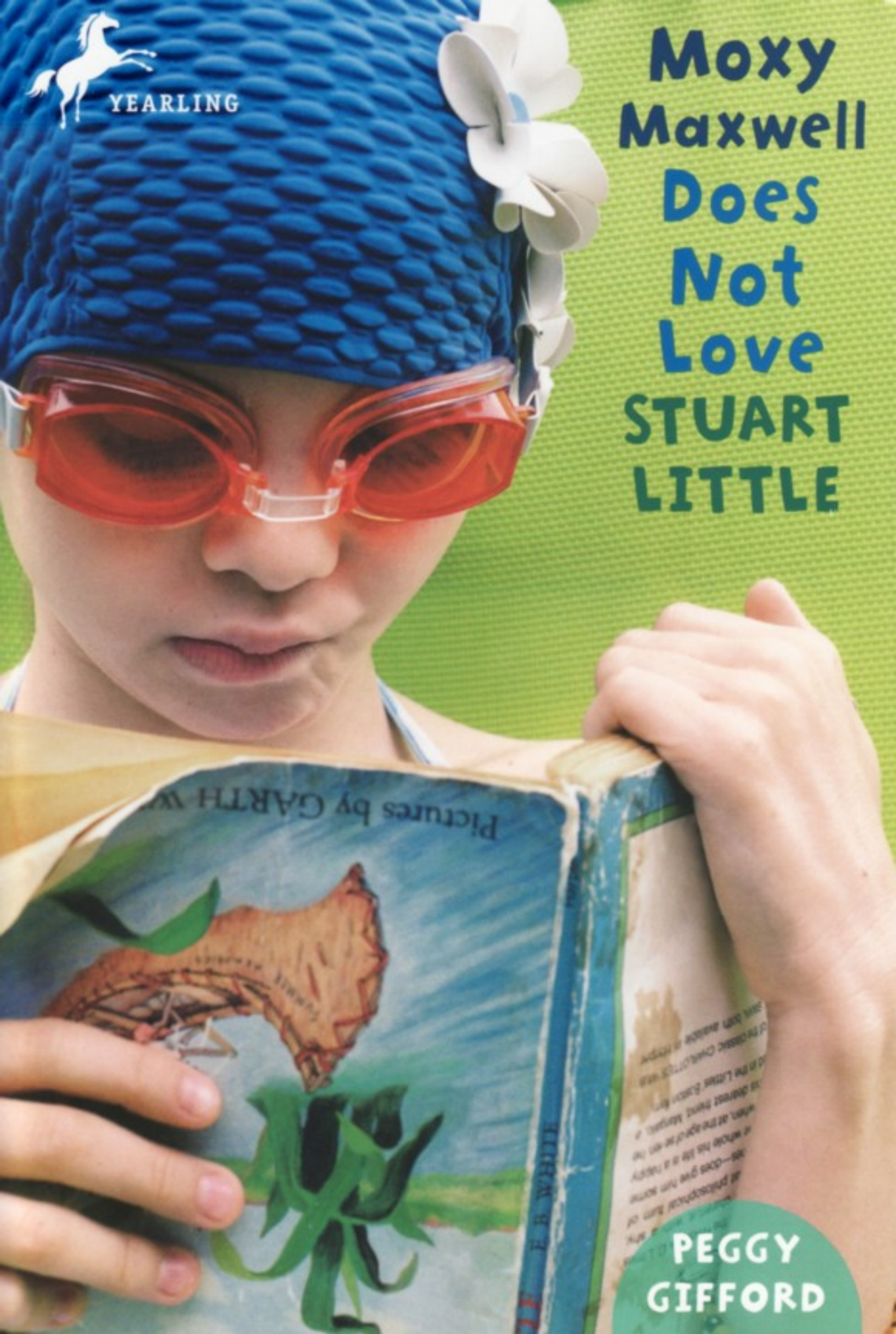




YEARLING

**Moxy
Maxwell
Does
Not
Love**
**STUART
LITTLE**



**PEGGY
GIFFORD**

chapter 1
In Which
Moxy Maxwell
Begins to Read
STUART LITTLE

Her name was Moxy Maxwell and she was nine and it was August and late August at that. It was so late in August that tonight was to be the "Goodbye to Summer Splash!" show at the pool. Moxy was one of eight petals in the water-ballet part. She and the other seven petals were going to form a human daisy at the deep end while carrying sparklers in their left hands.

Next year Moxy planned to do a rose solo. Moxy Maxwell was just that sort of girl—the sort of girl who even at nine had big plans. In fact, last April when Miss

Cordial asked the class to write a list of Possible Career Paths, Moxy had needed a third piece of paper. Moxy was going places, all right.

She was going to her room. And she was going to stay there until she read every word of *Stuart Little*. Mr. Flamingo, who was going to be Moxy's fourth-grade teacher this fall, had assigned the book for summer reading. They were going to have a quiz on it too—on the very first day of school. And tomorrow was the very first day of school.

Now, Moxy loved to read books. She loved books so much that sometimes she would stay up all night and read. It's just that Moxy liked to read what she wanted to read and not what someone told her to read.

And it wasn't as if Moxy hadn't tried to read *Stuart Little*. She had not been exaggerating (very much at all) when she had explained to her mother earlier today that the

reason she hadn't finished reading *Stuart Little* had nothing to do with the fact that she had spent too little time with the book.

"We've been practically like best friends all summer," she said. "Inseparable."

It was true. Moxy had taken *Stuart Little* with her everywhere. If *Stuart Little* wasn't in her backpack, *Stuart Little* was in her lap. When Moxy was in the car on her way to rehearse her daisy routine, *Stuart Little* was beside her or somewhere behind her or nestled under the windshield swelling up with sun.

It was also true that Moxy's mother had found *Stuart Little* on the porch under the broken leg of the wicker coffee table more than once. But that was a discussion for another day.

"In fact, last Monday *Stuart Little* fell in the pool," said Moxy. "That's how close we are."

★ "Moxy is an exuberantly
unforgettable character."
—*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred

It isn't as if Moxy hasn't tried to read *Stuart Little*.
She has.

They've been practically inseparable all summer,
like best friends. If the book isn't in her backpack, it's
in her lap. If it isn't holding up the coffee table on the
front porch, it's following her into the pool.

But now it's the end of August. The day before
fourth grade starts. The last possible second to finish
summer reading.

And if Moxy does not stay in her room and read ALL
of *Stuart Little*, there are going to be "consequences."
(Which means she won't get to play the eighth daisy
petal in the "Goodbye to Summer Splash!" water
ballet. Which will be tragic.)

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