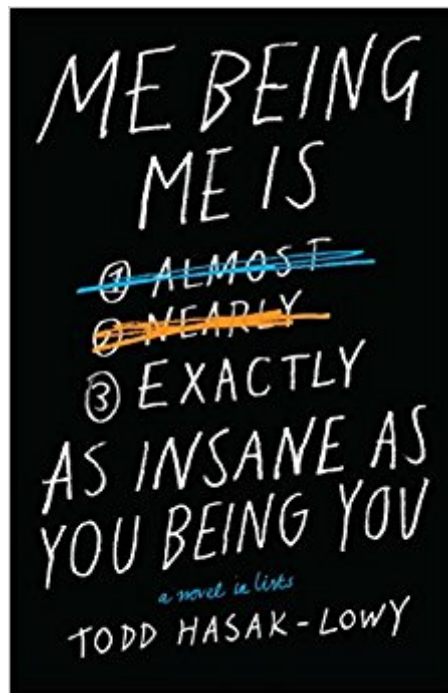




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Me Being Me Is Exactly As Insane As You Being You



Synopsis

A heartfelt, humorous story of a teen boy's impulsive road trip after the shock of his lifetime told entirely in lists! Darren hasn't had an easy year. There was his parents' divorce, which just so happened to come at the same time his older brother Nate left for college and his longtime best friend moved away. And of course there's the whole not having a girlfriend thing. Then one Thursday morning Darren's dad shows up at his house at 6 a.m. with a glazed chocolate doughnut and a revelation that turns Darren's world inside out. In full freakout mode, Darren, in a totally un-Darren move, ditches school to go visit Nate. Barely twenty-four hours at Nate's school makes everything much better or much worse—Darren has no idea. It might somehow be both. All he knows for sure is that in addition to trying to figure out why none of his family members are who they used to be, he's now obsessed with a strangely amazing girl who showed up out of nowhere but then totally disappeared. Told entirely in lists, Todd Hasak-Lowy's debut YA novel perfectly captures why having anything to do with anyone, including yourself, is: 1. painful 2. unavoidable 3. ridiculously complicated 4. possibly, hopefully the right thing after all.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up • Three reasons Darren Jacobs is having a tough year: His parents have gotten a divorce and his dad reveals a truth that sends him reeling; his brother Nate has just moved out of the house to go to college, leaving Darren to deal with the fallout of his parents' split on his own; and

he's torn between two girls—Zoey Lovell, who is a troubled, elusive, and artistic enigma who Darren can't seem to get out of his mind and sweet, wholesome Rachel Madsen, who is supportive and cheerful. Hasak-Lowy's debut YA novel is told entirely in lists—slightly disorienting at first, but which quickly becomes an integral part of Darren's voice. In terse, engaging prose, this novel of lists traces the teen's awkward yet heart-tuggingly true-to-life relationships with his parents, his older brother, and with the girls who are entering his life. Readers will relish and recognize the playful and profanity-tinged banter between the brothers as well as Darren's conflicted feelings as he analyzes (and overthinks) each scenario and interaction he has with Zoey, Rachel, Nate's college roommate, a new member of his band, his dad, and his mom. This novel might be great for reluctant readers due to its brief and inventive style, although younger teens might want to beware of the occasional depictions of drug and alcohol use. Although the characters are authentic and appealing, several plot threads are left dangling, which makes the ending feel a little rushed and abrupt.

—Evelyn Khoo Schwartz, Georgetown Day School, Washington, DC --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Hasak-Lowy maintains a sweet, acerbically funny, and often painfully honest tone.” (Publishers Weekly)

“In terse, engaging prose, this novel of lists traces the teen's awkward yet heart-tuggingly true-to-life relationships with his parents, his older brother, and with the girls who are entering his life . . . great for reluctant readers due to its brief and inventive style . . . characters are authentic and appealing.” (School Library Journal)

“The lists make for fast reading, and the reward is sweet for those daring enough to engage in the unconventional format. In his young adult debut, Hasak-Lowy really gets what it is to be a teen.” (VOYA)

“Powerful stream of consciousness that allows readers insight into Darren's conflicting feelings not just about his parents but also Nate's fall from grace and his own frustration with his attraction to bad-girl Zoey rather than the obviously delightful Rachel.” (Booklist)

My father (who told me about this books) is an obsessive list-maker, so I was intrigued to read it. The device of having every chapter being a list is clever and very funny in places, but it also reflects how the mind thinks: not always in elegant prose, but sometimes in simple lists of information. What I ended up liking most about this book is how it portrays that transition when teens are starting to do the things that adults do, and how it's sometimes exciting and sometimes frightening, but almost always uncomfortable.

