to track him down, and she wants to meet him and talk to him, to hear what he has to say about her. She wants a relationship with him, but she suspects her mother won't approve and somehow her boyfriend Robin isn't the right one to help her. So Angela turns to Tycho to be her partner in meeting her father. But when things go all wrong and Angela's world seems to crash around her, will Tycho be strong enough to help her get back on her feet? I loved Tycho's personality and his family's dynamics. I also liked the history between Tycho and Angela, and I liked his big blowup and his confession after she met her father. He was a fantastic character. The book threw me off a bit, though, starting off seeming mysterious but then ending up staying strictly in the real world. Because I liked Tycho so much, I didn't like the way Angela kept stringing him along.

I originally saw this book and though it might be a good one to add to my classroom collection (as a middle school science teacher). So I put it on my wishlist. It was given to me as a gift a few weeks ago and with time on my hands I decided to read it. This book was more of a romance than I expected and less of a science book. While it had some good science material in it about the stars, I do not believe it would be good for kids at age 12. Two teens become friends after viewing a lunar eclipse, though they have known each other since they were 5. He has been in love with her since they met, and she has been in love with romance. It seems a typical one-sided relationship for him until she realizes that romantic ideas have a place, but do not rule all we do. She finally sees him for the wonderful person he has always been and falls in love with him. Though I do not usually read romance-type stories, it is a nice story and I am glad that I read it.

At the age of 20 I sometimes still feel young enough to read this kind of books. I have heard many people praise ms Mahy's talent, but this was my first touch with her - I must say I wasn't disappointed. This book contains some clever dialogue, it has a great attitude and it is well-written too. Of course, the story is quite escapistic, but I don't personally mind reading about beautiful girls falling in love with desperate losers. According to my own experience, such things don't happen very often in the real world, but as light entertainment this book functions very well. And if we keep in mind that it's meant for people aged about 14-16, I think I'll let the author get a bit educational. After all, this is an intelligent book. It speaks of human relationships with good taste and doesn't stay too middle-of-the road. The characters are all a little strange, which makes it all more interesting. I recommend.

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