



The Opposite Of Music

Janet Ruth Young

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when i am well

i will take you

At first Billy's father just seemed distant, as if he had something on his mind. Then he stopped listening to music, saying it hurt his ears. After a while he stopped eating and sleeping. And after that he just stopped. Stopped being Billy's father and his friend and became someone else. Someone who was depressed and withdrawn and wouldn't respond to treatments.

Determined to help their father, Billy and his family devise a series of unconventional therapies for him. But the strain of looking after Dad begins to wear on them all. Billy stops writing songs and starts avoiding his friends. His sister wants to suicide-proof the house. And his mother worries about losing her job because she takes so much time off. Taking care of Dad is starting to sap the strength they need to keep him alive.

The Opposite Of Music Details

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From Reader Review The Opposite Of Music for online ebook

David Liera says

Do you know how it feels when your dad is going insane? This teen's father is mentally unstable because he is going through depression in general it's causing the family to go to a rough time. They take his father to a therapist then gives the boy's father pills that makes him even more mentally unstable. The boys father can't sleep at night, his father has nightmares and it makes the family even more scared of his condition. the boy's family is trying their hardest to help him but nothing works. The boy has to try his best to help his father go through this time.

The story is about a boy's father that is menatally unstable and the boy finds happiniess by playing music, the boy seperates from his friends and society. The main charcters were Billy, his sister Linda , his uncle Marty, his Father Mr.Morrison, and his Mother Mrs. Morrison. Billy and his family try to help his father but nothing seems to work. Billy sneakes out with his friend gordy to see a show and he leaves his father at home by himself before his uncle came. My favorite charcter was Billy because he tries so hard to help other people.

My favorite charcter was Billy because I can kinda relate to him in a way becays by the way he is struggling help other out when he can't help himself out.I've been in the same experiences as Billy, like sneaking out and forget about everyone just for one thing. I try to make other people when i couldn't be happy myself.

Overall in my own opinion this was a really great story and I loved it so much. my favorite part in this book was when Billy and Gordy sneak out and go to a show, and they get confused and they don't know what to do. If i could change anything in the book it will be the middle because it only focuss one thing. But this book was amazing and it was one of the best book i read.

I would rcommend this book to a lot of people actually it was a great book like so good. If you like sad and heart worming stories this book will just blow your mind it was so great.

Shanti says

I have no idea how to rate this book. On one hand it was empowering and had an absolutely beautiful and compelling writing style and on the other hand I was totally uncomfortable with how the father was portrayed. I read it really fast- it's pretty easy to get into, but I had really mixed feelings. So.

Lets start with the good stuff. This book was trying to write about mental health in an honest way. It talked about how the father was still a person, and discussed different kinds of therapies in a fairly honest way. The author had obviously done her research. The writing is beautiful phrases like 'the opposite of music' (you guessed it) pop up al over the place, and I feel like the protagonist, Billy was an interesting perspective to read about. I liked how he thought, and that he loved his father so much. The family was definitely trying to support the Dad. And I think Billy's trouble with that was also realistically written. All of the characters (except for the father) were complex and multi layered. It was really compassionately written.

So what didn't I like. For one, the father had no personality. None at all. He would occasionally say things, but he mostly just sat there. Considering that his illness and the extraordinary means that they went to trying to help him, it wasn't really described. We were mostly told and not shown how the father is feeling, through Billy's perspective. Also, therapy and medication were shown in a really negative light. Having had several people really close to me benefit from medication, I really wished that they showed both it's advantages and

it's disadvantages. I know that it was really hard for the Morrison's, but they didn't really (as Billy kept pointing out) try anything except for electro shock therapy long enough to see if it helped. It didn't really make sense what they were trying to do to help him. Also, this book is slightly low on a cohesive plot- there's no climax, or really much rising action at all.

So, I feel a mix of emotions about this book. It compassionately told a story of people, but it also dehumanised people with mental disorders, even if the characters didn't believe they were doing so. I don't know how to rate it. If you're curious though, you could always read it.

