



The Line, the Itch and the Rabbit Hole

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The Line, the Itch and the Rabbit Hole is the memoir of David Jester: a child with Tourette's Syndrome, a young teenager with depression and an adolescent addicted to drugs and alcohol.

A humorous autobiography charting 11 difficult years, beginning with his first tic aged 7 and spanning an adolescence of addiction, illness and self destruction. A dark and funny memoir that chronicles a wide range of difficult experiences including Tourette's Syndrome, Borderline Personality Disorder, Dystonia, drugs (dealing and using) suicide attempts and a stay in a psychiatric hospital.

The Line, the Itch and the Rabbit Hole Details

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From Reader Review The Line, the Itch and the Rabbit Hole for online ebook

Richard Louden says

No wonder this memoir by David Jester has attracted such glowing praise. It isn't just honest, it's searingly honest. The author isn't afraid to bare his soul, telling us in unflinching detail of his struggle, between the ages of 7 and 18, with Tourette's, mental illness and drug and alcohol addiction. In the end, he is diagnosed with dystonia, a neurological disorder where muscle contractions give rise to twisting movements or abnormal postures. Against that tough background, he regularly shuns social contact, prefers his pet rabbit to local friends and finds every excuse not to attend school.

It is to David Jester's enormous credit that he paints this dark picture with self-effacing humour and generous dollops of irony. We feel sad that he has faced such testing challenges to his physical and mental welfare but his wit constantly uplifts us and, somehow, we feel sure he will come through in the end.

For me, as a fellow writer, it is especially heart-warming to read that his eventual redemption comes through his gift for writing. Just when he is at his lowest ebb, his creative talent lifts him and gives him a compelling reason to break his cycle of misfortune and self-destruction.

"The Line, the Itch and the Rabbit Hole" is poignant, touching and richly endowed with humanity and wit. I cannot commend it too highly.

Myrna says

Growing Up Is Hard To Do

I enjoyed not only the story line but the writing style of this author. He managed humor within a serious anti social personality. The writing illustrates how a person can hinder their maturity by negative self-talk and being unable to develop confidence in their abilities. The author reveals his Tourette's illness which he deals with by using alcohol and drugs but leaves unclear if any of the treatments really helped.

Jacalyn Current says

Kept my attention!

The story drew me in and then it kept twisting and turning, I thought I knew where and how it would end but I was so wrong!

Clarissa Cartharn says

I'm so glad I read this book. A memoir of the author's experiences in the ages between 7 and 19, Jester successfully shares the dark experiences of his life in a remarkably light and entertaining fashion. Love and absolutely loved the conclusion of this book! However I was looking forward to the author's experiences of

tourette as it is still much a misunderstood and stigmatising condition with those who suffer from it wrongly categorised as social misfits with diminished intellectual capacity. On the contrary, there are many notable personalities who carried the tourettes syndrome such as writer and poet, Samuel Johnson. In spite of this, Jester has delivered an excellent account of his young years that will remain with you long after you put the book down. Loved it!!!

Lisa *OwlBeSatReading* says

I loved this book so much. It reminded me of James Freys A Million Little Pieces, with its brutal honesty and no holds barred approach. David's comments and responses to people in the system who cared/pretended to care had me laughing out loud. His dry, dark humour was what made this book so perfect IMO. To see past the seriousness of the subject matter with the quick fire one liners was just a perfect contrast to the mess David got himself into with his terrible addictions. It made me feel thankful, sad, happy, intrigued, shocked and amazed.

Everyone should read this book, I urge you all to give it a try. It has to be one of the best non-fics I've read in years.

Tisha says

I usually like memoirs and there were likeable parts to this book. I think the author did a good job of showing what goes on in the mind of a person with BPD, depression, Tourette's, etc. He also does a good job of showing how much we fail those who suffer with these issues....both within the law and within the medical field.

On the other hand, this book just didn't flow for me. It felt more like a loosely joined series of feelings and experiences that just were plucked out of his head and plunked down on paper with very little direction or conclusion.

All in all an okay read that didn't instill a desire in me to read more of the authors work but interesting enough to read to the end.

