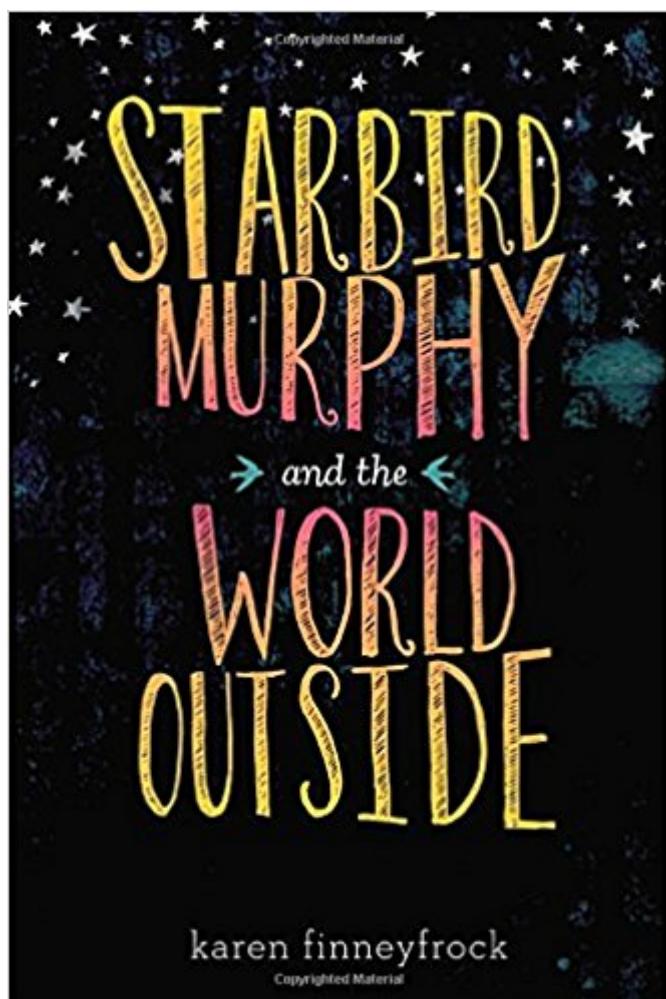


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# Starbird Murphy And The World Outside



## Synopsis

In her sixteen years of life, Starbird has never touched a dollar bill. She's never been in a car. She's never used a cell phone. That's because Starbird has always lived on the Free Family Farm, a commune in the woods of Washington State. But all that is about to change. When Starbird gets her "Calling" to be a waitress at the Free Family's restaurant in Seattle, she decides to leave behind the only home she's ever known. Nothing could have prepared Starbird for the World Outside, or for what it would teach her about the Family—and herself. From the author of *The Sweet Revenge of Celia Door* comes this hilarious and poignant story about finding your true calling in life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 8 UpStarbird grew up within the confines of her Family. To her, normalcy is not knowing who her father is, working for the greater good of those on the Free Family Farm, and waiting for elder and translator EARTH to make his way back from his mission. Starbird is a true believer, not like some of the other members of the Family who have drifted since EARTH's departure. She despairs about her own brother's disappearance, but finds comfort in the rituals of Family life: farming, communal cooking, story night, and her developing feelings for fellow family member Indus Stone. But when Starbird finds herself seemingly scorned by Indus, and she has an opportunity to work Outside in the Free Family Cafe, she leaves the Farm for the first time. After moving into a communal home in Seattle, Starbird registers for public school and begins her job at the cafe. She

quickly realizes that life in the Free Family was not everything she thought it was. Just when Starbird is ready to ask some tough questions, charismatic EARTH comes back into the picture. This well-paced, character-rich story boasts a sense of foreboding that will be palpable even for those readers without much knowledge on American cultism. Finneyfrock deftly uses Starbird's new life in high school to weave in the history of American cults and communal living to place Starbird's story within a larger context. Readers from all walks of life will likely identify with this story's overarching themes of questioning faith and authority and the building of family. •Stacy Dillon, LREI, New York City

