

## **Hot Dog Girl**

**Jennifer Dugan**

**Reviewed by: Ritika Chhabra, 13**

**Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity**

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At a magical castle with carousels and knights, there are two main things that fit together. A cute diving pirate and a gorgeous, graceful princess. Working at Magic Castle Playground was Lou's childhood dream. But in her second summer at the job, she's assigned to be a giant dancing hotdog... again. To top it off, this is the park's last summer, before its closing steals away Lou's precious memories of the place. Can Lou capture a pirate's heart and save the whole park in a single summer?

One enjoyable aspect of the Hotdog Girl was the representation of Lou's single dad. Caring, loving and sweet, the father-daughter relationship was one that was extremely enjoyable to read about. In addition, Lou's father gives her the right amount of space to experiment and grow, while gently guiding her through different experiences. I also loved that the story was full of humour, heart and honesty, three character traits that weave together to create a nostalgic and memorable atmosphere. The book also moved at a good pace, and wrapped up well, giving each character a satisfactory ending.

One main part of the book that I disliked was Lou's personality. Throughout the story, she is consistently self-centred, demanding and inconsiderate of other characters. And although it appears that she is making an effort to improve herself, there is no permanent change in her attitude towards her friends and family. Many times during the book she uses her best friend with no regard for her emotional reaction, and an apology is all that it takes to make amends to the situation. In addition, she often has misguided beliefs about herself and her relationships to other people. For example, Lou justified breaking up another couple because "they don't look that in love anyway." In the end, these problems are neither addressed nor fixed in a meaningful way, setting a negative example for readers. This book would be best suited to readers aged 12+.

### **Recommended Titles:**

These Witches Don't Burn by Isabel Sterling

Pumpkin Heads by Rainbow Rowell

I Wish You All the Best by Mason Deaver

Technically, You Started It by Lana Wood Johnson

Tweet Cute by Emma Lord