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Butter



Synopsis

A lonely obese boy everyone calls "Butter" is about to make history. He is going to eat himself to death-live on the Internet-and everyone is invited to watch. When he first makes the announcement online to his classmates, Butter expects pity, insults, and possibly sheer indifference. What he gets are morbid cheerleaders rallying around his deadly plan. Yet as their dark encouragement grows, it begins to feel a lot like popularity. And that feels good. But what happens when Butter reaches his suicide deadline? Can he live with the fallout if he doesn't go through with his plans? With a deft hand, E.J. Lange allows readers to identify with both the bullies and the bullied in this all-consuming look at one teen's battle with himself.

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Customer Reviews

Butter is a High School student who weights over 400 pounds. One day, he gets this great idea of creating a website where he'd stream live his death by over eating on New Year's Eve. Suddenly, this website makes Butter a popular kid; fat, but popular. I enjoyed reading how Butter deals with his new popularity by keeping it real and, most of all, keeping it focus: must still kill himself on New Year's Eve. Butter also has an online girlfriend, Anna, who goes to the same school he goes but who doesn't know that "that fat kid" who sits at the oversize table in the back of the cafeteria is her online love interest. Nope, Butter has never sent his picture to Anna claiming it to be more romantic that way. And obviously, he uses a nickname online. But he can't be an online boyfriend forever and Anna's pressure to meet in person makes him set a date for such meeting: New Year's Eve, the

same night he plans to over eat to death. How is he planning to accomplish both? What would happen when Anna finds out that the guy she likes weights more than 400 pounds? Think about for a moment. Would you forgo his physical appearance? Right. Butter reminds me of Playground (both overweight kids) but unlike Playground, Butter is a rich kid. Yes, you read that right; in fact, Butter drives a BMW to go to school. I find it interesting reading about being bullied and overweight being a rich kid. Why, rich kids have the means to better nutrition, exercise, therapy and so on. And Butter's home is not broken. On the contrary, his mother loves him dearly and takes good care of him. I liked that Butter kept it real and knew that his new found popularity had to do with the fact that he was planning to kill himself (even if at times his subconscious chose to forget that). In other words, his highs and lows were real, credible. I also liked that Jeremy the jerk (every book has one) didn't become a saint at the end. Lange kept Jeremy's character true (hateable) to the end. And I also liked that the rest of Butter's new "friends" didn't have a turn of heart and became all mushy and good boys. I didn't like though, that Anna, Butter's love interest ended up being Butter's friend after all. I really don't see the point of changing a character at the very end for no other reason than giving the book a happy ending. I think that is why I liked Cracked so much: the characters hated each other from the beginning and they didn't end up being best friends. The book has many vital messages such as cyber bullying is bad, suicide is not the answer, and physical appearance doesn't matter. And the messages come out strong. I give it 3-stars because these are all messages that I have read before and I'd like to read about a different take on them. For instance, if Anna wouldn't be friends with Butter because he is fat, why change at the end? Just because she discovered he is a nice guy? BUT she discovered this not knowing that the nice kid she was chatting online with was no other than the fat one they made fun of at school. Why not get to know him in school instead? Do you see my point here?

Butter was a book that I knew I had to read. As someone who has had eating disorders around her all her life I am always intrigued to see how an author handles the subject. Now, we get to read about anorexia and bulimia all the time, but I have never come across a book that tackles the other end of the eating disorder spectrum. That's right, we finally have a novel about obesity & compulsive/emotional eating and it really hits the nail on the head as to how you can be addicted to food, just as you can be addicted to drugs or alcohol. I walked away from this novel very impressed with how Erin Jade Lange tackled the multitude of emotions connected with a disorder such as this. Butter was a character that I felt for, he was unhappy in his own skin and he had just given up on trying to get better. He felt that he had passed the point of no return and was wallowing in what

could have been. I totally understood his helplessness, once you tip the scales at 423 lbs it's not exactly easy to lose it. While I of course didn't agree with where he decided to go with it, I at least understood his motives, and with a very over the top plot such as this, that's saying something. I've personally had people who suffer from both ends of this spectrum in my life and I thought the little things were handled perfectly; Butter's mothers attempts to appease him through food and the vicious cycle that creates is something that I have seen every day. A complaint that I do have about the novel though is that at times I found myself being reminded by instances that the students were in high school and not junior high. The coddling the Butter receives at home as well as the reactions of the kids at his school felt quite juvenile to me, then they would hop in their cars, or have a drink, and I would think "Oh yeah, these guys are in high school." While there was some dissent among the students I do feel that it wouldn't have been swept under the rug quite as it was after the first night that the website went up. Especially in this day and age with suicide topping the headlines, but alas, this is a novel, a fiction novel at that. Overall, I was very happy with the novel and it took me on a rollercoaster of emotions that I wasn't sure the subject matter would allow it too. Lange clearly did her research on the health issues at hand and it really showed in the execution of the plot. If you're looking for a contemporary read that is definitely different from the pack, then I would say Butter is for you.

This is such a unique premise. Morbid and shocking, but I couldn't look away. Butter had some major issues, his weight, the bullying, the way they almost seemed to see him as a mascot, as well as his self-esteem, but he is a likable narrator, and it felt seamless being in his head. At first I couldn't see his appeal to Anna but as the story went on, I could understand that it didn't in fact come from nowhere or from purely physical aspects, even though that is certainly a factor. It broke my heart their different interactions. I really like how Butter didn't seem to want the readers pity, he wanted their respect and to look past the outside. It really was just telling a story. Yes its about obesity, yes it is about bullying and being bullied, yes it has a message in it, but it is honest, it is gritty and it is thankfully laced with hope even in the darkest moments. That said, this is a dark book. It deals with bullying, suicidal thoughts, and other mature themes with some gritty, disgusting scenes. But Erin writes it beautifully in a manner that I just could not stop reading until I found out what happened to Butter. Bottom line: I've never read anything quite like it and I couldn't look away.

I've been looking forward to this book since I heard the premise (what a great premise!), and was not disappointed. I enjoyed the dark sense of humour in the writing and rooted for Butter all the way.

I couldn't put this book down; I ripped through it in one day. Recommended!

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