Deanna says

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2007

Young Adult

Billy talks about how his father seems less interested in life at first, but then things come down to the point of bad depression including weight loss, lack of communication, loss of sleep, and suicidal thoughts. This book tells the story of a family dealing with depression. Billy's mom finally decides that her husband needs help. Dr. Fritz's attempts to help are frustrating. The first medicine he prescribes makes Billy's dad break out in gross sores. The next medicine causes paranoia and really bad dreams. After failed tries to use medicine to treat the depression, Billy, his mother, and his sister wanted to fix the problem themselves. Each researches the therapy they think would be best, and then they work together to cure dad. Some of their treatment involves diet, exercise, aromatherapy, etc. Everyone sacrifices their own life to devote time to dad. When it is obvious that their theories are not working and thoughts of suicide come up, it is decided that a new psychiatrist must be contacted. The new doctor recommends electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). Research tells Billy the therapy could be effective, but he also reads horrific tales of brain damage. His father may not recover.

I think the theme of this book is "Never give up." Billy and his family go through a lot with their dad and they never give up. His dad never gives up on trying to get better. He knows there's something wrong with him and he tries to fix it. The whole family pitches in to try to cure dad.

"Then a funny thing happens to Mom's face. She begins to smile, and the smile grows, exceeding what you would consider normal limits and turning into a half circle. It grows until it seems like it's taking up two-thirds of her face. Her cheeks turn into Ping-Pong balls, while her eyes get smaller and smaller. Then her eyes completely disappear." This can be found on page 343. It shows that the author is very descriptive and that she wrote from a teenage boy's point of view and did a very good job in doing so.

I chose this book because I thought it would be about music, and it wasn't. It was about a family trying to overcome their Dad's depression. I can relate to this book because I have a friend whose Dad is going through depression and he has some troubles sometimes, but I am always there for him. I liked how this family in this book is so strong and they won't give up until their dad is better.

Zaji says

Told in a unique, contemporary voice, *The Opposite of Music* is a story of sadness, frustration, courage, and hope as it follows Billy Morrison through his life as he tries to help his depressed father.

Mr. Morrison is a distant, quiet form of what he used to be. Billy used to think he was the coolest dad, one who would always be there for him. But now, his father has changed. In fact, Billy and his sister Linda hardly know their father anymore. The man's delayed responses, hesitance to eat, and withdrawn nature prompts Billy's mother to take him to a psychiatrist, who only concretizes their suspicions by diagnosing him with depression. Billy, his mother, and his sister all do their best to help out Mr. Morrison, trying to figure out what it is exactly that is causing him to be depressed. They feign ease and positive attitudes when someone stops by for a visit, but are really weighed down with the burden of trying to get rid of the depression once and for all. As his family tries to take care of him, his depression only gets worse and they all slowly begin to careen into a downward spiral; after nearly fruitless meetings with the psychiatrist, they resort to other treatments. One of the considered ones—through desperation—is shock therapy...they hear mixed reviews about it, and Billy is totally opposed to the idea. His protests, however, don't seem to change his mother's decision about trying it out. Different friends and some family members often stop by to help the stressed family deal with the hard times, but really, it's within the four of them that they finally find a way to emerge from the cold and dark confusion that encircled their lives. Through clever wording, a steady pace, and, sometimes, a poetic flow, *The Opposite of Music* captures a family's determination to help a father and each other, even when facing extremely difficult times that threaten one's health.

Talia says

Obviously this book is meant for a younger audience, and it wouldn't be something I would pick up normally. The very subject of it, a teenage boy dealing with the crippling depression of his father, is not something I am generally drawn to. However, I'm sure some kids, especially kids who are going through similar situations, would find it easy to relate to, or at least more accessible. However, I found it hard to get into, personally, because of the way Young writes for Billy, the main character.

One of the things that bothered me a lot about the book was the lack of actual description. I didn't know how Billy was fifteen until about half-way through the book, which made a lot of the things Billy said until then difficult for me to understand. I had been under the impression that he was closer to twelve or so, so finding out how old he actually was was actually a bit of a relief. Billy had referenced sex a few times before he mentioned his age, so it had all seemed a little inappropriate for him. Also, I have no idea what Billy really looks like, and he seems a little flat for a character, his development hard to follow and understand from the beginning of the book towards the end. I imagine that it would make it hard for a younger reader to follow the change that Billy goes through in his father's depression.

