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# Thaw



## Synopsis

A proud, gifted young man learns to overcome abuse. Dane, a high-school senior and ski team standout, is in a rehabilitation clinic in Florida, a thousand miles from his home in upstate New York. Guillain-Barre syndrome has paralyzed him completely, and doctors don't know when he'll regain the use of his body. When Anya, a young, no-nonsense woman, enters Dane's room and introduces herself as his physical therapist, Dane promptly sends her away. He's confident that he'll overcome this freakish illness without her superior attitude. Dane finds his occupational therapist more agreeable, and the two make quick progress on Dane's upper extremities. His legs are another matter. Dane understands quickly that if he wants to ski or walk again, he'll need to work with Anya. She and Dane reluctantly agree to develop his body strength, but as his family's visit to check his progress gets nearer, tension mounts. Dane's disdain for his friends, his family, and even his girlfriend grows clear, and his father's intolerance for failure becomes a consuming preoccupation. When the day of the visit arrives, a lifetime of subtle abuse either will cause Dane's icy mind to crack, or the young man will learn to thaw.

An intense pain, tingling and electric, suddenly needles into my right calf, making me flinch. My breathing tries to speed up on me, but I catch it, forcing it back into the right rhythm. I close my teeth onto the insides of my cheeks and focus.

Never lose control.

FROM THE BOOK

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 10 Up •Eighteen-year-old Dane is furious with his father, his ex-girlfriend, his

no-nonsense physical therapist, and most of all with the disease that has robbed him of the use of every muscle in his body, Guillain-Barré syndrome. In a rehabilitation hospital in Florida, far away from his family and his career as a champion high school cross-country skier in upstate New York, Dane slowly relearns how to feed himself, turn the pages of a book, and perform basic physical functions, and he is forced to consider the possibility that he won't fully recover.

Punctuating his fear of this fate-worse-than-death scenario are his encounters with the daughter of a man vegetating in a room across the hall, four years after a brain injury. In flashbacks, Dane recounts his relationship with his former girlfriend, whose love he has never been able to fully return (until now?). Like Chris Crutcher's characters, disgruntled Dane guards his emotions carefully, allowing only his nature-loving occupational therapist to penetrate his anger. Roe's descriptions of wintry New York are stunningly beautiful. The protagonist's frustrations about feeling out of control will resonate with teens, and the context of neurological rehab presents an original and challenging read. As Dane and his friends are sexually active, use strong language, and drink at parties, this novel is best suited for an older audience. —Nora G. Murphy, Los Angeles Academy Middle School Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Roe's success at creating a smoothly compelling narrative is impressive. . . . Well written." --Kirkus Reviews  
"Roe's descriptions of wintry New York are stunningly beautiful. The protagonist's frustrations about feeling out of control will resonate with teens, and the context of neurological rehab presents an original and challenging read." --School Library Journal  
"A tasty mix of drama and contemplation. . . . The combination of Dane's arrogance and helplessness makes him an intriguing protagonist." --Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

A compassionate, realistic look at a teenager struggling not only with a paralyzing disease but also with character faults which cause him to treat all those around him with disdain. This attitude causes him to lose his girlfriend just when he needs her the most. Only as his hardened heart starts to thaw is he able to appreciate his physical therapists as well as those who loved him enough to support him in spite of his cavalier attitude. His controlling, domineering father is accustomed to his son excelling in academics as well as in sports (Dane is a champion skier). Dane's disease brings to light the dysfunctional aspects of his family and the chaos which results. This is a multi-faceted book which will appeal to young adults as well as giving adults a glimpse into the adolescent mind. Additionally, its medical aspects are interesting and educational.

Thaw is a remarkable read with rich characters and a fascinating story line. Roe draws the reader in from the first paragraph and keeps you engaged with her strong writing, unique story, and a flash-back technique that works extraordinarily well. Roe weaves together the voice of the protagonist and the emotions of the other characters in a compelling, satisfying manner that leaves you loving, hating and at times, holding your breath. Thaw is a story of revelation and redemption. And Roe has created one of the most satisfying endings I've read in a long time. The stories and the characters in this book will stay with you long after you finish reading. I highly recommend Thaw to anyone who loves a great read!

It isn't often that a book comes along leaving me hating the main character but absolutely loving the complete package! The main character in this young adult novel is so refreshingly dislikable...a strange statement, I know, but really, take my word for it here. You'll have extreme disdain for him through most of the book, but by the end you'll love him and just want to give him a hug. When high school ski star and big man on campus, Dane begins suffering from Guillain-Barre Syndrome, life seems to stand still. Though the syndrome is not permanent, it results in Dane being completely immobile, having to slowly regain nerve function in his entire body and re-learn even the most basic of tasks all over again. While recovering, Dane resides in a rehabilitation home in central Florida, far from the snowy weather of his home in Upstate New York (YAY....my home too!) and very far from the verbal and mental abuse of his father. Given almost endless time to think and reflect on the past couple of years, Dane slowly begins to open his eyes to how he's treated people and why he is constantly surrounded by people, but always alone. Monica Roe did a beautiful job of creating an incredibly egotistical, smart mouthed main character that really believes he can do no wrong. He has treated his family badly, his girlfriend badly, and his teammates badly, though truly believes all that hurt is attributed to their faults, not his. As he struggles to become whole again, Dane's thought processes begin to shift and his coldness starts to melt, leaving him to try to mend fences that he had broken with his lack of care for others. Thaw was a true surprise to me. I really didn't like Dane in the beginning of the story, though I now see the point of the character being written the way he was. The plot is very strong and the characters all unique. This is a great teen novel and one I will most definitely be recommending to all.

This book is incredible. The author has brought the main character to life in a such a way that you develop strong emotional feelings for him while he's dealing with his disease. You start off hating

Dane and his egotism, superiority and arrogance, and slowly grow to feel sorry for his situation and family life and then gradually begin to understand and grow fond of the person he becomes. The author did an incredible job of bringing to life the characters and the understanding of the disease in this book. While I am much older than the recommended age for this book, I would strongly recommend it for ALL ages! Incredible book. Incredible and believable author.

I had the privilege of reading this book in manuscript form, and I'm looking forward to reading it again. Even as a boring thirty year old, I found it a really fun read and it sparked an interest in the work that physical therapists do. I also found the medical aspects of the story very interesting. It is very well written and thoughtful. I plan to buy a copy for my 14 year old brother in law as well. It's a compelling book, equally interesting for boys and girls, though perhaps a bit more morally useful for boys. The writer's approach toward the brutal years of teenagedom is raw, authentic and viable. I was easily drawn in!

I happened upon this book just by chance. While reading the description I noticed that the main character had Guillain-Barre Syndrome, the same problem that my young nephew has. So I picked it up just to see what it was about. It was a pleasant surprise. Nicely written it deals with Guillain-Barre Syndrome and to some extent other neurological disorders in a very human way. I really liked how the main character grew - not in a fake way but in the way normal people do. I also appreciated the secondary characters, especially Robert and his daughter. Loved the sweatpant scene.

Very hard book to put down after start. Loved the development of the characters and how their stories intertwined. Written with a depth, that found me personally hating some characters and empathizing with others....where I had to actually put the book down to realize it was just fiction...The novel was both purely entertaining, and able to leave with you with a lasting impact....

This book is a great read. I cannot believe this is her first novel. Her characters are so rich and full of life. I could not put the book down. Roe created a great level of suspense that made me want turn page after page to see what happens next. The word choice paints a beautiful picture and weaves a terrific plot. This book is a great choice for anyone and everyone!

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