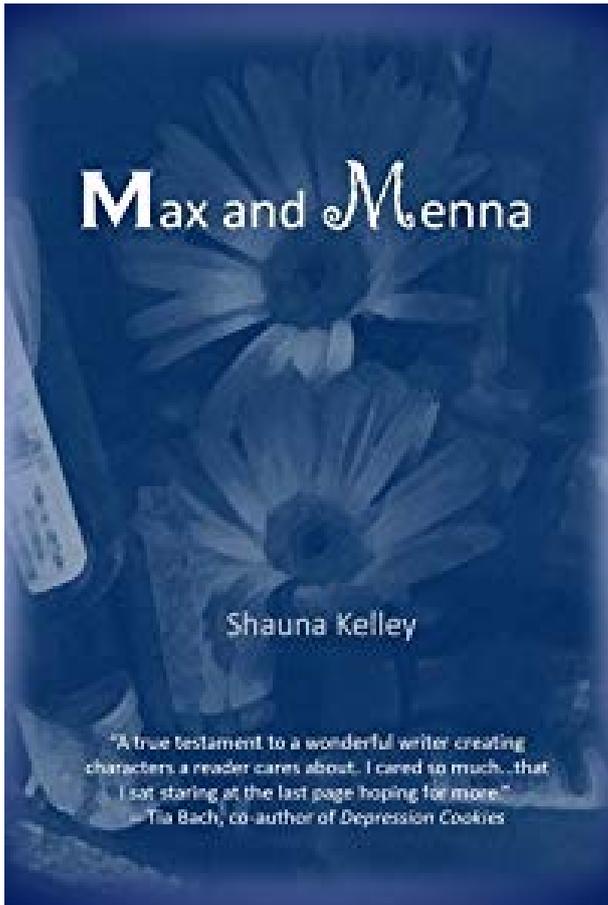


Max and Menna



Author:	Shauna Kelley
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Max and Menna tells the story of two siblings surviving a deplorable home life in the South in the early 1980s. Telling the story from each of their viewpoints, Max and Menna outline their reliance on each other and on Nick, their only friend, as they cope with growing up in poverty, living with an alcoholic mother, and having no indication of the other half of their parentage. The story opens with Max and Menna in the eighth grade.

They meet Nick, a Native American, and the story continues to take place during their summer vacations progressively through high school. Max, quiet and introspective, struggles to understand how to be the only man in the house and protect a family that seems determined to destroy itself. Menna is quick-tempered and vivacious, and grows to love and view Nick as a method of coping with a childhood that requires her to be very adult.

Despite the strength of the bond the three of them share, however, their environment works against them. As the children of the town drunk, the younger siblings of the town slut, and the friends of an Indian from "over the fence," Max and Menna fight not only to grow up, and get out, but to stay together, and stay safe. Author Shauna Kelley states: "This is a story that has been with me for a long time, but I hadn't, until quite recently, lived enough to begin to do it justice. I relied on the excellent example of my writing heroes -- Margaret

Atwood, Sherman Alexie, and John Irving -- and hope I have constructed a book that will appeal to women and young adults and help them learn about the human capacity for overcoming unbearable situations. This is a one that I have only just begun to understand.”