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Playing With Matches



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Synopsis

When 16-year-old Raina Resnick is expelled from her Manhattan private school, sheÃ¢â ¬â„¢s sent to live with her strict aunt —Ã Â but Raina feels like sheÃ¢â ¬â„¢s persona non grata no matter where she goes. Her sister, Leah, blames her for her broken engagement, and sheÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a social pariah at her new school. In the tight-knit Jewish community, Raina finds she is good at one thing: matchmaking! As the anonymous “MatchMaven,Ã¢â ¬Â• Raina sets up hopeless singles desperate to find the One. A cross between Jane AustenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Emma, Dear Abby, and Yenta the matchmaker, RainaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s double life soon has her barely staying awake in class. Can she find the perfect match for her sister and get back on her good side, or will her tanking grades mean a second expulsion? In her debut novel, Suri Rosen creates a comic and heartwarming story of one girl trying to find happiness for others, and redemption for herself.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 7 UpÃ¢â ¬â •Sixteen-year-old Raina Resnick cannot catch a break. After two years as Queen Bee in her Manhattan private school, she is unceremoniously "counselled out" (read: expelled) and sent to live with her strict Aunt Mira. Her new life in a tight-knit Jewish community in Toronto is hardly the fresh start she was hoping for. Between a headmistress who is constantly scrutinizing her every assignment and an older sister (former BFF) who won’t speak to her, Raina is desperate to find her niche. A chance meeting on the bus with young, single Jewish woman helps unveil a hidden talent: matchmaking! After her success matching Tamara and Jeremy, Raina sets up the anonymous MatchMaven account and is ready for business. Things get really complicated when her

sister Leah turns to MatchMaven for help finding The One after her broken engagementÃ¢â ¬â •a breakup for which Raina is blamed. But the more she tries to help others find love, the less her friends and family love her. With sinking grades and constant fatigue, the teen struggles to keep up the maddening pace. Raina is well drawn, and supporting characters all add humor and poignancy to the story. Of particular note are the relationships the teen forms with the older characters, Bubby Bayla, Professor K, and Esther. These characters play an important role in light of Raina's absentee parents. This charming story of growing up and owning up, will ring true with readers, particularly those who share her cultural traditions.Ã¢â ¬â •Elaine Baran Black, Georgia Public Library Service

"Charming … Rosen gives us a coming-of-age tale with a twist featuring a fun heroine who puts 100 per cent toward creating a happy ending."Ã Â — Quill & Quire"This charming story of growing up and owning up, will ring true with readers, particularly those who share her cultural traditions." — School Library Journal“Fizzy, funny and ultimately redemptive.Ã¢â ¬Â• — Kirkus Reviews“Playing with MatchesÃ Â is compulsively readable. It is absolute fun, and Rain is the best kind of narrator." — CM: Canadian Review of Materials“IÃ¢â ¬â„¢d never read a YA novel with a Modern Orthodox Jewish main character before, and this one was funny, sweet, charming, and so, so recognizable to me in ways big and small that reading it made my heart explode a little.Ã¢â ¬Â• — Barnes & Noble BNTEEN Blog“Suri Rosen has created a set of characters fully realized. Each has positive traits and some flaws, making them inherently human. . . . Readers may want to keep a box of tissues nearby." — Jewish Book Council"Playing with Matches is a fabulously unique story—formal matchmaking is definitely not a regular theme in YA—that embeds all the angst of falling in love and growing up and doing right by your family and yourself all under one cover." — CanLit for Little Canadians"This is a funny, refreshing look at the challenges of being a teenager, when the world seems against you no matter how hard you try to make things right … because Rosen chooses to amuse rather than preach, her gentle lesson about self-discovery and forgiveness will resonate with young adult readers." — National Reading CampaignÃ¢â ¬Â•Playing with Matches is a cute story, but it will also touch your heart — My Book Views"Besides being a sweet, big-hearted coming-of-age comedy, this offers a fascinating glimpse into the importance of the matchmaking role in observant Jewish communities." — The Bulletin of The Center for ChildrenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Books"Breezy and entertaining." — Ottawa Jewish Bulletin"Deliciously plotted and unflaggingly entertaining, the narration of Rain's double-life adventures is frantic, funny, and finally heart-warming . . . a catch readers won't want to miss." — Books for Kids“While Playing With Matches is aimed at a

teen audience, adults who enjoy light fiction will also find it absorbing reading." — The Reporter

Have you ever screwed up royally and been willing to do anything to make things right? Have you ever tried to repair the damage, only to create more? Have you ever wondered if youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d make it as a matchmaker? Then this book is for you!Our main characterÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s voice sucked me in from the very beginning on this one. Raina fits the bill as my favorite type of character: sheÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s snarky and a little messed upÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •and we get to find out why. After a childhood spent moving around with her parents, they finally let her settle into a school in Manhattan, where Raina got to really make friends for the first time. Unfortunately, Raina screwed up that opportunity, getting herself kicked out of school, so sheÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s shipped off to Toronto for her last chance with an even stricter aunt. Now, sheÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s been labeled a troublemaker by nearly everyone: her aunt, the school officials, her classmatesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •and even her sister Leah.I loved reading this book for the insight into the tight-knit Jewish community. While the plot doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t really focus on the religious practice, I got to learn about Jewish culture, particularly their marriage practices. RainaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s world revolves around her familyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •her strict Aunt Mira, whoÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s always getting onto Raina no matter what she does, her heart-broken sister Leah, and MiraÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s mother-in-law, Bubby, the hilarious trouble-making older woman who throws wild parties and gorges on salty snacks.Ultimately, this is a story about community and familyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •about how far you would go to correct your mistakes, how hard you would fight for your sisterÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s affections, and how hard it can be to change peopleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s perspective of you.This is a book about romance, but itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not a romance. RainaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s main focus is finding matches for her clients, who email her anonymously. At first, matchmaking is an accident, but over the course of the novel Raina really immerses herself in trying to make other people happyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •from Tamara, the woman she meets on the bus, to Professer Kellman, the widower she meets by accident, and everyone in between.RainaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s matchmaking mishaps are absolutely hilarious. I donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t want to spoil any of the fun, but let me just say that I was laughing out loud at various parts. Raina tries so hard to find happiness for others and often finds herself in ridiculous scenarios. I really appreciated that Raina herself isnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t interested in romance, but rather is working tirelessly to help others, almost without realizing how selfless sheÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s being. This is a story of growing up, but Raina doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t even recognize how much growth sheÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s really doing until the end.Although the plot

sometimes felt forcedÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •in that the situations were so absurd they didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t seem fully realisticÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •I ultimately really enjoyed reading this book.

This is a sweet YA, I love a good match making book! My go-to book when I want to re-read something

Playing With Matches is a book written for teenagers, but all ages can enjoy this book. Suri Rosen is the author and creates memorable strong characters, each of whom are so real.The book is enchanting and brings out in you an array of emotions. I found myself laughing outloud and then crying and sometimes both at the same time.There are many life lessons that can be learned from Playing With Matches at all stages of life.I recommend reading Playing With Matches and I can only hope that Suri Rosen entertains us with further books.

Well plotted and well-delineated characters. Some aspects of the plot are predictable, but that's why one reads books like this. Other aspects are not and are surprising, which I liked. There is humor too.

Delightful and fun read... Central character is a 16-year-old girl, but the story speaks to any age!

I couldn't put this book down. I'm waiting for the sequel!

A wonderful story set against the backdrop of Jewish Toronto. A great read!

Very entertaining. A fun read with delightful characters.

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