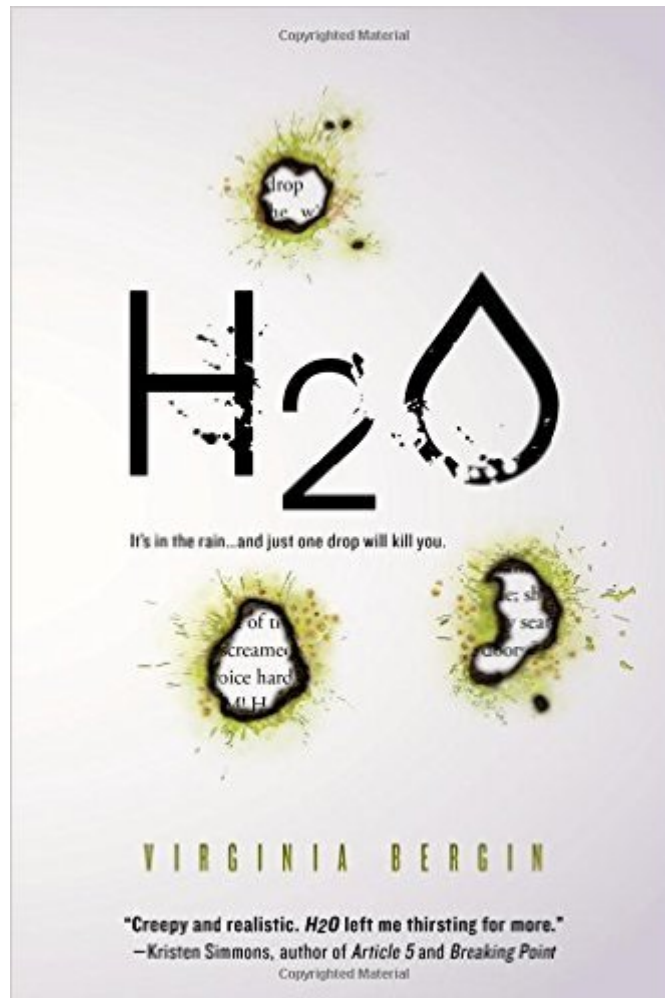


The book was found

H2O



Synopsis

.27 is a number Ruby hates. It's a number that marks the percentage of the population that has survived. It's a number that means she's one of the "lucky" few still standing. And it's a number that says her father is probably dead. Against all odds, Ruby has survived the catastrophic onset of the killer rain. Two weeks after the radio started broadcasting the warning, "It's in the rain. It's fatal and there's no cure," the drinkable water is running out. Ruby's left with two options: persevere on her own, or embark on a treacherous journey across the country to find her father-if he's even still alive.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Picking up H2O at the bookstore, I was intrigued by the idea of "killer rain". After it sat on my bookshelf for a few months, I just got around to reading it and, well, I have some thoughts. I still feel like the premise of the book is an attention-grabber. A good old-fashioned apocalypse. What fun! However, I find myself wishing that the story was told from the view of a different character. Anyone. Just not this obnoxious, braindead teenage girl named Ruby Morris. The book begins with her first kiss from her crush at a pool party, and minutes later, the same boy is poisoned by the rain, because his MP3 player was worth running out into the killer rain for. These are the kind of characters we're dealing with. Once back home, Ruby realizes that she forgot her cell phone at the party. OH SWEET HEAVENS. Now it's an apocalypse! Okay, I admit it, as someone still in my teen-to-adult years, I often have my phone/music player attached at the hand. But I expect better

