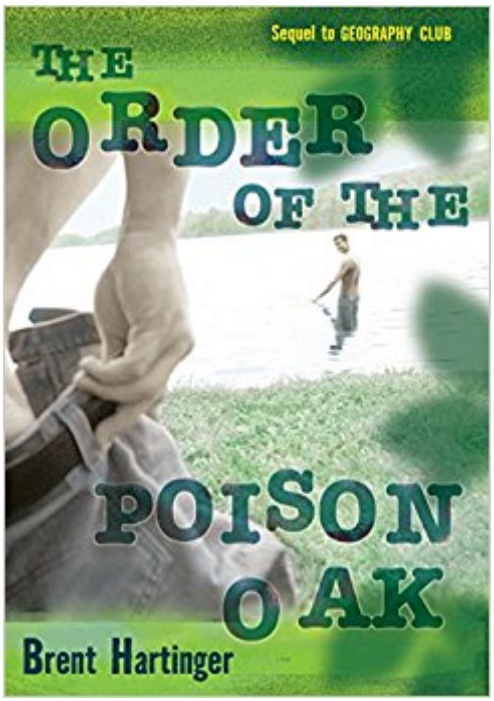
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Order Of The Poison Oak, The



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Synopsis

Summer camp is different from high school. Something about spending the night. Things happen. Geography Club's Russel Middlebrook is back, and he and his friends are off to work as counselors at a summer camp. Brent Hartinger's third novel is the story of Indian legends, skinny-dipping in moonlit coves, and passionate summer romance. It's also the story of Russel's latest club, the Order of the Poison Oak, a secret society dedicated to helping its members see life's hidden beauty and accept its sometimes painful sting.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 8 UpÃ¢â ¬â œSixteen-year-old Russel Middlebrook hopes to escape his identity as the token gay guy at school by spending the summer as a counselor in a camp for burn victims. At first he finds that controlling eight hyperactive, 10-year-old hellions is grueling, but once he charms them with a retelling of a fable based on Native American legend in which a multicolored crow is burnt black by fire, he has no trouble taming them. And with their cooperation and enthusiasm, he creates the Order of the Poison Oak, a special club dedicated to outcasts of all types. With its titillating cover, high dramatics, and steamy romance triangles, Hartinger's novel will definitely score big with teens hankering for a sequel to Geography Club (HarperCollins, 2003). But even with improved characterizations and fast pacing, it's not enough to cloak the author's less-than-subtle attempt at equating burn-scar victims with victims of homophobic bigotry and prejudice. Unfortunately, this well-intended yet domineering metaphor smothers many of the novel's better elements, and ultimately will render more groans than shouts of triumph from its readers.Ã¢â ¬â œHillias J. Martin,

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Gr. 7-10. In this sequel to Geography Club (2003), 16-year-old Russel, now openly gay and tired of being the freak at school, tries to escape as a counselor in a rural summer camp with his two best friends. The camp kids are 10-year-old burn survivors, scarred and disfigured, and Russel identifies with them. They also have fun together, once he stops seeing them as "all nervous and noble." But Russel fights with his friends, especially after discovering that he and bisexual Min are attracted to the same gorgeous counselor guy--who tries to have unprotected sex with each of them. There's too much metaphor and message, including the stories Russel tells the kids about raging fires, hidden beauty, and developing toughness. What readers will like best is the honest, tender, funny, first-person narrative that brings close what it's like to have a crush and hate a friend. In one unforgettable scene, some teenagers call the scarred kids freaks, and to his lasting shame, Russel says nothing. Hazel RochmanCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved

I'm not going to describe the plot - that was done by others. I'm going to tell you what I liked and what I didn't like.I liked the setting and the story line. I liked the characters. I liked the compassion Russel has for his group of campers. I liked Russels'thoughts and ideas. I loved the story about the order of the poison oak.What I didn't like were his one word responses when anyone tried to talk to him. "Huh?" and "What?" were two words I got tired of reading. Yes, he was usually deep into his own thoughts but it was still annoying. I kept thinking that at some point his friends would learn to tap him on the shoulder to let him know they were there and a conversation would ensue.This is a quick read, about 4 hours for me. I read .three of this series out of order but am now reading them so there's some continuity.

I usually don't like giving 5 stars, because then it feels like I'm saying the book is perfect and there are no books that are perfect. However, I really did love this book.Russell is having trouble dealing with people at school because now they all know he's gay. For the summer, he, Gunnar, and Min escape to be camp counselors. They stay there for several different sessions with different kids, but the story focuses on teh first group, which are mainly comprised of burn survivors. Russel is put in charge of some unruly boys I think they were about 11 years old. Not only that, but there's a romantic element with a character who's name I forgot. Russel experiences troubles with his friendship with Min because of the romantic interest.The book explores how society tends to push

away people who are different, whether they be different because they’re gay or because of visible burn scars. Russel finds himself in a unique position in which he is the one who has to deal trying not to judge people.What I love about this author is that he always shows the characters, especially Russel in a human way. Russel’s not perfect, he has many flaws, and like any other teenager. We saw that in the last book with that character I can’t remember his name, but he was bullied by the whole school and at first Russel acted like any other teenager, but in the end he grows to learn how to act differently.

Significant quality fall from the first book. While the first book’s target audience was "young adults" this feels like it was written for babies. I can’t believe that one of my most favorite stories (Geography Club) could have a sequel that would be no different than those weird, creepy and clichÃƒÂ©d fan-fictions on the internet.I am extremely disappointed. Please don’t read the sequels if you don’t want the story of the original book RUINED.

This author is just OK. He writes well, but the stories don’t really have much pazzaz. This was the best book of this series.I bought a bunch of his books as they all got really high ratings for him as an author. Well, he’s no Mark Roeder or any number of great authors I could name. But as this takes place at camp after the main character gets his heart broken in the first book, the writing style seems a bit more fluid and interesting here.

Maybe it just wasn’t for me, but I really couldn’t get into this story. I found it a bit... whiny, weak. Sorry about that too, because I’d read such great reviews for this author’s series. the characters just didn’t engage, maybe I’m too mature (read: old) an audience for it.

I initially felt disappointed with this book, because its first chapter starts off very slowly, almost leading me to put it down. Thankfully, I stuck with it, and was pleasantly surprised to see that POISON OAK actually surpasses the author’s first book, GEOGRAPHY CLUB, to which this is a sequel.One might think that the story of three teenage friends at a summer camp might not have a lot of dramatic potential... but think again. Sure, this story’s got all the expected teenage angst, but add to that romance, betrayal, lust, friendship, and a wealth of other emotions -- quite a rollercoaster ride. Some unexpected twists and turns lead to several surprising dramatic climaxes, along with valuable lessons in life for both the reader and the characters.Like the author’s last novel, POISON OAK draws its characters vividly, and their many flaws make them both interesting and very real.

Hartinger makes some good points, comparing children with scars on the outside to those with scars on the inside, and does it in a way that’s never cloying or hokey. And the romantic yearning felt by the three central characters are universal; some might characterize the book as a being for "gay teens," but I think these emotions can be empathized by anyone with heart.This being a YA novel, don’t expect for the sex scenes to be explicit. I’d call this "PG-13" sex, leaving much to the imagination, but still with enough details to make the point. The emotional content is much more intense; there’s several scenes that I suspect many readers will find very moving, and at least a couple that are almost heart-breaking. And this ain’t no "after-school special

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