

Girl Against the Universe

By Paula Stokes

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From the author of *The Art of Lainey* and *Liars, Inc.* comes a fresh, contemporary story about a girl coping with PTSD and the boy who wants to help her move on from the past. Perfect for fans of Sarah Dessen or Jenny Han.

Sixteen-year-old Maguire knows the universe is against her. No matter how many charms she buys off the internet or good luck rituals she performs each morning, horrible things happen when she's around. Like that time the roller coaster jumped off its tracks. Or the time her brother, father, and uncle were all killed in a car crash--and Maguire walked away with barely a scratch. Despite what her therapist tells her, Maguire thinks it's best to hide out in her room, far away from anyone she might accidentally hurt. But then she meets Jordy, an aspiring tennis star who wants to help her break her unlucky streak. Maguire knows that the best thing she can do for him is to stay away, but it turns out staying away may be harder than she thought.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal
Gr 8 Up-The past few years have been hard on 16-year-old Maguire. She escaped injury in both the car wreck that killed three of her family members and the roller-coaster accident that injured two of her friends. Nor was she injured when a candle she left lit in her windowsill burned down the neighbor's house. Maguire believes she is a jinx. To cope, she has developed a litany of compulsive behaviors, not the least of which is isolating herself from other people lest she harm them inadvertently. When Maguire gets the opportunity to fly to Ireland to visit her deceased dad's family, she is determined to overcome her fears. Therapy and Jordy, a cute guy she meets at therapy, help her carry out her plan. A fledgling romance with Jordy, crippling emotional issues, a new town and school, and terrifying goals-this is a lot for Maguire (and readers) to manage. Throw in Jordy's reasons for needing therapy, and the story gets a bit dense in places. Still, teens will find in Maguire a compelling heroine. Her obsessive behaviors are depicted in convincing detail-the luck notebook she keeps, the periodic five-second checks she does of her surroundings, the ritualistic behaviors. Maguire's forays into wellness are anything but pat, giving her story additional credibility. The novel is written in first-person present tense, which may be distracting because it simply does not work in scenes such as the roller-coaster ride and the car wreck. VERDICT Teens who enjoy emotionally charged stories will appreciate this novel about resilience.-Jennifer Prince, Buncombe County Public Libraries, NCα(c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Review

"Maguire is a brave, relatable character...There are friendships formed, family relationships tested and restored, and issues of identity explored. This is a satisfying and breezy book with likeable characters working through trauma to move to better, healthier places in their lives." (Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA))

"Stokes' engaging prose and sympathetic characters serve up great lessons in acceptance for teens dealing with trauma." (Kirkus)

"Romance fans will enjoy the slow, sweet, and tentative burn between the teens. Recommend to readers who enjoy Jenny Han or Maureen Johnson." (Booklist)

"An engaging story. Its true appeal lies with Stokes's well-developed characters and in the way Maguire and Jordy support each other's efforts to conquer the challenges they face." (Publishers Weekly)

"Teens will find in Maguire a compelling heroine. Her obsessive behaviors are depicted in convincing detail. Maguire's forays into wellness are anything but pat, giving her story additional credibility. Teens who enjoy emotionally charged stories will appreciate this novel about resilience." (School Library Journal)

"Filled with equal amounts of empathy, humor, and heart, Girl Against the Universe is an empowering story about finding the courage to piece your life back together, even when it feels irreparably broken." (Tamara Ireland Stone, NYT bestselling author of Every Last Word)

"I loved this sweet, slow-burn romance. Sports fiction at its best!" (Miranda Kenneally, bestselling author of Catching Jordan)

"Romantic, honest, and deep, Girl Against the Universe is one of those books where I couldn't believe that the characters were only a figment of the author's imagination-they simply jumped off the pages with their relatable flaws and hard-earned wisdom." (Sarvenaz Tash, author of The Geek's Guide to Unrequited Love)

"Absolute perfection. Completely magical. Girl Against the Universe is a poignant, beautiful story." (Ann Aguirre, NYT bestselling author of The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things)

