



Death by Toilet Paper

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Fans of *How to Survive Middle School* will welcome the adventures of a contest-crazed seventh grader who uses his wits and way with words in hopes of winning a big cash prize to help his family avoid eviction.

Benjamin is about to lose a whole lot more than good toilet paper. But even with his flair for clever slogans, will he be able to win a cash prize large enough to keep a promise he made to his dad before he died?

Praise for Death by Toilet Paper

"Gephart's generous view of humanity's basic goodness shines through, and she leavens her characters' difficult situation with plenty of humor. . . Readers can't help but enjoy this heartening book about hanging in there."--*Kirkus Reviews*

"Ben is a character kids will root for, and he's surrounded by family and friends who help him see things will be okay, a message that may comfort readers facing similar circumstances."--*Publisher's Weekly*

"Gephart, author of *How to Survive Middle School* (BCCB 6/10), again shows a deft hand at rendering difficult situations with empathy, adding just the right amount of realistic humor to relieve but not trivial- ize. . . Despite its title and cover art, this is not a romp, but it would make a fine classroom readaloud."--*The Bulletin*

From the Hardcover edition.

Death by Toilet Paper Details

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Author : Donna Gephart

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From Reader Review Death by Toilet Paper for online ebook

Jen Kleinknecht says

Once again, Donna Gephart delivers a funny, heartwarming and wholly original tale of a boy who faces some real challenges: the death of a parent, the threat of eviction, the cruelty of a bully, and his grandfather's Alzheimer's disease. In trademark Gephart style, the seriousness of these issues is balanced with humor and optimism. Ben, the likable main character, pins his hopes on winning a contest with his witty slogans for toilet paper to avoid eviction from the apartment he shares with his mom and his grandfather. A quirky best friend named Toothpick and a spunky senior neighbor show Ben true friendship when the tough going gets even tougher. This book will make you laugh out loud; the scene with the dentures is HYSTERICAL! Be prepared to get a little verklemt, too, especially if you have recently experienced the loss of a loved one. Gephart should also be commended for her deft depiction of Jewish characters, something which is hard to find in books for middle grade readers. I will recommend this one to fans of Wendy Mass.

Lorna says

With a title like this you might be prepared for non-stop toilet humor, but ready to have your heart break a bit for Benjamin. Everything seems to be derailing in his life, but Benjamin meets it with hope and often humor. A great, heart-felt book. I love all the toilet paper facts interspersed throughout the book.

Sarike Roest says

Wat een fantastisch boek voor een hoop jonge lezers. Benjamin is een innemende jongen die ervoor zorgt dat je pagina na pagina leest. Het verhaal loopt weliswaar goed af, zoals verwacht, maar het eindigt niet voorspelbaar.

Kent R. says

Sad book his dad dies and they are poor that they cant pay for medical bills then now the grand parent is going to live with them its just sad but i liked it because the main character is smart and his doing fundraising and entering contest just for his family.I recommend this to people who likes inspirational books.

Amanda Harris says

If you think you have problems...then you haven't lived Ben Epstein's life! Ben's dad died the year before and now his mom is working at a local restaurant where she has to wear a paper piggy hat and gets little to no tips, some of which end up dropped in sticky syrup. Their rent is due (plus back rent) and they either need to cough up the cash now, or they'll get evicted from their apartment. Ben's grandpa Jake comes to live with them, but seems to be suffering memory loss and sometimes he's not himself. Grandpa Jake accidentally kills

Ben's fish Barkley and he got caught at school for selling candy bars to make money to pay their rent. Ben has a run in with a bully and runs away from school...now it seems he's in even bigger trouble. To top it all off, they can only afford the worst, most horrible, no good toilet paper.

It was Ben's dad's dying request that he take care of his mother after he's gone, but he doesn't feel like he's been doing that. In fact, he feels like he's been an epic fail. Ben's idea to sell candy was such an easy way to make some cash fast, that he decides to give it another go...but what will happen if he gets caught again?

There are a couple of bright spots...Ben's friend Toothpick and his dad have been a positive influence in his life and Ben also loves to enter contests! Ben will enter any contest available and he has his eye on a big grand prize from Royal-T Bathroom Tissue...\$10,000!! If he wins, they'll get to keep their apartment and Ben will feel like he is really taking care of his mother.

