

## **My Heart and Other Black Holes**

**Jasmine Warga**

**Reviewed by: Elisabeth Suarez, 14**

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

[www.bethestaryouare.org](http://www.bethestaryouare.org)

Aysel, a sixteen-year-old girl, feels like everyone is judging her at school. They whisper and talk about her behind her back because of a crime her father committed against a local teen. Aysel has depression and begins to plan to kill herself. She finds a website online for people looking for a suicide partner, as she finds killing herself is not an easy task. She thinks a buddy that will help her along the way will stop her from “chickening out.” Someone under the name “FrozenRobot” posted on the website, looking for a partner who has no kids, lives close and will accept his one non-negotiable- the date of their death has to be on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

Aysel finds she fits these requirements, so they become buddies. She then is surprised that “FrozenRobot” is a teenage boy, Roman. Despite their difference, they grow to become closer. Aysel begins to learn more about Roman’s tragic family accident. Eventually, they develop feelings for one another. Yet, Roman still wants to go through with the suicide, even making their pact more solid. Aysel must decide between her love for Roman, or making him happy by letting him go through with taking his own life.

This book is good for teens or young adults that have depression and are looking for something to relate to. Just a warning and cautionary message, there is plans and thoughts of suicide in the novel. It is NOT recommended for people having suicidal thoughts. If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, please contact your doctor or a professional immediately. I would also give this book as a gift only if you know the receiver very well.

Overall, this book has its positives and its negatives. My opinion is a little partial as I am not a big fan of romance novels, but I was excited when I thought the book was mainly about mental illness, rather than a love story. The positive is that it is relatable in some parts when discussing depression. I have battled depression and anxiety for a few years now, and found the “black slug” feeling Aysel describes as painfully true. Aysel’s character does a great job of showing how hard living with depression is. My favorite quote from the book is, “Depression is like a heaviness that you can't ever escape. It crushes down on you, making even the smallest things like tying your shoes or chewing on toast seem like a twenty-mile hike uphill. Depression is a part of you; it's in your bones and your blood.” Depression doesn’t just go away. It lives inside of you; makes you always feel weighed down. Yes, there may be some days where you feel lighter, but ultimately, it is never ending. Aysel portrays that feeling in an easily understood way. Another positive is the way the two main characters, Roman and Aysel, illustrate guilt. Both also make these heavy emotions easy for someone who hasn’t experienced such things to understand.

Some things I didn’t like about the book was how it may make depression feel glamorous and like a thing to overcome. Yes, the book shows depression as being a burden but one of the reasons Roman starts to have feelings for Aysel is because she wanted to kill herself. This is

definitely not the right idea for teens for have. Every day is a battle with depression; it is not a thing like teenage love or having a boyfriend can fix just like that.

**Recommended Titles:**

It's Kind of a Funny Story by Ned Vizzini

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky

Suicide Notes by Micheal Thomas Ford

Elanor and Park by Rainbow Rowell