The setting of the book was also something hard for me to grasp, though it really isn't the main part of the story like it is for some books. It's not as though Billy is traversing across the continent to reach some destination. I just wasn't sure where he lived, exactly, as he only mentions a town called Hawthorne. I imagine that there can't just be one Hawthorne, and not everyone knows their geography well enough to be able to picture where it is on a map, especially not a student who is struggling

with school already. Without more context of where Billy lives, some of the parts of the story lack a rich understanding that some other novels have, making it a little frustrating when Billy references the types of people that live near him and when he talks about a new place that he is.

izzy says

This is totally different from other books that deal with depression

When the father of a happy family becomes depressed, what will the rest of the family do?

With little or no knowledge about the disease, They have to work hand in hand to help him

The story is told by Billy (jnr) the first child in the family.

The issue i had with the book was that i got lost most times and it wasn't really engaging.

PinkAmy loves books, cats and naps says

Downgraded from 4 to 2 stars after rereading.

Sadness. Sleepless. Irritability. Loss of appetite. Hopelessness. Nightmares. After discounting medication and the advice doctors, Billy's mom is trying to cure his father's clinical depression with the help of Billy and his annoying little sister. But his dad keeps getting worse. The deeper Bill Sr disappears into depression, the more each member of the family also disappears. Billy knows what they're doing isn't working. Something has to give.

Janet Ruth Young is an important voice in YA fiction, because she writes gritty, realistic stories about the impact of mental illness on families. Teens (and adults) hear words like "depression", but often only understand the definitions on a pop-culture level, much different than understanding the disorder as it impacts people. Billy is a complex, flawed fifteen year old narrator, bright, loving, eager to help his family. He actually has better ideas than his mother. I wanted to shake his mother for defying the doctors' recommendations, and for parentifying her children by making them responsible for their father's care. I'm a child psychologist and I've seen this situation in real families, and Young nailed it. After reading Young's insightful and touching THINGS I SHOULDN'T THINK, I had high expectations for THE OPPOSITE OF MUSIC (TOOM). I thought TOOM dragged a lot in illustrating the repetitiveness of depression, and the pamphlet inclusions might have been better used as appendices, as they brought the pace of the story to a near halt. I normally read books in a day or two, no matter the length. This took me 5.

In terms of recommendations, I'd steer readers who are interested in learning about mental illness in families and clinical depression more than readers who are want to read an easy, uplifting novel. Depression is as much a character in TOOM as Billy or any of his family members. I'd recommend the novel to kids and adults who are depressed or have depressed family members. Even though individual experiences differ, the difficulty of depression is universal.

Autumn says

My routine of picking up some random book from my school library brought me this book and my goodness am I glad it did. There was little, if anything, to complain about. Unless you NEED romance. Because, there is no romance for Bill, who is narrating the story. All the romance is the steadiness of Mrs. Morrison's love for her husband. Not exactly the hands on kind most YA books give. But I loved it. Young had me refreshed with a story that didn't have some romantic counterpart to get the MC through his struggles. And struggles there were. Which, is obvious just from reading the back of the book. But, oh-my-goodness, it's possible! Billy can get through them without a girl. Not even a hint of one. Which... Okay. Is not the point of this book at all. I was just really really impressed with Young for not adding in any silly romance. She did an excellent job at being real with it. Billy was real. His family was real. The tidbits we see of his friends, are real. Even the strange psychiatrist they visit at one point is real. And how they deal with Mr. Morrison's depression, and Mr. Morrison... Not over dramatic in the least. She portrayed life, the weird bits, the strangeness of people, the funny parts, the serious moments, and did well.

Bonnie says

Depression, an illness that affects the entire family, is the topic of this book recommended for young adults.

The story is told in the first person by a 15 year old boy who with his mother, sister and uncle assumes the care of his father who is sinking into clinical depression. They begin with help from the medical arena where a diagnosis is received and various medicinal concoctions are tried but this becomes frustrating as the father has reactions to the medications. They then venture into the realm of every cockamamie article ever written on mental health. Imagine 'wafting a lemon soaked kleenex under a persons nose' as a way of curing depression!

To be responsible for something as important as making his dad better is a daunting and all consuming task for Billy. What child wouldn't want to be part of the reason his father gets better. But at the cost of friends, studies, sleep?

