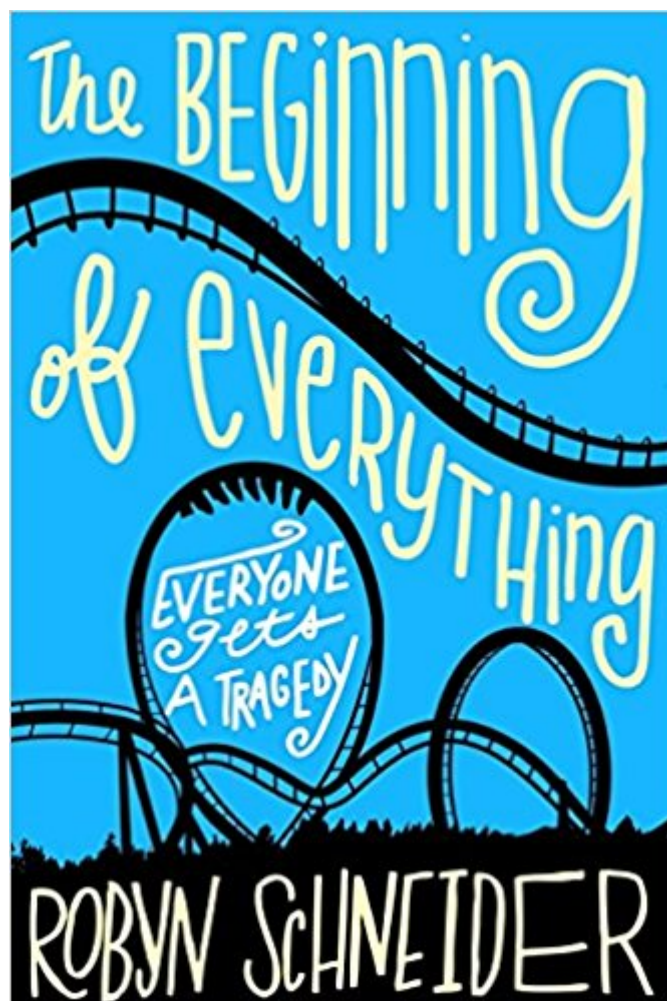


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The Beginning Of Everything



Synopsis

Robyn Schneider's *The Beginning of Everything* is a witty and heart-wrenching teen novel that will appeal to fans of books by John Green and Ned Vizzini, novels such as *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, and classics like *The Great Gatsby* and *The Catcher in the Rye*. Varsity tennis captain Ezra Faulkner was supposed to be homecoming king, but that was before—before his girlfriend cheated on him, before a car accident shattered his leg, and before he fell in love with unpredictable new girl Cassidy Thorpe. As Kirkus Reviews said in a starred review, "Schneider takes familiar stereotypes and infuses them with plenty of depth. Here are teens who could easily trade barbs and double entendres with the characters that fill John Green's novels." Funny, smart, and including everything from flash mobs to blanket forts to a poodle who just might be the reincarnation of Jay Gatsby, *The Beginning of Everything* is a refreshing contemporary twist on the classic coming-of-age novel—a heart-wrenching story about how difficult it is to play the part that people expect, and how new beginnings can stem from abrupt and tragic endings.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up-Ezra Faulkner believes that everyone has a tragedy waiting to happen that will be their life-changing moment. In the summer before seventh grade, his best friend, Toby, had his moment when he inadvertently caught the severed head of a boy who was decapitated on a ride in Disneyland. Ezra ended his friendship with Toby after that. Now 17, Ezra encounters his own tragic watershed event: he finds his girlfriend cheating on him and then has a car accident that ends his tennis career. He returns to school for his last year a broken boy who has shunned his jock friends