PRAISE FOR *STARBIRD MURPHY AND THE WORLD OUTSIDE*: "Readers will feel like they're experiencing every step of Starbird's eye-opening journey firsthand." •Publishers Weekly, A starred review "A unique and fully immersive reading experience." •Booklist, A starred review "Both Starbird and readers will expand their worlds." •Kirkus Reviews "Will prompt lively discussion about independence and belief." •BCCB "In this page-turner, entertainment and discussion potential make it a great acquisition, especially paired with *The Interrogation Of Gabriel James*." •VOYA "This well-paced, character-rich story boasts a sense of foreboding that will be palpable even for those readers without much knowledge on American cultism. Finneyfrock deftly uses Starbird's new life in high school to weave in the history of American cults and communal living to place Starbird's story within a larger context. Readers from all walks of life will likely identify with this story's overarching themes of questioning faith and authority and the building of family." •School Library Journal PRAISE FOR KAREN'S FIRST BOOK, *THE SWEET REVENGE OF CELIA DOOR*: From authors: "Karen Finneyfrock is an amazing poet, so it is no surprise that her first novel is poetic. It is also hilarious, exciting, and as painful as anybody's teenage years. Read it, please." •Sherman Alexie, winner of the National Book Award, Young People's Literature, for *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* "This might be the truest book I've ever read about the casual cruelty of bullying." •Gayle Forman, #1 New York Times best-selling author of *If I Stay* "I LOVED *The Sweet Revenge of Celia Door*! Celia is a quirky and unique character whose journey through friendship and secrets and chocolate will stay with readers long after they close the book." •Ruta Sepetys, A bestselling author of *Between Shades of Gray* "Hats and hoodies off to Karen Finneyfrock for an outstanding first novel that manages to be entertaining and important at the same

time. • James Howe From critics: "Engaging" What debut novelist Finneyfrock captures perfectly is the powerlessness of being a teen. • Kirkus Reviews "In her YA debut, Finneyfrock gives Celia a drily funny voice that keeps the narrative zipping along. • Publishers Weekly "Finneyfrock weaves characters and plotlines into an entertaining and thought-provoking mix. She succeeds in making her debut much more than a problem novel," by creating a memorable outsider who is articulate, funny, and brave. • School Library Journal "Suggest this to fans of David Levithan's and A. S. King's books, as well as all teens who feel outside the frenzy of high-school social life." • Booklist "Author Karen Finneyfrock works magic on the page...both hilarious and poignant." • BookPage "This well-written, engaging, and ultimately hopeful book offers sympathetic characters with depth and interest . . . Many readers will see themselves reflected in these pages." • VOYA And from booksellers: "The Sweet Revenge of Celia Door is more than just a revenge novel; in it Karen Finneyfrock has tackled some of the toughest young adult issues—bullying, coming out, divorce, suicide, runaways—in a novel as creatively penned as one of her heroine's poems." • Jill Hendrix, bookseller, Fiction Addiction "Believable, hilarious, and heartbreakingly real, The Sweet Revenge of Celia Door is a treat for readers!" • Leslie Reiner, bookseller, Inkwood Books, Tampa, FL

First, I love the name Starbird. A few years ago at the Chuckanut Writers Conference, Karen Finneyfrock said she named the character after Starbird Road, which is the 218 freeway exit between Bellingham and Seattle. I drive past this exit all the time, too, and always have loved the sound of it. It makes for a great character name and book title. I enjoyed every page of this book and didn't want to put it down until I found out what happened to Starbird and the Family. I found the resolution completely satisfying. This is a tight young adult novel with universal appeal. Every scene, every character is there for a reason. Starbird is naive, yet smart, and I like the way Finneyfrock explores cult-think from the perspective of the indoctrinated. I also appreciate that the cult is not portrayed as good or evil. At one point, a teacher tells Starbird not to look for absolute rights and wrongs because the world rarely provides them.

