

My Heart and Other Black Holes

Jasmine Warga

Reviewed by: Rachel Johnson, 42

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

www.bethestaryouare.org

Aysel Seran is 16 years old, loves physics and works at a telemarketing firm. She is also very depressed and wants to commit suicide. Ever since her father was put in prison for a crime that shocked the community, she has had a tough time. Her friends have either distanced themselves or been pushed away. People look at her differently and she feels her mother does not want her around. While at work she regularly visits a website called Smooth Passages where she looks for someone to be her suicide partner. While on the site she meets Roman who is also depressed, and they decide to be partners.

Roman is 17, a great athlete and popular. He is overwhelmed with guilt because his sister died while in his care. He has a specific date he wants to die and Aysel agrees that they will begin planning for that day, which is about a month away. The two begin spending a lot of time together and learning about each other's trauma. The closer they get to the date Aysel starts having second thoughts. She is beginning to see why life is worth living and she wants to fight her depression. The only problem is she promised Roman. Can she get him to change his mind in time? How will she show him that he has so much to live for?

This is an amazing book. Although it is incredibly sad, it touches on depression which is a genuine issue that affects so many people. Jasmine Warga shows the pain and despair that accompanies depression. The main characters were so different but, in many ways, the same. The relationship that blossomed was a beautiful touch. I liked that the author found a way to include a touch of humor and romance to a tragic story, which lightened the tone. I also liked that in the end it was highlighted that having someone to trust and talk to in this situation is important. Some of the issues addressed in this book may bother some readers (suicide, murder, mental illness), and there is an incident of underage drinking parents may want to be aware of. I would recommend this book as a buy for readers ages 15+.

Recommended Titles

Falling into Place, by Amy Zhang

All the Bright Places, by Jennifer Niven

The Burn Journals, by Brent Runyon