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The Impossible Knife Of Memory



Synopsis

For the past five years, Hayley Kincaid and her father, Andy, have been on the road, never staying long in one place as he struggles to escape the demons that have tortured him since his return from Iraq. Now they are back in the town where he grew up so Hayley can attend school. Perhaps, for the first time, Hayley can have a normal life, put aside her own painful memories, even have a relationship with Finn, the hot guy who obviously likes her but is hiding secrets of his own. Will being back home help Andy's PTSD, or will his terrible memories drag him to the edge of hell, and drugs push him over? *The Impossible Knife of Memory* is Laurie Halse Anderson at her finest: compelling, surprising, and impossible to put down.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (209 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #30,808 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #20 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Military](#) #24 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Depression & Mental Illness](#) #43 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Military & Wars](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

See more of my reviews on [The YA Kitten!](#) My copy was an ARC I received from the publisher via NetGalley. If there's anything Laurie Halse Anderson can do, it's write a story where she shakes up our perception of a topic so common we just about glance over it. With date rape in *Speak* and eating disorders in *Wintergirls*, she really nailed the all-too-common topics in a way few authors can even begin to approach. With *The Impossible Knife of Memory*, she works to pull it off again with PTSD as the topic this time. Does it work? Well...When it comes to Hayley and the really sad life

she lives with her Iraq/Afghanistan war vet father Andy, Anderson nails it and nails it HARD. Wow. The dynamic between them is very screwed up because of his PTSD and the effect it has had on Hayley's life, but they love each other dearly and you can feel it. Their ups and downs --especially his--are vivid and it makes you want to sweep them both up in your arms in hopes of making things better for them. Hayley has a well-developed character/personality, but she has a tendency to be a repugnant person. Calling everyone zombies, calling girls "baby-zombie-bitches," heckling them in her head because they dared enjoy heels,... She doesn't seem to like other girls much. Only the zombie habit sees change and while calling other girls such things, she's making feminist points about how stupid it is to blame a woman's menstrual cycle whenever she dares show emotion. It's a little jarring. What really tries to kill this novel is the unnecessary romance with a creep. *Speak* and *Wintergirls* both worked better without romances because it put the spotlight on their main characters and their issues. Here, the romance takes up a lot of the book.

As one other reviewer has already written, I, too, may have had my expectations set way too high before I read this book. I know that Anderson is a highly decorated YA novelist, and I also saw that almost all the customer reviews on *raved* about this book. The back of the book has quotes from professional reviewers calling her books "screamingly funny" and "riveting." So when I sat down to read this book, I was surprised at how unimpressive I found it. Don't get me wrong; it's not a bad book. I just don't really see anything great about it. The plot is a first person narrative of a high school misfit struggling with the usual high school angst as well as just about every other difficulty the author could think of. I was reminded of those ABC After School Specials they used to show on t.v. when I was a kid where every episode dealt with a teen dealing with some sort of life crisis (suicide, bulimia, bullying, etc.) Only this novel threw in so many "issues" that I started to lose count. The plot at least touches on a host of issues including but not limited to post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, alcoholism, drug abuse, marital infidelity, divorce. and teen sex. As a whole, I found myself starting to dread turning the page for fear yet another problem would rear its ugly head. The voice of the narrator was (at least in my opinion) a stereotypical high school misfit. Her attitude was to basically hate everyone and everything about her high school and seem way too cool and intelligent to be interested in anyone or anything. While I understood that, since the character has many struggles in her young life, her attitude wouldn't tend to being the most rosy, I found myself not really liking her that much.

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