and just wants to make it through life unnoticed. By reconnecting with Toby and developing a relationship with Cassidy, a new girl who has a secretive past and home life, Ezra gets the chance to remake himself into someone who lives rather than just exists. Though Ezra's old friends are depicted as stereotypes, they help to emphasize the attributes of his new friends, who are quirky, smart, and funny. This is a wonderfully told story. The dialogue moves the plot along at a fast pace, and Ezra, with all his flaws, is a character to whom readers can relate. Teens won't want to put this one down until the mystery of Cassidy is unraveled at the end.-Elizabeth Kahn, Patrick F. Taylor Science & Technology Academy, Jefferson, LA (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Starred Review The way Ezra Faulkner sees it, everyone gets one great tragedy, after which life should roll on predictably. His middle-school best friend, Toby, gets his when a roller-coaster accident brands him a social misfit, and Ezra gets his a week before junior prom, when he, the tennis star and class president shoo-in, is injured by a distracted driver. When senior year begins, Ezra and his destroyed leg slide easily into a new social circle, eschewing the surface attempts of former friends to stay connected and instead joining Toby on the debate team. That's where he meets Cassidy, a beguiling transfer student who helps Ezra discover his new self. To Ezra, it's an idyllic relationship, so when it collapses, his worldview collapses, too. Hadn't he just recovered from his one great tragedy? Throughout, Ezra reads *The Great Gatsby* and alludes to parallels found in the classic novel. His story of self-discovery and reinvention is told in past tense, providing just enough distance for bits of reflection and subtle foreshadowing, which serve to enrich characters and build suspense. This thought-provoking novel about smart kids doing interesting things will resonate with the John Green contingent, as it is tinged with sadness, high jinks, wry humor, and philosophical pondering in equal measures. Grades 8-11. --Heather Booth --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I chose this book for an English project and I kind of regret it. It's a really good book, I read it non stop for 2 days, but once you're done with it, it's silly. If you look back and think about everything you've just read, you'll be disappointed at yourself for being so engaged. It's the first book I read by Robyn Schneider and I don't know if I'm gonna read any more. If I'm gonna read young adult novels again I'm probably gonna go to John Green, David Levithan or Giovanna Fletcher.

3 1/2 Platypires for The Beginning of Everything by Robyn Schneider." "We have all been fooled into believing in people who are entirely imaginary "made-up prisoners in a hypothetical panopticon. But the point isn't whether or not you believe in imaginary people; it's whether or not you want to. This is my book club's book for July and I can't wait to discuss it with them. I am honestly up in the air about how I feel about this book. On one hand I really liked it but then there were times I was annoyed with some of the clichés. The jocks are bad and the smart kids are the really cool kids. A lot of the characters fit their stereotypes but even though they were common tropes I felt the story was unique. I am a huge fan of smart, quotable dialogue and this book had a plethora. Plus it had a lot of nerdy pop culture references. Any Harry Potter reference gets a gold star in my book. Like the cover picture this book was a roller-coaster but with less twist and turns. There were a few lag moments and I think it's due to how I felt about Cassidy. I wasn't that big of a fan and didn't see the aura about her. Yes, she was smart, pretty girl who went against the grain of what other thought but I still thought she was fitting some stereotype of someone above high school. Overall, I did like the book. I liked Ezra and really liked Toby. I thought the book was really refreshing to read and it wasn't your typical YA read. It had a lot of depth and it had me contemplating life even after I finish reading it.

There are lots of things to enjoy about this book. It's an honest, engaging coming of age tale. Ezra is likably introspective yet flawed, and his new group of friends sounds (mostly) like tons of fun. His changes are mostly for good, but he screws up just enough to keep things believable. The relationships, romantic and otherwise, are realistic, which is always nice. And it's so readable. I didn't want to put it down! My favorite character was Toby, Ezra's former best friend who becomes his best friend again during the course of the book. He's so utterly himself that at times I didn't feel like Ezra deserved him. But having a best friend like Toby means that he must see something in you, and his faith in Ezra made me believe in him too. The main thing I didn't like about this book is its stereotypical portrayal of athletes.

Here's the thing: there are high school boys (and grown men, for that matter!) who speak mostly in monosyllables, who thrive on keeping others down, and whose thoughts don't seem any deeper than the soles of their shoes, but not every athlete is like that nor should you assume that everyone whose interests are off the beaten path is of above-average intelligence or kindness. I didn't play a single organized sport growing up, so I'm not feeling defensive because of my own athletic proclivity; I just think it was a narrative technique used to prove a point that came off as a bit hateful. (Yes, I know Ezra's a former jock, but you

can't tell me that he was the only one on the entire team that had an original thought to his name.) Okay. Rant over. That might make it sound like I didn't like this book, which isn't the case at all. I just wasn't thrilled about this one aspect of it. All in all: The cover caught my eye and the story kept me interested. Check it out if you like coming of age stories.

The Beginning of Everything by Robyn Schneider is a new adult book and a good one. The characters are interesting and the story is full of witty dialogs and is generally well developed and for sure not trivial. The writing style of Ms Schneider is quite good which is impressing since this is her first book. Overall the book will be to the taste of people who liked 'Hopeless' by Colleen Hoover or 'The perks of being a wallflower'. One may say that The Beginning of Everything is a book which is closer to 'The Fault in Our Stars' by John Green than to 'Thoughtless' series by SC Stephens (the latter is all about blushing and lip-biting...). The book is not exactly happy end romance. It is more about the problems that a young adult encounters and the decisions one may need to take if to become a decent person. All in all, if you seek for an interesting and entertaining book for young adults, this one is a good choice and you will not regret reading it. It may be even more interesting to young people than I can imagine (being 36 years old). Still a good read for the old dogs.

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