Tom says

The author is still young (or so I gather), so perhaps a bit early for a "memoir." But I was hoping for a bit more insight into his mode of thinking, reacting, etc.

We start with a revelation... that he has un-diagnosed Tourette's Syndrome. That leads the reader to believe that the narrative will loop around in the end with some indication on how David Jester will go forward with this new knowledge. But that doesn't happen.

What follows is a description of childhood and early teen years that seem no different than anyone else's... or at least mine anyway. What kid doesn't feel like they are different than everyone else? Ostracized, embarrassed, lonely, persecuted, etc.? What kid doesn't want to stay home from school, lay about all day and play video games? Most amazing to me was that his parents actually gave in to this behavior. They let him

stay home from school... permanently! When my older brother tried that one, he was promptly booted out of the house. Along those lines, David's parents seemed far too compliant in all of his demands... Buying an obvious teenage alcoholic a bottle of whiskey once in a while because "It makes him happy?" Good Christ.

David Jester seemed like a pretty average kid, probably even above average, that is until his parents and the medical profession start trying to "fix" him with various medications. Not surprisingly perhaps, a recurring theme here is blaming medical/psychiatric professionals with misdiagnosis and incompetence, the flood of prescriptions, etc. Yet David Jester hides his real problems, symptoms and complaints from them. What other outcomes did he expect?

It was simply hard to get on David Jester's side in this story. He's intelligent, but so self-centered and self-absorbed that he thinks nothing of stealing, lying and generally being a complete ass to his friends, girlfriends and relatives, all for no good reason.

Mental illness doesn't give you license to be a total asshole. Or at least, by way of your illness, if you come off as an ass, have the good sense and common courtesy to apologize later to those you harm.

So, pluses for having an entertaining writing style and honesty, but minuses for lack of character and wrapping-up loose ends.

✿Claire✿ says

This was an ok book but one I didn't hugely enjoy. It was interesting reading about the narrator's life and background but there were bits that seemed repetitive and others that need a spell check. My biggest problem was that, just as I was starting to get into the book, it ended and that was that. No link back to the beginning, no explanation as to how they got from the end to the beginning, just a sudden finish leaving lots of loose ends untied.

Melissa says

As a writer who has also written a mental health narrative, I was intrigued by David Jester's memoir. His book begins when he is 21, "an antisocial, aspiring writer, trying to find a voice and a purpose whilst living with my parents in rural Northumberland." We are introduced to a problem that had been vexing him for years, these "involuntary urges," as he calls him, that are identified as symptoms of Tourette's Syndrome. We're faced with the full force of his anxiety, when talks about his "urges" with a doctor. In response to the doctor's question, "How often do these occur?", Jester writes:

" 'All the time,' I said before correcting myself, 'well, most of the time [...] Now I'm okay. I've done a few since I got here but nothing noticeable. Simple contractions of the muscles in my stomach, it seems to help.'

But sometimes it can be aggressive and they are noticeable. They move as well, my shoulders, my legs, my fingers, my jaw.' I trailed off and smiled meekly. "

These urges will underscore everything Jester experiences in this memoir, often popping up at the most inopportune times, but always signaling on ongoing inner turmoil. In fact, we see the combination of these urges, increasing isolation, depression and despair culminate into a "rock bottom life," which forced him to admit, "I had locked away every negative emotion and although the positive emotions were dulled, I was happy in my indifference."

The tone of his narrative shifts near the end of the book when he recovers from a potentially life threatening surgery.

He describes this moment, with shining prose, when he writes, "I entered a lucid world which morphed and twisted at will. I wanted to be in a lush environment, surrounded by trees and nestled into a safe corner. I wanted the sun to be shining but I didn't want to feel the full force of its rays on my skin. I wanted to be in the arms of someone I loved, someone I cared for, but I didn't want to choose anyone I knew. I wanted a faceless body who merely instilled those emotions. I was there and it was heaven. I conversed and interacted with the world around me. If I made a mistake, if I said something that brought an uncomfortable reaction or if I did something I didn't intend, I merely closed my eyes -- squeezing tightly -- and forced time backwards. It worked; I could redo everything and get as many chances as I wanted."