"Stories like this are important to have in YA...Thoughtful stories need to be told about mental health." (YA Mixtape)

"An emotionally complex tale, *Girl Against the Universe* explores one teen's touching struggle with past trauma. Readers will laugh, cry, and root for Maguire as she fights to reclaim her life with the help of a dynamic supporting cast." (Mary Hinson, Senior Library Assistant)

"Girl Against the Universe is a must-read for anyone who has ever needed healing, anyone who loves athletics and team friendships, and anyone who enjoys a slow and fiery burn romance. Recommend 10000 times over." (The Forest of Words and Pages)

"I think the shining star of this novel is how positively therapy is portrayed. Honestly I wish I had this book after my mom passed away because maybe I would have gotten the help that I needed to deal with my issues." (The Perpetual Page Turner)

From the Author
Three things you should know about *Girl Against the Universe*

1. This is a book about mental illness.
It's not immediately apparent from the sales copy above, but main character Maguire is suffering from PTSD, specifically survivor's guilt. After being in multiple serious accidents where everyone but her was injured or killed, Maguire worries obsessively that she might be a "bad luck charm" to anyone who gets close. To help combat her anxiety, she has developed unhealthy coping mechanisms like isolating herself from people and obsessively checking her environment for hazards. The first four chapters of the book are Maguire beginning a course of cognitive behavioral therapy after yet another accident pushes her to her breaking point.

2. This is a funny and uplifting story.
A lot of mental illness books are dark and gritty reads with depressing storylines and negative portrayals of therapy. Maguire's issues are treated seriously and respectfully, and the book's therapist is competent and helpful without doing all the work for her. There are places where she is suffering from panic attacks or engaging in compulsive behaviors that might feel all too real to readers with similar issues, but early reviewers have described the story as "hopeful" and "healing." There are plenty of lighthearted funny moments to balance out the darker places. If you are struggling with anxiety and/or dealing with grief, Maguire's journey will probably both comfort and inspire you.

3. The romance does not "cure" the mental illness.
As someone with anxiety, I can tell you that most of the time a new romantic relationship exacerbates one's current struggles by adding additional stress and expectations. There is a romance in this book, but it begins as a friendship, and Maguire has no problem telling Jordy that she's not healthy enough to date anyone at first. Even after they later become involved, Jordy supports her as she works through her therapy challenges, but she is the one who drives her journey toward healing, a journey which continues long after the final

pages of this book.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marcia Fullerton:

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? Reserve is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each guide has different aim or maybe goal; it means that reserve has different type. Some people feel enjoy to spend their the perfect time to read a book. They are reading whatever they acquire because their hobby will be reading a book. Consider the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, particular person feel need book once they found difficult problem or maybe exercise. Well, probably you will require this Girl Against the Universe.

Dean Green:

The publication with title Girl Against the Universe posesses a lot of information that you can find out it. You can get a lot of benefit after read this book. This particular book exist new information the information that exist in this book represented the condition of the world currently. That is important to yo7u to learn how the improvement of the world. That book will bring you inside new era of the globalization. You can read the e-book on your smart phone, so you can read this anywhere you want.

Beverly Rosa:

Reading a book for being new life style in this year; every people loves to examine a book. When you read a book you can get a lots of benefit. When you read books, you can improve your knowledge, due to the fact book has a lot of information into it. The information that you will get depend on what forms of book that you have read. If you would like get information about your analysis, you can read education books, but if you want to entertain yourself read a fiction books, these kinds of us novel, comics, as well as soon. The Girl Against the Universe provide you with a new experience in looking at a book.

Sharon Scott:

As a scholar exactly feel bored to reading. If their teacher expected them to go to the library or make summary for some guide, they are complained. Just little students that has reading's heart and soul or real their passion. They just do what the professor want, like asked to the library. They go to right now there but nothing reading seriously. Any students feel that looking at is not important, boring along with can't see colorful photographs on there. Yeah, it is for being complicated. Book is very important for yourself. As we know that on this time, many ways to get whatever we would like. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore , this Girl Against the Universe can make you feel more interested to read.

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