

The Weight of Zero

Karen Fortunati

Reviewed by: Mikha Kounouho, 14

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Catherine Pulaski is seventeen years old and has bipolar disorder. She doesn't mind the frenzied high energy manias, but she does mind Zero, the opposite end of the spectrum. Zero, the chilling monster that loves to visit, sending doubt, fear, anger, and desperation into her life. Zero has been lingering with her since her grandmother's death, a constant presence refusing to let go. Once, Zero won, seeping into her mind, soul, and body, until she gave in and tried to take her own life. Her mother came home in the nick of time, but she knew Zero would come back.

Since that day, Catherine made a plan. Slowly, she collected her pills, saving them in her secret stash for the day when she would be rid of Zero and her bipolar depression forever. Leading up to this day, Catherine decides to make a bucket list of things to do, but when she meets Michael, a boy who seems to run towards her rather than away, and Kristal, a girl from the support group she attends, her list begins to become a list of things that remind her to live, moments so happy that, sometimes, she forgets the monster lingering in her head. As the young girl combats the decision of telling her new friends the truth about her bipolar disorder, she finally realizes a truth she has been hiding from herself—she wants to live.

The Weight of Zero is a story that is so real and beautiful in every aspect. Author Karen Fortunati captures every last raw emotion of pain, fear, love and hope in this heart wrenching book that will leave you breathless. Catherine's story illuminates what makes life beautiful and worth living for: friends, family, love, hope, and truth. Her journey draws attention to the conflict between personal image and reality as Catherine struggles to find herself. Every page is filled with struggles that make the young girl stronger, helping her to ultimately uncover hope in its purest form.

I would recommend this eye-opening book to teens 13 and up. The content of this narrative is heavy, but it is this raw depiction of Catherine's reality that makes this book so inspiring. This book is, for all readers, a deeply moving depiction of a young girl's struggle, but it is especially a book for readers who have lost hope, who are struggling, who feel that they have no where left to go. The novel harks on the importance of new beginnings and is a vital reminder to look to the future, beyond your troubles, and see life's potential. It is a wonderfully humbling book, that I would definitely recommend buying as a gift. This book is truly unforgettable and a story that I would definitely reread many times over.

Recommended Titles:

Harmonic Feedback by Tara Kelly
It's My Life by Stacey Ramey
Fear of Missing Out by Kate McGovern