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Compulsion



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Synopsis

Today has to be perfect.Magic.I look at the clock.10:14 AM.Ten fourteen. One plus one is two plus four is six plus ten is sixteen minus one is fifteen minus two is thirteen. OK.I turn from the clock and walk into the hallway. "Ready."Saturday will be the third state soccer championÃ Â- ship in a row for Jake Martin. Three. A good number. Prime. With Jake on the field, Carson City High can’t lose because Jake has the magic: a self-created protection generated by his obsession with prime numbers. It’s the magic that has every top soccer university recruiting Jake, the magic that keeps his family safe, and the magic that suppresses his anxiety attacks. But the magic is Jake’s prison, because sustaining it means his compulsions take over nearly every aspect of his life.Jake’s convinced the magic will be permanent after Saturday, the perfect day, when every prime has converged. Once the game is over, he won’t have to rely on his sister to concoct excuses for his odd rituals. His dad will stop treating him like he is some freak. Maybe he’ll even make a friend other than Luc.But what if the magic doesn’t stay?What if the numbers never leave?Acclaimed author Heidi Ayarbe has created an honest and riveting portrait of a teen struggling with obsessive compulsive disorder in this breathtaking and courageous novel.

Book Information

File Size: 703 KB

Print Length: 309 pages

Publisher: Balzer + Bray (May 3, 2011)

Publication Date: May 3, 2011

Language: English

ASIN: B004CFA94G

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #602,626 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #35 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Sports > Soccer #156 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Depression & Mental Illness > Mental Illness #169 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult >

Literature & Fiction > Personal Health > Depression

Customer Reviews

This is a fast and powerful story told with great pacing, dark humor and vivid descriptions. It is a gritty look at the life of a family broken by silence and mental illness. I will never look at the time the same way again.

Overall the book was kind of off putting. The whole numbers get distracting. Ending wasn't quite as good as expected.

In Compulsion, Jake Martin is gearing up for his third state soccer championship when his OCD ramps into high gear, forcing him to struggle to hold it together until after the big game. His life is already a challenge, given that his mother suffers from mental illness, his father is emotionally aloof, and his younger sister is focused on improving her social status in school. But when the spiders (as he describes the compulsive thoughts) get a hold of his brain, he has to follow the patterns, add the numbers to make primes, and do everything absolutely perfectly to keep the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“magicÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• intact.Author Heidi Ayarbe sets herself a difficult challenge in writing in JakeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s voice, because everything is filtered through his compulsion. It gives the reader a powerful take on the overwhelming constrictions that a person endures, but unfortunately a little of it goes a long way. The problem with seeing the world solely through JakeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s eyes is that reality and illusion blur, so sometimes the narrative gets muddy, and itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s hard to understand exactly what is happening in particular scenes. When Jake is one step away from falling apart, somehow the people around him donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t seem to suspect, and given the enormity of his emotional reaction, itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s hard to imagine that people would overlook his anxiety. No one speaks about it. They go through their lives as though everything is normal. And what is normal, anyway?Ayarbe gives hints about the private lives of the other characters ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ JakeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s best friend Luc, his teammates, his pseudo-girlfriend. They all have their secrets. LucÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s father beat him, Tanya may be anorexic, a teammate may be gay, but these hidden worlds are much like JakeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s own efforts to mask his compulsion. He hopes that if he can create the perfect magic to win the soccer championship, all the spiders will disappear. But life doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t work that neatly.The novelÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s greatest impact is the glimpse of JakeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s internal life, but the storytelling suffers. Perhaps by giving the

reader a little more time with pre-spider, pre-OCD Jake (before the anxieties becoming so overwhelming), Ayarbe could better set the foundation of the story and the relationships of the characters. Another possibility is to allow one of the other characters, such as Luc, tell some of the story so that the reader gets a broader view of events.

The synopsis of the book fascinated me since I have a son who has had some obsessive behaviors around studying math. I read a few reviews that were very positive and it sounded like a book I would enjoy so I signed up for the tour.Unfortunately the reviews I read failed to mention the amount of language in this book. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve not come across a book with as much language as this one had in it. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m a little surprised this is being marketed to teenagers grade 9 and up. Being someone who generally speaking chooses book that are free from graphic sex, gratuitous violence and strong language this book was one I just couldnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t keep reading. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m very sensitive when it comes to offensive language in literature. I tried skipping ahead a few chapters but it was more of the same which was really disappointing to me because without the language this is a book I would like to have been able to finish. So reader beware there is a lot of strong language in this book including dozens of uses of the F word in just the first chapter.On a positive note here is a really cool thing about Compulsion. The main character has an obsession with prime numbersÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â|. Thus the chapters are all prime numbers, there is no chapter 1, 4, 6, 8, etc. The portions of the book I did read were eye-opening for understanding what life is like for someone suffering from OCDs.

As soon as I heard the premise of this story I know I would be picking it up as soon as possible. I'm always immediately drawn to books regarding mental illness and disorders and am fasinated by the feelings, emotions and behaviors surrounding them. Jake Martin is a high school senior, soccer player extrodinare, who is living with a secret. His life is consumed with his obsession and need for prime numbers. He feels that the prime numbers bring him magic, magic that not only protects his family but brings him luck on the soccer field as well, but these numbers also consume his life, if Jake can just make it through saturdays championship soccer game, he thinks the magic will stay with him forever, but will it, or will the numbers continue to consume his life?I had a very hard time connecting to this story and the main character Jake, not because he was male, but just his character in general. Anyone who knows me knows i'm far from a numbers person, and I think maybe the overwhelming abudance of them make this book a bit taxing for me. Which some could argue may have been the point of the story, that in fact that's how Jake felt in regards to his OCD,

but I had a hard time being able to connect.I wish the story focused more on his disease, rather then him trying to keep it a secret, and I wish the ending resolved or came to a better conclusion, because in my opinion it felt like it was left uncomplete, and ended kinda-of abruptly. I did however find this book interesting in the respect that while I have read novels regarding OCD i've never read a book regarding OCD with regards to numbers, and I know thats very common in people with OCD, so I did get to see a whole nother side to the disease that i've never really delved into before.I do think this book is worth picking up and giving a chance, and I do feel that a lot of guys would really enjoy this novel, The protaginist is male, and it deals with an athlete and issues I think a male would be able to relate to better then a female.

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