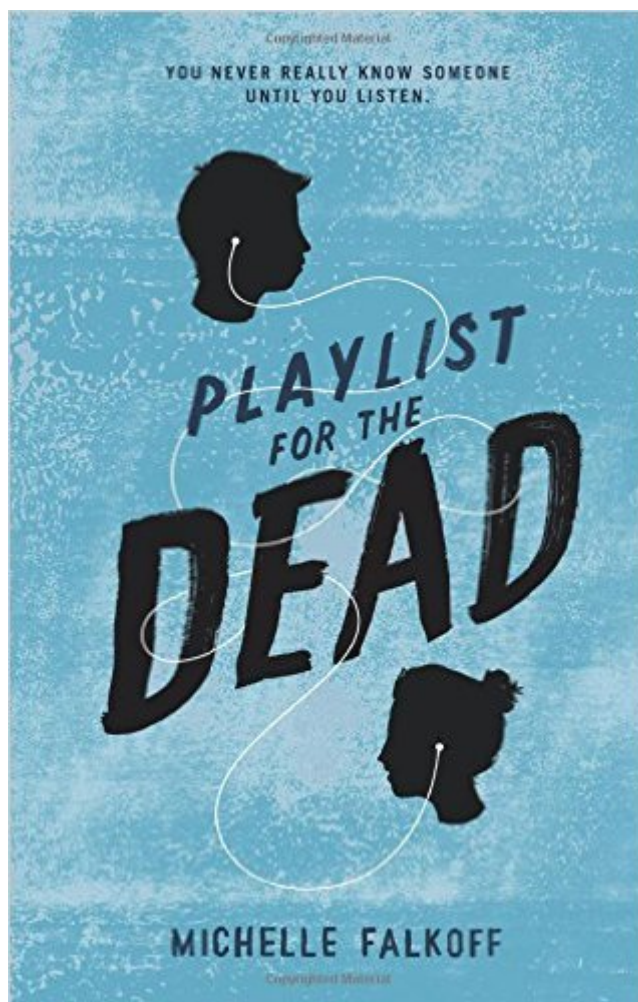


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Playlist For The Dead



Synopsis

“A page-turner that combines genuine intrigue with heartbreak and desire.” —Holly Goldberg Sloan, New York Times bestselling author of *Counting by Sevens* There was a party. There was a fight. The next morning, Sam’s best friend, Hayden, was dead. And all he left Sam was a playlist of songs and a suicide note: For Sam “listen and you’ll understand. To figure out what happened, Sam has to rely on the playlist and his own memory. But the more he listens, the more he realizes that his memory isn’t as reliable as he thought. And it might only be by taking out his earbuds and opening his eyes to the people around him that he’ll finally be able to piece together his best friend’s story. And maybe have a chance to change his own. Part mystery, part love story, and part coming-of-age tale in the vein of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and *The Spectacular Now*, Michelle Falkoff’s debut novel is an honest and gut-wrenching first novel about loss, rage, and what it feels like to outgrow a friendship that’s always defined you—and the struggle to redefine yourself.

Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: HarperTeen (January 27, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 006231050X

ISBN-13: 978-0062310507

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (85 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #354,728 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #100 in Books > Teens >

Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Suicide #195 in Books > Teens > Literature &

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Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Death & Dying

Customer Reviews

Michelle Falkoff’s *PLAYLIST FOR THE DEAD* is a moving, thought-provoking, and wonderfully told story about a boy who’s trying to come to grips with his best and only friend’s suicide and understand just what his friend was trying to say through the playlist he made for him. It is a story that tackles a tough subject, but does so in a way that is not too heavy, yet still weighty enough for readers to make an emotional connection with the story and its characters and to give

them a number of things to think about. It introduces a boy who is completely lost, alone, riddled with guilt, and desperate to understand what part he played in his friend's decision. It follows him in the days and year after the suicide as he tries to interpret the meaning behind each song in the playlist and build a new life for himself. The author lets both readers and her main character, Sam, try and solve the puzzle together about just what led Hayden to choose to end his life. Through Sam's memories, the memories of a few others who knew him, and the songs on Hayden's playlist, readers will get to know Hayden, come to empathize with his struggles, and perhaps understand why he did what he did. And while this is in part a story about Hayden, it's very much a story about Sam and everyone that Hayden left behind. **PLAYLIST FOR THE DEAD** focuses on what happens to those whose lives Hayden impacted, how they cope with the loss, how they adapt, how they survive. It is sad and sweet and heartfelt and heartbreaking. It asks the question "why," and it reveals the answer in a way that feels a little bit like a mystery. It gives readers a peek into a friendship that was on the verge of changing, one with secrets, one that had its ups and downs, but one that still had a strong bond.

****I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.**** Having read *13 Reasons Why*, I initially thought about that book when I read the synopsis for *Playlist for the Dead*. I did worry it would be too similar, but it stands on its own two feet with Sam's voice in narrating, the mystery surrounding Hayden's death, and the things Sam learns about himself as well as Hayden. *Playlist for the Dead* is not only about suicide but also friendship, growing up, bullying, and finding your own path amid the pressures from parents, school, and even your friends. The story surrounding Hayden's suicide is messy and complicated, and that's how suicide is. There's never just one reason why a person feels that's their only option; instead there's a myriad of them, and sometimes one event can push that person off the ledge much like the saying about the straw that broke the camel's back. I felt the weight of Sam's guilt settle over me as I read. That was realistically done and as Sam unravels the mystery, he finds more and more people who are also secretly blaming themselves and wrestling with their own guilt, wishing they could have done something to change the outcome. This is one of those times where you wish badly for a rewind button. I believe Hayden felt hopeless about all the bad things happening in his life and didn't have any fight left in him to keep trying for the good. Topped off with the events the night of the party, that was his last straw. Obviously he must have been thinking about suicide as a way out for a while - people don't just wake up one day and kill themselves. It's a slow progression downhill with a lot of time spent struggling, and thinking about all of this just made me feel so much empathy for Hayden.

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