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Press Play



Synopsis

Booklist Top 10 Sports Books for Youth: 2015 Pound by sweaty pound, Greg Dunsmore's plan is working. Greg is steadily losing weight while gaining the material he needs to make the documentary that will get him into film school and away from the constant jeers of 'Dun the Tun.' But when Greg captures footage of brutal and bloody hazing by his town's championship-winning lacrosse team, he knows he has evidence that could damage as much as it could save. And if the harm is to himself and his future, is revealing the truth worth the cost?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Greg Dunsmore wants to escape the small town whose main source of pride and revenue is the high school's sports team that has made his life hell. Now in his junior year, Greg focuses on putting together a portfolio that will ensure he gets accepted to film school. While documenting his weight loss story he inadvertently captures the violent hazing and abuse the lacrosse team endures during practice but what shocks Greg even more is everyone who's involved. Press Play is a young adult story that delves into hazing and bullying with a dark intensity and unflinching honesty. It presents an interesting social commentary on high school life, family dynamics and society. I liked that it had a deeper message about honesty, integrity, courage and change. The narration is engaging with a cadence and distinct voice that makes the main character feel genuine and relatable. The characterization was great and I enjoyed reading the interactions between the characters as their relationships strengthened. I liked that each of the characters had their own issues and that they supported one another as they worked through them. The story explored the different variations of

bullying and their effects. It was interesting that it also showed how these issues aren't isolated to just high school but can also bleed into adulthood. The story presented a variety of moral dilemmas and I liked that the main character struggled with them before choosing a course of action. I enjoyed reading about the interests the main character had. It helped offset the intensity and was fun to read. I liked that technology factored into the story while also showcasing the culture and effort put into filmmaking. The main character's weight loss story felt authentic and honest.

Truth, at whatever cost. Because this is apparently my thing when it comes to book reviews, my one word to describe Press Play is **hardcore**. Press Play is also gripping, provocative, and authentic, and there's loads to digest during and after reading it. The depiction of bullying might be considered dramatic by some, but I felt it was as accurate as it was chilling. As such, some of the content is difficult to swallow...but really, that's part of the point. Abuse--whether it comes in the form of hazing, bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or neglect--is a terrible, terrible thing that shouldn't happen. It shouldn't be excused or permitted. Yet it does happen, and it is excused or permitted in many contexts--particularly in schools. Sometimes, we choose to stand on the sidelines and do nothing even though we know someone is suffering from some form of abuse--whether it's because we're afraid of the abusers, or afraid of the perceptions our peers will have about us. We all have our reasons. Press Play delves into those reasons and presents a solid case for doing what's right no matter the consequences, showcasing virtues like compassion, courage, determination, and honor. Devine really engages us and challenges us to consider our choices and perspectives. The style, setting, and characters have an authenticity about them that's difficult to come by. I'll admit the swearing was a bit much, but it did capture the high school setting well. Still, I was overwhelmed at times. But I loved how each character--no matter how "together" they seemed--struggled with something on a soul-deep level...and they all tried to hide it. Press Play offers comfort and hope to all of us because we all keep secrets, and we all struggle.

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