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The Beautiful Lost



Synopsis

Here are three things to know about Maia:1. Ever since her mother left, Maia's struggled with depression -- which once got so bad, she had to go to an institution for a while. She doesn't want to go back.2. Maia's sure that if she finds her mother, if the two of them can talk about whale songs and constellations, then everything will be okay again.3. She's in love with Billy, the handsome, brooding boy who lives in the group home in town. He doesn't seem to know that Maia exists... until now. When Maia sets off on a road trip in search of her mom, Billy unexpectedly comes along. They drive up the East Coast, stopping along the way for lobster rolls and lighthouses. Maia learns that Billy has dark secrets of his own -- and wants to outrun his past, too. But what will the future hold if they reach their destination? From internationally bestselling author Luanne Rice, this is a sweeping, stunning story about the surprising directions our hearts can take.

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Customer Reviews

Typical story of teenagers experiencing problems and how they tried to find what piece of their lives were missing. Well written.

I've enjoyed Luanne Rice's novels for years. I didn't realize she wrote young adult novels until I picked this out. The book immediately grabbed my attention; I read it in one sitting. I could tell that Luanne Rice has experience with depression because her writing Maia's story was so realistic. I fell in love with Maia. She was so real to me. That's the measure of a good book for me: how much do I care about the characters? Maia was a young woman in pain; she was living in a world of anguish. I can't give away too much of the story! I could feel Maia's need for her mother; her fear of her own depression and her desire to be wanted and loved by Billy. Billy wasn't as lovable to me; his character was angry and while it's understandable that he would be so mad, it got in my way of caring too deeply. I know he was hurting badly. I had empathy for him but his hard shell was too hard for me to crack. I recommend this book to teens. The topic can be overwhelming yet it's a topic that needs to be addressed. Hopefully a teen with questions would have an adult to discuss the book with them.

~The Beautiful Lost~ by Luanne Rice is one of those YA novels which goes far beyond the ordinary traumas of teen-aged angst and delves potently into serious relationship issues. The story is told from the viewpoint of sixteen-year-old Maia, whose mother left her in the care of her father three years before this narrative begins. Maia's feelings of abandonment led to a major depression, for which she was sent to a mental hospital for a while. Supposedly stabilized by meds at the point when the story opens, she none-the-less feels judged and overly supervised by her stepmother Astrid, and conceives a plan to run away and seek her mother, a ~Whale Maven~ whom she believes is staying in a remote cabin on a fjord in Quebec. Maia is joined in her escape by Billy, a resident of the neighboring group home, who also has a family trauma to deal with. His mother was murdered by his father, who is currently in prison, and his grandfather, his real mentor, has seemingly rejected him. He hates the group home, and sympathizes with Maia's quest. The story deals primarily with the youngsters' road trip. Although there are challenges and difficulties, nothing is over-played or implausible. Maia and Billy grow to trust and rely upon each other, and their friendship blooms naturally into a deeply caring relationship. The culmination of the story is not really predictable, but is generally very well worked out, providing a sense of balance and rightness. As a YA novel, the book is easy to read, but is fully developed and charmingly characterized.

I hesitate to read teen books about depression because they're normally cliché and full of teen angst. This one was a true book about the realities of depression mixed in with coming of age, first love and a twisty adventurous backstory full of road trip adventure and whales songs. Luanne Rice writes beautifully and I won't miss a book of hers from now on!

Many YA books about depression and other mental illnesses have fallen into the trap of being cliché, but this one has not. It goes above and beyond the expectations of many readers and LuAnne Rice breathes animus and plausibility into her characters, which is a real gift. I have read other books by LuAnne rice and she is a truly gifted author and her books are ones I will be following. Maia, 16 is the protagonist of this story. Maia's mother left the family when Maia was 13 and Maia subsequently suffers from clinical depression. Sadly, her depression was so debilitating that she served time in a hospital. I absolutely loved her psychiatrist, who was truly a good person. Released and medicated and seemingly stabilized, Maia plans to run away from home, especially from her stepmother Astrid with whom she has a bad relationship. She seeks her natural mother and clues point her to Quebec. Maia is accompanied by a boy named Billy who lives in an area group home. His father killed his mother and the father is serving a life sentence. The boy's grandfather is not in a position to raise the boy, so he wound up in the group home, which he hated. The two young people join forces and decide to go on their respective quests together. Their trip is not an easy one nor is it one without danger and problems. Forced to trust each other, in time the pair do. They meet some very interesting peers along the way including two girls who are partners and help point them in the right direction on their mission and a hitchhiking pair in Canada who may or may not be what they claim. The pair's road trip from Connecticut to Canada was an exciting quest and as a reader, I found being along for the ride quite harrowing and exciting. Maia and Billy were very resourceful and literally lucked out on their trip to Canada. I felt Maia was a very sympathetic character and one who described crippling clinical depression in a very plausible way. Billy was also a sympathetic character due to his family upheaval. He has a real tender side as when he bought ice cream for children in a group home en route to Canada. This is an excellent novel and one that will keep readers thinking and talking for a very long time. Hopefully it will become a book featured in book discussions and school groups. Having the conversations about depression and the related issues covered in this book is something that will prove helpful to many and keep people thinking. Willie Nelson's classic "On the Road Again" and the 1965 Dave Clark Five classic "Catch Us If You Can" could well underscore this book.

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