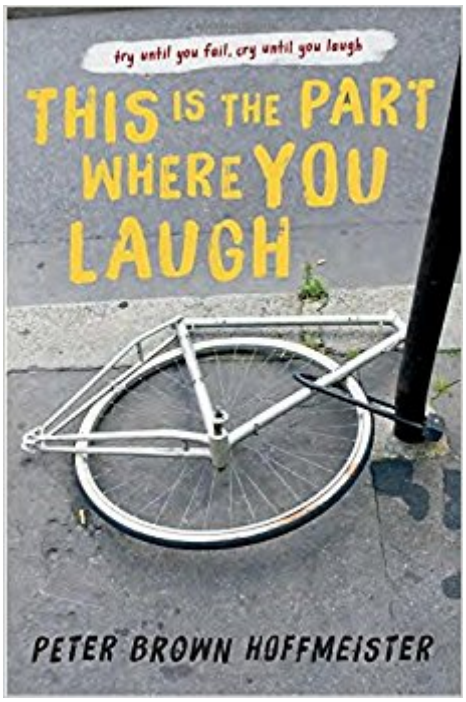
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This Is The Part Where You Laugh



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Synopsis

"So real it hurts."Ã¢â ¬â •David Arnold, New York Times bestselling author ofÃ Â Mosquitoland.Ã Â Fans of Matt de la Pena will be captivated by this summer-in-the-life of a teenage guy growing up in a trailer park in Eugene, Oregon. Ã Â Travis never gives up. Not when his mom takes off. Not when he gets suspended from basketball. Not when he cracks four ribs jumping off a bridge to impress a girl. Not when he and his best friend Creature get into trouble deeper than they know how to handle. From acclaimed author Peter Brown Hoffmeister comes a painfully-funny, sometimes-crushing story of growing up, making mistakes, and pressing on, against the odds. "In my mind the best storytellers walk that high tight wire between tragedy and comedy. This Is the Part Where You LaughÃ Â is exactly the part where you laugh. And ache. This is aÃ Â reallyÃ Â good book!"Ã¢â ¬â •Chris Crutcher Ã Â "A courageous novel. Incandescent and unflinching." Ã¢â ¬â •Jeff Zentner, author ofÃ Â The Serpent KingÃ Â Ã Â "A raw offbeat novel with an abundance of honesty and heart." Ã¢â ¬â •Publishers Weekly, starred review"Hoffmeister crushes it.Ã Â There is blood and truth on every page." Ã¢â ¬â •Estelle Laure, author ofÃ Â This Raging LightÃ Â

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Customer Reviews

Gr 10 UpÃ¢â ¬â •In the opening scene of this powerful and unsettling novel, Travis is in the process of releasing two caimansÃ¢â ¬â •fearsome alligatorlike creaturesÃ¢â ¬â •into the lake behind his grandparents' home. He claims that he is doing so to provide entertainment for his dying

grandmother. Is his motivation this simple, or is his genuine love for his grandmother also a pretext for expressing the rage that seems to lie just beyond the realm of his understanding? No easy answers are provided, and readers are forced to decide for themselves if Travis is perpetrator, victim, or both. He spends much of the narrative searching for the heroin-addicted mother who abandoned him, and he suffered the depredations of foster care and the juvenile justice system before being taken in by his caring but poverty-stricken grandparents. Basketball provides solace and purpose for his life, but even here his violent nature intrudes, as he knocks a trash-talking opponent unconscious in a game. While he forms connections with Creature, a teammate who writes love letters to long-dead Russian princesses, and Natalie, a troubled girl who lives on the affluent side of the lake, Travis is, in the end, unable to overcome either his own impulses or the circumstances of his life. In a compelling but disturbing narrative voice, the protagonist recounts the assaults and other acts of aggression he commits in flat, uninflected, unemotional language, as if he were describing the deeds of someone else. VERDICT A unique, unforgettable tale that is a must-have for all YA collections.Ã¢â ¬â •Richard Luzer, formerly at Fair Haven Union High School, VT

"A raw offbeat novel with an abundance of honesty and heart." Ã¢â ¬â •Publishers Weekly, starred review"In my mind the best storytellers walk that high tight wire between tragedy and comedy with a magicianÃ¢â ¬â„¢s grace. The further they take you down the road of comedy, the further youÃ¢â ¬â„¢re willing to follow them down the road of tragedy. Enter Peter Hoffmeister. This Is the Part Where You LaughÃ Â is exactly the part where you laugh. And ache. This is aÃ Â reallyÃ Â good book!"Ã¢â ¬â •Chris Crutcher"A memorable story of good kids' transcending rough lives.... What might seem didactic in lesser hands feels realistic and right here. Messages are delivered in natural dialogue, the well-drawn characters speaking from the heart with wisdom derived from firsthand experience." Ã¢â ¬â •Kirkus, starred review"A powerful story...Ã Â Hoffmeister has done a wonderful job of allowing the reader to get into the head of a young man whose world seems to be crashing down around him." VOYA, starred review"A unique, unforgettable tale that is a must-have for all YA collections." Ã¢â ¬â •School Library Journal, SLJ Popular Pick"So real it hurts. Hoffmeister explores the depths of family and addiction, friendship and first love with the skill of a writer who knows his way aroundÃ¢â ¬â •and I was happy to follow. This story will stick with you." Ã¢â ¬â •David Arnold, New York Times bestselling author of Kids of Appetite"A courageous novel. Incandescent and unflinching." Ã¢â ¬â •Jeff Zentner, author ofÃ Â The Serpent KingÃ Â "Hoffmeister crushes it, weaving seamlessly between aching humor,

brilliant dissonance, gritty romance, and chaotic hope. He glosses over nothing. He doesnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t give a single word for free. There is blood and truth on every page." Ã¢â ¬â •Estelle Laure, author ofÃ Â This Raging Light

