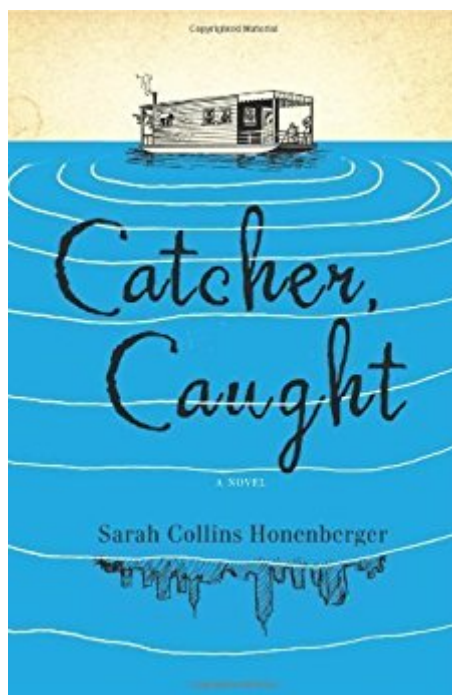


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Catcher, Caught



Synopsis

After an earth-shattering diagnosis of leukemia, 15-year-old Daniel Landon sees a reflection of himself in the words of J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. Inspired by Holden Caulfield, Daniel begins to question the intentions and authority of those around him in his own search for identity as he faces death. Tired of his cramped surroundings and hippie parents' alternative approaches to his treatment, he follows the footsteps of Caulfield to New York City in search of the same eternal truths, only to discover the importance of home when death looms. A coming of age story, a love story, and a new classic, *Catcher, Caught* will engage the imagination of more than one generation, searching for lasting values.

Book Information

File Size: 656 KB

Print Length: 258 pages

Publisher: Lake Union Publishing (December 28, 2010)

Publication Date: December 28, 2010

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B003A2C3NC

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #28,944 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #23

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family

Issues > Death #26 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Literature &

Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Values & Virtues #26 in Kindle Store > Prime Reading >

Literature & Fiction > Literary Fiction

Customer Reviews

Best part of this book was the frequent contrast between the existential teen misery (compelling to the miserable, but generally cured by time and finding your own place in the world) that is the topic of the original *Catcher*, and a true life and death crisis. Voice was unique, not a copy. Characters

were real (read imperfect, but really no villains either). And Landon is a real teenager with a more mature perspective due to his diagnosis. Still, a girlfriend is as important as mortality, and running away to NY to ask for medical care seems like a good plan. I especially liked the understated, untold story of Mack. How much of his drug experimentation was influenced by Landon's medical issues, if any? I like that the author doesn't take a position. Good read, I'd buy another book by this author on the strength of this one.

The premise of this story is to see the world from the eyes of a 16 year old who has just been diagnosed with stage 4 leukemia. Daniel is the middle son of three sons to a mom and dad who are a product of the hippie culture of the 1960s. They live on a houseboat in tidal waters of Virginia, and really are backwoods folks with anti government ideas feathering their nest. When they discover the leukemia in their son, they eschew traditional medical treatment, and instead turn to a herbalist who prescribes concoctions of herbs and natural products to hopefully cure Daniel. In the meantime, Daniel has the normal teenage raging hormones coursing through his veins, and he meets Meredith, who is a twin sister of Julianne. Meredith becomes Daniel's girlfriend, and Julianne becomes Mack's (Daniel's best friend) girlfriend. Daniel is obsessed with Salinger's story, the Catcher in the Rye, and he constantly patterns his life around answering the question: "What would Holden Caulfield do in this situation?" Holden is, of course, the 16 year old protagonist and narrator in the story. Like his hero Holden, Daniel is intelligent and sensitive, and he narrates in a cynical and jaded voice. He finds the hypocrisy and ugliness of the world around him almost unbearable, and through his cynicism he tries to protect himself from the pain and disappointment of the adult world. It is beyond interesting to view a terminal disease referred to as "The Disease" from Daniel's point of view. He is direct with his mortality, and he narrates some poignant insights as to how people begin to treat someone who has terminal cancer. Good story, well written, and it is as much an ode to the Catcher in the Rye as it is its own story.

I love the true voice in this novel of a 15 turning 16 old guy dealing with life threatening Leukemia while trying to be a more or less normal teenage guy messing around with his best friend; getting on with his brothers; trying to deal with his parents, especially his mom who thinks the usual chemo treatments are bad and prefers to consult an unschooled herbalist for her son, and meeting and falling in love with a beautiful young

woman. Daniel sees Holden Caulfield of CATCHER IN THE RYE fame as a sort of guide he wants to follow, but Holden, though he dealt with his own problems and worries, is not Daniel because Daniel grabs life and relishes his love for Meredith and his care for his family and his best friend, Mack. But it is the real and true voice that Sarah Honenberger uses in her novel that should ensure CATCHER, CAUGHT to be an enduring classic, along with the all too real problems faced by Daniel.

Like most high school children of a certain era, I was made to read The Catcher in the Rye. I didn't like it, maybe I even skipped reading it and read the Cliff notes instead. I can't remember. I used to know someone who LOVED the book and was inspired by it like the main character Daniel in Cather, Caught, who finds the book so near to him that he actually refers to it and the main character of that book, Holden Caulfield, throughout the story. I very much enjoyed Catcher, Caught-way more than the story he refers to. Way more. We are privy to his struggle to find life, to live life as a normal teenager in his final year of his existence. His parents refuse traditional treatment for his fatal disease thus all but ensuring his demise. The story is open ending, never really ending, leaving us to our own conclusions. It is easy to read with a plot that keeps you turning the pages...and just might make me read that darned old classic "The Catcher in the Rye" to see what all the fuss is about.

You will enjoy Catcher Caught if you like coming of age stories. While the writing was uneven at times, the story is thought provoking and the characters are appealing. Honenberger does a good job of creating a dialogue of sorts between her protagonist, Daniel, who suffers from a terminal illness, and Holden Caulfield. Any readers who have likewise dreamed up friendships in their own youth with fictional characters will be able to relate to this aspect of the book. There were moments in the novel when it seemed it could benefit from one more draft; however, the family drama is done convincingly and anyone who has lived on or close to rivers will appreciate the setting on Virginia's Rappahannock River.

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