This is a nice simple read for kids 12 and up. It gives a discreet look into the world of unique living situations outside the realm of the ordinary. The author could have easily attacked communes or "cults" here, but showed that in a situation that seems so alien to outsiders, there are plenty of good

traits that the collective has to offer--with plenty of kind souls just trying to make it in the world. I like seeing the outside world from the main characters eyes experiences high school for the first time, and the jolt/paranoia she has about "outsiders" in general. By the third act it starts heating up and had me glued to it, until the end of the book. Look forward to more from this author!

Great read!! Not just for young adults . Very compelling exploration of life in a sheltered community which could be compared to many groups with strong beliefs that differ from mainstream society. Also a beautiful study in negotiating difference and growing up. I bought this book for all the women and teens in my family for Christmas and got rave reviews. Ms. Finneyfrock is an author to watch. I hope to hear a lot more from her.

Very disappointing. I really like this sub-genre. And please send me any good recommendations on good hippie stories to read. This fell pretty flat and I just couldn't get into it. Not much happens at all in the first few chapters.

Karen Finneyfrock does it again! I devoured The Sweet Revenge of Celia Door and couldn't wait to read her second novel! Starbird is the kind of heroine I wish I had read about when I was in high school: intelligent, passionate and full of heart. This book is a perfect summer read for yourself or any young woman in your life who needs a bit of inspiration, magic and empowerment!

Blown away by this story - especially the fierce, honest, humble, thoughtful, and brilliant protagonist Starbird Murphy. This is a book for all ages, for all of the ages. An absolute must read.

Starbird Murphy and the World Outside is a funny and moving look at the power of family and the importance of being a strong confident individual. Starbird Murphy is a strange teen. She is totally devoted to her family, her mother and brother, and to The Family, the other people on the commune where she has lived her entire life. Unlike most teens, Starbird never questions the thinking or decisions of the adults in her life, she has no desire to ever leave The Free Family Farm, and she has no interest in finding out how the rest of the world lives. She knows she is completely ignorant of the basics of normal life, but she doesn't care that she has never ridden in a car, used electronics or money, never been to school, a mall or a party. She has never even had a conversation with anyone who was not a member of The Family. When the adults on The Farm tell her that it is her "Calling" to move to Seattle and work in the restaurant The Family owns, she does as they expect

even though she is sure that living in Seattle and working as a waitress is not her Calling. Starbird awkwardly trying to navigate life in the city is hilarious. Her descriptions of her first experience with high school are laugh out loud funny, and her scathing review of the students, teachers, and culture of high school is spot-on. But the most memorable events in the story are the ones that trigger Starbird's slow transformation into her own person as she realizes The Free Family Farm is not perfect, and its leaders are corrupt. Starbird loves The Family so much, that even when she has irrefutable proof of the corruption, she insists that there must be a logical explanation. The ending is disappointing. Evidently members of The Free Family Farm do not believe in holding people accountable for dishonest actions.

Having lived through the original iteration of the hippy commune, I found much of this book a bit of a slog. The people live on the farm without ID or any sort of connection to the outside world. They live in a sort of orbit around the man named Earth. Starbird comes to her last name rather late in the game and finds she was born Starbird Murphy. She has totally drunk the Kool Aid and believes as dogma the rules that edge her life. Work is hard, food is not fancy, and belongings are frowned upon. She can be excused to find her celestial calling to be assigned to the chicken coop..I never thought I would be the tiresome adult to find all this all too twee and heavy slogging. Their just isn't too much that is new here. One wants to slap someone on the average of once a half hour, and that is a bad sign. The characters can have some redeeming wistfulness and the world of the commune does portray one of a kingdom coming to the end of its cohesion in an interesting way. Just really does the main guy have to call himself Earth?

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