Peter Brown Hoffmeister is a gifted and versatile author. Some of what he writes about may be hard to stare between the eyes, but it is real, and pulled from the lives of living and breathing human beings. The brilliance in his portrayals of characters living on the margins is that he stays away from over sentimentality and cliches are turned on their heads.In, THIS IS THE PART WHERE YOU LAUGH, Travis means well. His view of the world isn't stunted as much as it is heavily influenced by those who raised him (even in absence). He is a survivor, tough, and entirely vulnerable, even if he knows it would be self-sabotage to show it. We become invested in him as a protagonist, cheering him along, and ultimately horrified and/or startled by his actions and the way we try to work around them in our hope for a better future. This reflection, though sometimes uncomfortable, is a powerful example of the empathetic nature of fiction.You will, undoubtedly, not be happy with all of Travis' choices, but by the end of the book, you will see the crooked logic behind them. And that ability is one that is well-suited to navigating life in the real world at large.

Don't know why I decided to choose this book, but man, I'm so glad I did! I'm always smitten by good books about friendship, and this is one of them. There's a certain innocence in the voice of T, the narrator, innocent but not naÃƒÆ'Ã Â ve by any means. His fellow player, Creature, is a remarkable creation, one of killer basketball moves, and a writer of the tale of the Russian Princess. And while Creature is a poet and a unequalled basket ball player, T has a surprising streak of violence in him...one that almost takes him by surprise. They are so bonded yet so endangered. This is an amazingly powerful story. I recommend it almost urgently.

Since I am not actually the age group these Vine Young Adult novels are intended for, I tend to think I know something about how the world works and the fact that it isn't the same for everybody - many people get a much rawer deal than I could ever imagine through absolutely no fault of their own. Then I read a book like "This Is the Part Where You Laugh," whose characters and their issues definitely put any middle class suburban teen problems to shame and realize that I am still clueless.Luckily, the book helped in that it provides a perspective - that of a formerly homeless, now "trailer trash" teenager living with his grandparents in an Oregon mobile home park, while his mother is gone, presumably homeless as she is a longtime heroin addict. Travis, the protagonist,

has recently returned from juvie (a place where the author spent time as a youth according to the cover blurb), and plans to spend the summer before his junior year of high school practicing basketball with his friend Malik (nickname "Creature') so he can hopefully start the season with disciplinary issues behind him, caring for his grandmother who is terminally ill, pranking the neighbors (so they'll have something to think about besides their usual problems), and flirting with the new girl, Natalie, across the lake, who has scars from the past of her own. While Malik is busy writing "The Pervert's Guide to Russian Princesses," in his free time, Travis keeps an eye both on the lake, as he has recently released a pair of caimans into it, and the local areas where the homeless congregate, hoping to find his mother and give her what she needs to get back on her feet. When a dive gone wrong, and a surprise ambush on his friend put both boys' futures in jeopardy, Travis must - well, not come to terms in any traditional YA novel sense, but figure out a way to keep going.The actual school year sounds like it could easily be a sequel, but the book stays firmly in the summer prior, though we get regular updates on how Travis's life has been since he was little - sleeping in a Dumpster and hiding from the authorities after his mom is arrested for starters. Travis does a lot of things (like most teens) which show poor judgment and lack of how the consequences may affect the future, but he also displays impressive maturity and willingness to reflect on past mistakes. The secondary characters: Coach, the grandparents, etc. feel real and not mere stereotypes that often populate these kinds of books. The book has a sad ending, which the reader will likely see coming, though perhaps not all the particulars. Overall, it is a heartbreaking read with some truly unforgettable characters.

One of the best books I've read in years, at least since Sherman Alexie's The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian.Travis is unquestionably a good kid. He loves basketball, and he practices every day. He takes doting care of his grandparents, with whom he lives. He worries about his mom. He works hard mowing lawns, and he saves all the money he earns. But Travis has been dealt a hard hand in life - his grandmother has cancer, his mother is an addict, he lives in a trailer park. The book doesn't dwell on any of this; it's all presented as the matter-of-fact reality of Travis' life. Nor does he dwell on it. But it's easy to see how, no matter how hard he tries, the deck is stacked against him.The book tells Travis' story during one summer, after his freshman year of high school, that is at first unremarkable, but by the end a summer that will likely have changed him forever. It took me a few chapters to get engaged with the story (it's definitely a male perspective, and I'm a woman), but about halfway through I couldn't put the book down. I was completely moved by the end, and it's still with me several weeks later.

While I did not love this book, it was only because it is not my particular taste of a storyline and it was hard for me to identify. I did enjoy the way it played out and was written, though, and the character development was beautiful. This book was so easy to read, it took me only a few days - I think it would appeal to a lot of young adults but in particular if you are a young teenage male, this book might be one you don’t want to miss. The very real friendship between Creature and Travis feels incredibly authentic. It’s not often that books serve up complex male characters but author Hoffmeister delivers on that point. The males in my life certainly aren’t reduced to sports player or computer programmer or business man. We are all multi-facted, we are all more complex that what appears.

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