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Goldfish: A Novel



Synopsis

I am Lou Brown: Social outcast, precocious failure, 5'10" and still growing. I was on the fast track to the Olympic superstardom. Now, I'm training boys too cool to talk to me. In a sport I just made up. In a fish tank. My life has quickly become very weird. Nat Luurtsema's YA debut is side-splittingly funny and painfully true to anyone who's just trying to figure out how they fit into the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up
Fifteen-year-old Louise has been a competitive swimmer for most of her life, and she's good at it—so good that she is up for a spot in a high-performance training camp that may just pave her way to the Olympics. Imagine Lou's mortification when not only does she come in dead last at the tryouts but the spot goes to her best friend, Hannah. Lou heads back to school after the summer break, shunned by her ex-teammates, sans friends, and without the focus that swimming gave her. When she is approached by three guys from her school who want her to choreograph and coach an underwater dance routine for their Britain's Hidden Talent audition, Lou doesn't know if she should accept or run away screaming. Accepting the offer turns out to be just the beginning of a new adventure and perhaps a different kind of fame. Luurtsema excels at creating multidimensional characters whom readers will care about. Lou is a swimmer first and foremost, but readers get to know her as a sister, friend, daughter, and student. Lou's sister, her dad, and the swim boys are equally developed, giving this story a true-to-life feel. Only the mean girl, Cammie, and Lou's mom are not as fleshed out. VERDICT A fun story with well-rounded

characters whom readers will root for; purchase where YA sports fiction is needed.~•Heather Webb, Worthington Libraries, OH

"Filled with slapstick antics, this lighthearted story of 15-year-old Louise Brown, a down-on-her-luck swimmer, deserves to make a splash with readers." -- Publishers Weekly

"A fun story with well-rounded characters whom readers will root for." -- School Library Journal

"Lou's voice is irreverent and self-deprecating." -- Horn Book

"This story is excellent at illustrating self-reliance and the power of friendship. A welcome addition to any middle or high school fiction collection, *Goldfish* proves that talent does not define a person and helping others is worth more than gold medals. This book will appeal to all readers." -- VOYA

"Readers will root for Lou as she realizes that failure isn't the end of the world." -- Booklist

Very painful to your torso to read as lots of laughter involved. The main protagonist is a 15 year old girl who is a tad socially awkward but actually very well adjusted. Years of focus on swimming has left her with one friend who is away for most of the story. And the story is about how she finds new friends and the odd way it comes about. She has a great family, even her slightly older sister (who of course doesn't interact with her at school) is on her side and tries to be helpful when she makes her missteps. The characterizations are very sharp and along with the humor make this a superior YA tale. I highly recommend it.

A laugh out loud novel. It perfectly captures the triumphs and angst of teenagers navigating school, friends, sports and family life. Lou Brown is a brilliantly relatable heroine, whose positive attitude gets her into hilarious situations.

Goldfish is a great book. It has many funny lines, but there is some bad language in it. I would say that 12-18 year olds should read this book due to the teen content. It has cruel humor. I think this book is well put together and the author really took time to think through the book as a whole. I loved when the main character found out her best friend actually cared about her, because it is such a true thing that happens in our society today. I think teenagers will connect with her. Goldfish also has a play on words I enjoyed, the book is about a girl who loves to swim. Fish like to swim. I think you get the picture. I would recommend this book to many different people. People who like adventure, romance, drama, and even humor!

Reviewed by Sofia H., 11,
Denver Mensa

Sometimes it's fun to just read a story. No gimmicks, no lofty concepts, and no inscrutable motivations. The reading experience of Nat Luurtsema's *Goldfish* was just that - a wonderful storytelling experience. In the first few pages, we learn that Lou Brown is on her way to the Olympics, until she isn't. Her best friend heads off to swim for Team Great Britain while Lou heads back to school on her own, without any friends and with muscles she no longer has use for. This novel is chock full of witty observations of teenage life - like spending hours making the perfect playlist to be cool, without actually acting like you're trying to be cool. Oh, the memories!! I laughed out loud several times and cringed for Lou several times, as well. The story didn't head in the direction I thought it would and what a gift that is! Give this one a read if you're in the mood for something lovely, sweet, and witty.

Lou Brown has only one goal in life, to become an Olympic swimmer, along with her one and only friend, Hannah who is a swimmer too. But when Lou fails to make it in the heats to get into the prestigious high-performance training camp, and Hannah does, she is left with no swimming lessons, no best friend to hang around with, and no purpose to her life. Things get doubly hard for her at school without Hannah, as Lou is classed as a social outcast, and no-one wants to sit with her, let alone talk to her. So why is it that three of the cool boys are trying to get her attention, and what on earth are they trying to do in the swimming pool? *Girl out of Water* is a hilarious account of one young girl's life. Lou is extremely funny and witty and had me crying with laughter, at and with her, throughout the book. Her life is completely bizarre, from an older sister who pretends that she doesn't even know her, to a divorced mum and dad that live together, whilst her mum goes on dates with other men, and her out of work dad goes out everyday in his suit, pretending to go to job interviews. Plus there is also her friend Hannah, who seems to be losing the plot whilst she is away at camp, making for a daring rescue mission. The cool boys, Gabriel, Roman and Pete, want to win the Britain's Hidden Talent contest, and they want to do it with a sort of synchronised swimming, underwater dancing show. They have already failed one audition and now they need Lou to teach them everything she knows and to train them up, so that they can win. The boys are complete individuals, personality-wise, yet they are all just as wacky as Lou. Over time you start to notice a friendship occurring between the outcast and the cool kids. The plot had me hooked right from the opening chapter and I read the book in two sittings, on a return train journey. I had many strange looks at times as I actually did laugh out loud on the train in front of lots of strangers - oops!! If you are looking for a book that will

give you a happiness-boost and lighten your mood, then this is the one. Whether you are 8 or 80, you will love this book. Reviewed by Stacey at Whispering Stories Book Blog**I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review**

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