"Me Being Me Is Exactly as Insane as You Being You" by Todd Hasak-Lowy may be pegged as being in the Young Adult genre but, believe me it is perfect for so many more than that age group. I'm pushing 60 and was delighted with the fresh and unique approach Hasak-Lowy took with this book. It's a story told in lists. I wasn't sure what to expect and it was a total surprise! In a good way surprise! I couldn't put this book down. I was fascinated with the format and the characters. I refuse to say anything more about the book except you will love it. If you see any reviews with a Spoiler Alert, look away and never look back. Trust me, you want to know nothing before you read it. This book is fresh, unique, and way cool. It's a book appropriate for teens grade 10 and seniors 130+ should they live so long.

"Me Being Me Is Exactly As Insane As You Being You" is a uniquely written account, told through lists, of the doubts, dreams, and life conflicts fifteen-year old Darren Jacobs experiences. Todd Hasak-Lowy's coming-of-age novel is one you will find intriguing and authentic, or one you will find tedious and inane. Spanning several days in Darren's life, "Me Being Me Is Exactly As Insane As You Being You" is written in the third person. However, the tone feels as if Darren himself was writing the lists but was referring to himself in the third person. This technique provides perspective and allows Darren to distance himself from his emotions and the events with which he is dealing. Todd Hasak-Lowy realistically captures the angst Darren is experiencing with respect to his parents' divorce, his reaction to girls, and his perspective on the future. The author clearly understands and empathizes with the emotions of teens; the conflicts and physical reactions, the actions Darren takes are all true-to-life. The use of lists as the vehicle by which Darren's story is told reflects the reality of communication with teens - either their responses are short and pithy or they become quite long and detailed. The use of these longer and more detailed narrative lists and shorter, succinct lists help keep the novel moving. The shorter lists provide relief from some of the less compelling, longer lists of the novel; the longer lists create the background for the novel's action. Parents may want to read "Me Being Me Is Exactly As Insane As You Being You" to determine whether it is appropriate for younger members of the target age group. Situations and relationship issues may not comport with conservative values. Nevertheless, this novel is the reality for many teens and is one that will appeal to the target audience. There were two reasons I rated this book as a 4-star read - the unique format and the author's understanding of the adolescent experience and psyche. Had those attributes been absent and had it been possible, "Me Being Me Is Exactly As Insane As You Being You" would have received 3.5 stars.

I decided to read this book based on the list format. It's an intriguing idea: a novel in lists! I was not disappointed. The list format may be a gimmick, but is so skillfully used that I sank into the story instead of thinking, "Oh cool; I'm reading lists!" The lists range from revealing teenage boy humor to numbing heartbreak: Fictional Creatures Nate Sounds like While Puking:1. Chewbacca2. Frankenstein3. The Hulk Storefronts Darren Walks Past until He Can No Longer Hear Them:1. Byron's Liquor2. Suds Coin Laundromat3. Saturn Cafe4. Fifth Third Bank And I loved Darren. I cheered for him, felt so sorry for him, and genuinely wanted the happiest possible ending for him. Note: this book contains obscenities and multiple references to drug and alcohol use. This doesn't diminish the book at all for me, but may be a point to consider if you plan on gifting this book or using it in a classroom.

I was a little skeptical when I started reading this book. Writing a novel comprised entirely of a series of lists seemed a little gimmicky to me, especially once I realized that many of the "items" on the lists were pages-long sections of traditional narrative, with dialogue, action, and the protagonist's thoughts. But once I got past the first 100 pages or so, I started to really enjoy the lists. They added a humor and a unique rhythm to the book that I absolutely loved! The main character is a teenaged boy named Darren, who is dealing with his parents' divorce, his older brother's erratic behavior, and his own confusing love life. Darren is extremely well characterized, and I think that teenagers, as well as most adults, will see something of themselves in him. He's angry, frustrated, and trying really hard to be a good person, which isn't always easy when you're 15 or 16. I loved this book. I would definitely recommend it to just about anyone.

A book entirely written in list form. Some are short, some are long and in narrative form. Darren Jacobs is a normal high school student whose brother has left for college and his parents have decided to divorce. That is rough and he is trying to take it in stride. But then dad has more news and Darren takes off to try to see his brother in college. A pretty good story carried out in a unique way. Sometimes I see free verse books as blatantly trying to lower its readability down and appeal to "reluctant" readers, but this one seems in earnest and a fine experiment in narrative form.

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