An easy read but at times became irritated with the chain of events being irrational. But what in a 15 year old's mind is rational?

Kris says

Recommended for gr. 7-12. This is the story of a father's gradually increasing depression and how his family deals with it as told by his son, Billy. The family turns increasingly inward as they attempt to deal with the depression through medication, diet and home remedies and finally electroshock therapy. Through Billy's words we can see how the treatment is all-consuming to the point where he has no activities outside of the family any more. Brief mention of masturbation in a conversation between teenage boys, otherwise nothing objectionable.

Les says

This should have been good. But the author, a woman, writes from the first person point of view of a teenage boy, and fails to convince me that she understands boys at all. The family irritates me. The father, who is clinically and severely depressed, needs more care than usual, and the family all pitches in to help out. Along the way, I was mad at Mom, annoyed at Linda, and I wanted to smack Billy. Only Dad didn't drive me nuts, but he was almost a non-entity in this book. His character is merely a foil for the lives of all the other characters. Okay read, and I suppose it's an interesting peek into what it's like to live with someone who is mentally ill (although it's NOTHING like my experience of living with a mentally ill person), but I wouldn't put it at the top of my list of anything.

Victoria says

This book was not my favorite. I felt that Young was trying to hard to think about what it would be like to be a teenage boy in this scenario. I feel she could have better written this book from the perspective of a teenage girl, since she has actually experienced what it is like to be there. Or she could have showed us the scenario through everyone's point of view.

I really thought this was going to be a good book. It sounded good, a family going through their father's crippling depression and trying to help make him better. It sounded like it would be emotional, but I felt no emotional attachment to this book, and I was really okay when I was finally done.

If you need something to read...go grab a different book. This isn't worth your time.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Sally Kruger, aka "Readingjunky" for TeensReadToo.com

Billy describes how his father just seemed less interested in life at first, but then things deteriorated to the point of severe depression including weight loss, lack of communication, insomnia, and thoughts of suicide. **THE OPPOSITE OF MUSIC** tells the story of a family dealing with depression.

Billy's mother finally decides that her husband needs to seek medical help. Dr. Fritz is nice, but his attempts to help are frustrating. The first medicine he prescribes makes Billy's dad break out in disgusting sores. The next medicine causes paranoia and frightening dreams.

After failed attempts to use medicine to treat the depression, Billy, his mother, and his sister become determined to treat the problem themselves. Each researches the therapy they think would be best, and then they work together to cure dad. Some of their treatment involves diet, exercise, light therapy, aromatherapy, etc. Everyone sacrifices their own life to devote time to dad.

When it is obvious that their theories are not working and thoughts of suicide surface, it is decided that a new psychiatrist must be consulted. The new doctor recommends electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). Research tells

Billy the therapy could be effective, but he also reads horrific tales of brain damage and torture. Will this help, or is his father's recovery a hopeless dream?

Janet Ruth Young offers an extremely realistic portrayal of depression and its effects on a family. It is definitely a book to recommend to teens living a life like Billy's. They will know that they are not alone.

Robin says

I enjoyed this book quite a bit, but it isn't a happy book.

It is written in first person from the perspective of a fifteen-year old boy. It journals the experience his family has as they go through the sudden and severe depression of their father.

It captures well the difficulties of dealing with mental illness: getting a diagnosis, struggling through treatment options, deciding who's in charge, guilt, isolation, anger, etc.

I think it also captured well what it's like to live with depression specifically or to love someone with depression. It showed how it is an illness that affects the entire family.

But it was able to do all this without getting too heavy. I wouldn't have a problem if my kids wanted to read it. Some of the members of book club maybe . . .

Rusty says

When I began this read I wondered why I chose this book. I was confused but no more confused than the characters in the novel. However, as I read more I became caught up in the problems of the family that was trying to cope with the changing behavior of the father. They, too, were confused. He didn't want to go to work. He wouldn't eat. He couldn't sleep. They sought medical help but the medications didn't help either so they turned to the internet seeking other solutions. When these didn't help the family found returned to their doctor. Their lives were dedicated to to watching and caring for a father who seemed lost. Someone had to be with the father always. They had no lives of their own. Would anything help? Read the novel for your self to discover the answer.
