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Nest

by Esther Ehrlich

Price: \$19.99(Hardcover)

Published: September 09, 2014

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: For fans of Jennifer Holm (Penny from Heaven, Turtle in Paradise), a heartfelt and unforgettable middle-grade novel about an irresistible girl and her family, tragic change, and the healing power of love and friendship. In 1972 home is a cozy nest on Cape Cod for eleven-year-old Naomi “Chirp” Orenstein, her older sister, Rachel; her psychiatrist father; and her dancer mother. But then Chirp’s mom develops symptoms of a serious disease, and everything changes.

Chirp finds comfort in watching her beloved wild birds. She also finds a true friend in Joey, the mysterious boy who lives across the street. Together they create their own private world and come up with the perfect plan: Escape. Adventure. Discovery.

Nest is Esther Ehrlich’s stunning debut novel. Her lyrical writing is honest, humorous, and deeply affecting....

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What We Say

This debut novel by Esther Ehrlich is a winner. Set in 1972, it shows 11 year old Chirp dealing with her dancer mom's sudden illness. As if a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis wasn't hard enough, Chirp's mom sinks into depression and has to be institutionalized and conceivably undergo electro-shock therapy to snap her out of her doldrums. Chirp's psychiatrist dad is annoyingly (if lovingly) ready to address her feelings and her older sister Rachel too quick to step into the role of mother. Still, as her travails pile up, one of the unexpected insights of "Nest" is that she may have it better than her neighbor and classmate Joey. Ehrlich never quite spells out what is going on in Joey's household, but he's got three dangerous and bullying older brothers and a hateful father, not to mention what we would ID as some serious OCD issues. But that drama is only hinted at -- this isn't an AfterSchool Special. Esther and Joey simply become wary friends who have ups and downs with their misunderstandings and attempts to help each other. Why Chirp as a nickname? Because our heroine loves birds and is a budding naturalist who escapes to nature with her binoculars whenever she can. That leads to a poignant scene late in the book and gives her a positive passion to counteract all the high drama in Chirp's life. Ehrlich's book is excellent at depicting her family life, especially how an older sibling can be annoying one moment and the most important person in the world to a kid in the next. "Nest" is funny, sharp and quite moving. It's slotted in the category for kids and young adults, but anyone should savor this sharply written tale and its memorable heroine. -- Michael Giltz

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What Others Say

Kirkus starred review, May 15, 2014:

"A poignant, insightful story of family crisis and the healing power of friendship."

School Library Journal starred review, May 15, 2014:

A stunning debut, with lyrical prose and superbly developed characters, this novel is an emotional roller coaster that effectively conveys a family's visceral tragedy.

Publishers Weekly starred review, July 14, 2014:

"Ehrlich's novel beautifully captures the fragile bond shared by Chirp and Joey and their growing trust for each other in a world filled with disappointments and misunderstandings."

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