from a readable protagonist, I guess. There is nothing wrong with realism, and I understand the want for the cellphone, but as the world is being practically exterminated around you, one has more pressing problems. My main complaint is how shallow and vapid Ruby Morris is. Throughout the book, she worries about life-changing conundrums like her cellphone, her hair and makeup, and being rude to Darius, the only surviving classmate of hers that is offering to help her, even though at school she treats him like dirt because he is "nerdy". You know one of the first things she does after her entire family dies? Jets back to her boyfriend's house to retrieve her cell! Although the integral element of the book, the story, moved along decently, I feel like the prose could have used another round of editing or three. I've written a novel before, and this reminds me of some of the stuff I cut out from my manuscript. There are excessive uppercase letters, even when the characters are not shouting whatsoever (Ruby doesn't just say "What?", she says "WHAT?!?!", in italics too). There are sentences that essentially repeat what was said in a previous sentence, and the narrator refers to characters as things like "the SIT-DOWN! guy". Also, I wish that some of the side characters that Ruby met, like the limo full of young people, and the strange man standing outside the bar, had come back into the narrative somehow. It may be more realistic to an apocalypse (yes, you read that right) that one doesn't meet up with strangers again, but I felt it would have made more sense in a story, so that you felt that you were meeting these characters for a reason. Lastly, as the story winds down, we find Ruby running away yet again from a group of survivors that are trying to help her, so they can rebuild. She goes on a mission to find her dad, but it frustrated me that we don't even find out if he is alive. To me, her journey as a character was nonexistent, because at the end, after all she went through, she is the same annoying, bratty teen she was at the beginning, worrying about unimportant things. Taking into account that this is the author's debut novel, first of all, kudos to Virginia Bergin on getting published. But I would say not to go too overboard on trying to make your narrative voice sound like a teenager. It may be realistic, but in my opinion, it is more grating than anything. I agree with the above reviewer that said it is like reading "the Instagram comments of a fifth-grader". Overall, 2 stars for an interesting premise that was done in by the annoying protagonist.

There is nothing in the world quite so droll, so understated, so stiff-upper-lipped as a British apocalypse. That sounds like I'm being sarcastic, but I am totally not. Ruby is fifteen in Dartbridge, England. The killer rain is coming, and Ru isn't even at home with her mom and step-dad. What is she going to do? No Katniss, Ru is not going to whittle a longbow and protect her family at all costs. No Tris, Ru is not going to accept being the plain girl with the unusually heroic divergence. No, Ru,

a normal, semi-popular 15 year old, is going to make a lot of stupid decisions, get lucky often, and loot stores for fabulous fashion while generally muddling through. And I was surprised how much I liked her for it. The basic premise of this book is so horrifying: a bacterium from space, released when we blew up an asteroid that was going to hit the earth, has passed into the atmosphere and saturated the rain. If you drink it, you die horribly. And fast. If you get wet, you die horribly. And fast. The only safe fluids are ones that have been sealed before it all began. Even boiling does not destroy this space-bacterium. No one is immune...When I first started reading, I thought, "So.... how is that gonna work?" I mean, to have a good apocalypse story, you have to have some tiny percentage of insanely lucky, impossibly immune, tenacious survivors. But if no one is immune, and the killer is EVERYWHERE, um... how does this pan out? [I'm quite pleased to say that a character in the book also asks this (as yet unanswered) question. So the author is aware of the tremendous scope of her scenario. Bully for her.] Essentially, well, the killer rain's saving grace is.... it's killer. We start with a full population, and after a few days of rain, less than one third of a percent (we think) is left. That means there are a lot of bottled beverages left for everyone! For a while, anyway. Everyone Keep Calm and Carry On, right? One of the best things about this book is that Ruby doesn't miraculously stop being a shallow teenager. She still gets distracted by shiny objects and does things while freaked out that are not the wisest decisions. She gets by a lot on dumb luck, teenage adaptability, and the help of random people. She sticks to her one mission (getting to London to find her dad) with teenaged bloody mindedness. In other words, she's as realistic a teenage apocalypse heroine as I've ever seen. Another choice of the author's that I applaud is that Ruby doesn't team up with some life-saving partner in the first chapter and stick with that person through thick and thin. People go their separate ways. People have trust issues. People keep dying. Ruby has to keep adapting. It's a gutsy move by V. Bergin, and she pulls it off. The bottom line is, this was a really well done apocalypse scenario. Terrifying but with flashes of humor, humanity, and even hope. Overwhelming, but with strands of believability. Solid 4.5 stars from this reviewer.

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