As a reader, I rooted for Jester to overcome his urges, depression and struggles, and in this moment, we see glimmers of this longing, to not be controlled by mental illness. We see a glimmer of recovery. As someone who has also struggled with mental illness, I related to this desire to force time backwards and have a redo. In fact, I'd argue that everyone has felt this at least once. The universality of this desire reflects a deeply expressed humanity in this book--to not be determined or constrained by our circumstances, our bodies or our minds.

In terms of Jester's books place in the genre of mental health narratives, I was glad to see this struggle from a young male, English writer because it is from such a different perspective of an American woman. Plus, with different diagnoses, him with borderline disorder and Tourette's, and mine of bipolar disorder, I had the opportunity to expand my view of what it means to struggle with a mental illness. However, I don't believe this narrative would only appeal to those with similar struggle--the shared humanity, I spoke of earlier, provides an opportunity for many more to connect to his book, as well.

Deanna says

Written by a man who has Tourette's and actually remembers how his illness began. Insightful, informative, and entertaining. I enjoyed his story, as well as his writing and his sense of humor.

Bob Craton says

This book isn't in my usual genre (fantasy/sci-fi) and I don't remember the last time I read a memoir, but I'm very glad I encountered this author. The years 7-18 can be stressful in anyone's life, but they clearly were traumatic in this case. The product description gives an accurate list of the problems so I won't repeat them here.

I'm amazed that anyone can write with humor about such dark personal experiences. I enjoyed the humor but I was affected even more by the seriousness of his situation. From his first encounters with compulsive tics as a child to his hospitalization at 18 for medical problems caused by alcohol and sedatives, the author opens himself up to the world. For an example of his ability to inject humor into a serious moment, see his description of his constipation problem in the next-to-last chapter. I could quote many examples of touching moments, but one that for some reason affected me out of proportion to the short length of the passage involved his encounter with a girl named Kelly during middle school (what Americans call it).

I recommend this book to anyone but especially to those of us who have our own issues and would like a little encouragement.

Chrissy says

This book started off very promising. Then it quickly grew very depressing (which is fine, as it IS a memoir about Tourette syndrome and depression), but it became very monotonous. The author describes the same scenarios over and over again, and he never really states HOW he overcame his addictions to alcohol and drugs. And the ending is very abrupt. I had hoped he would write more about how he dealt with the news that he had Tourette Syndrome, but it was never mentioned again after the beginning of the book. Kind of disappointing.

Evan Bollinger says

Charming, dark, and not at all typical

Through school years of turbulence, relations far and wide with drugs and demons, through the good times and the bad--Jester's accounts remind us just how deep life's well goes. We all have our neurological quirks (albeit dystonia goes beyond), and we've all been in the pits after reaching the peaks. But David Jester has a way of recounting it, which is simply unique. Witticisms, truth, satire, and absurdity combine to create a tale that is both entertainingly dark (post-South Park Tourettes) and downright funny. The author's treatment of a serious and provocative lifeline avoids the typical depressive pitfalls of similar works in the genre. In Jester, we are clearly dealing with a sharp and seasoned writer.

Michael says

This is easily one of the best books I've read this year and I was fortunate to come across this author. It was very engaging from the first page and reading the well-written accounts of his school days made me feel very nostalgic to my own primary school years - I even had a rabbit called Snowy! It is very honest, thought-provoking and laced with well-placed humour throughout. Despite its length, it didn't take me long to finish it because I found myself whizzing through the chapters eager to find out what would happen next and I was never bored once. I can highly recommend this novel and I look forward to more from David. Fantastic!

Daniel Davis says

This was an amazing chronicle of being different and not fitting in and the sinking to the bottom. it is also a story of reaching up and pulling yourself from the bottom back to life. This story was similar to my own and i am glad it has been told. Every breathing human should read this. Every weird kid who does not fit in should have someone who loves them make it a gift to them. in the end WE WIN,,, i loved it.

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