Will Ben get caught selling candy bars again? Will Ben and his family get evicted from their apartment? Can Ben save the day by winning the grand prize of \$10,000? You'll have to read and find out!

Shoa Khan says

I had come across this quirky title on goodreads several times, and so, when I saw it at the library, I immediately picked it up.

The title and some reviews led me to believe that this would undoubtedly be a laugh-riot. Sadly, it fell completely short of my expectations. It's not that it's a horrible story or anything, but there was hardly a laugh-out-loud moment in the entire book.

Plus, what I had thought to be a funny title, turned out to be something I can't even bear to think about. This picture just about sums up how I feel about this book :/

Lisa says

What a great, heartwarming story! I loved Ben's family and how they pulled together as a team to make it through this hard time. As did Toothpick and his dad. All good people! This book had me laughing, crying, anxious, and everything in between.

Donalyn says

A funny and heartwarming family story. Readers will enjoy Benjamin's honest reactions to the challenges in his life. Includes random facts about toilets and toilet paper at the beginning of every chapter, as well as a glossary of Yiddish words.

Carrie Gelson says

From the title and the cover, one would think this is a light hearted novel. There is humour but it is full of emotions. In fact, I woke up early one morning worried about the character and had to finish the book to make sure all was okay. What do you do when you are twelve, you have lost your Dad and money is an issue? This title explores this reality in creative, but always authentic and sensitive ways. Fantastic characters and family dynamics.

Cindy says

I couldn't put this book down. It is heart-warming, eye-opening, and hilarious. I learned a lot from reading this book. Also, it portrays the life of a middle-schooler really realistically. This book has many twists and turns. I definitely could not predict what was going to happen—at any point in the book. This book does not sugar-coat things, but, at the end of the day, it restores my hope in humanity.

Death by Toilet Paper is unique in so many ways. There was so much more to this book than I ever thought possible. Bravo, Donna Gephart! This will be a book that stays with me a long time. I can't wait to start recommending it to others!

P.S. After reading Death by Toilet Paper, I am very interested in reading Donna Gephart's other books.

Deb Tyo says

It is sometimes quite hard to leave characters in their stories once I close the covers of a book. I feel invested in their lives; I have celebrated their successes and have sympathized with their struggles. This feeling of warmth for believable, real characters is exactly what I feel for Benjamin, the protagonist in Donna Gephart's newest novel, Death by Toilet Paper.

I became engaged in the life of twelve year-old Benjamin. I didn't want him to worry about the rent his mom couldn't pay. I wanted to run to my bank, make a withdrawal, and send an anonymous envelope to the Epsteins that could solve their dilemma.

I didn't want Benjamin to worry about the fact that his mom wasn't making enough money working at Piggy's Pancake House. I wanted to let my school know where they could hire a dependable, hard-working mother as a classroom or library aide.

I didn't want Benjamin to fret about his grandfather's forgetfulness. I wanted to comfort Ben and tell him of my own grandmother's struggle with a similar absent-mindedness to put him at ease.

That's what incredible books have. Authentic characters. Benjamin is an honest-to-goodness, down-to-earth, amazing-amazing-amazing kid. And I'll bet that every reader knows a kid just like Benjamin. That's why Death by Toilet Paper makes an excellent read.

I can't wait to book talk Benjamin's story to my eighth graders. In addition to the realistic protagonist and the exciting plot, this book is humorous. There are many snort-worthy sections. I know the exact pages I will

read to begin my book talk ... pages 81-83. If these pages can be read silently or aloud without a single chortle, perhaps the reader should check his/her pulse.

The toilet paper facts at the beginning of each chapter only add to the enjoyment of reading this book. I have already shared several of the facts with my students. It's hard to resist!

I am happy to say that Benjamin has secured a forever home on the classroom bookshelf right next to Olivia and David and Vanessa.

Pamela says

Absolutely **gobsmaking** great!!!

Terrific with a capitol ***** T *****!

"Please don't squeeze the Charmin" - kind of **jingle-jiving** GREAT!

Middle-grade novels/mysteries/adventures make for some of the best summer reading. For the most part they're easy, breezy, cleanly and efficiently written; rarely do they contain unnecessary minutia or filler fluff or extremely gory, graphic content. Plus, they're usually loads of wild and wonderful, snarky fun. Death by Toilet Paper is no exception. And really, could there be a more compelling, tickle your fancy (or should I say, fanny) title?????

Gephart hooked me on page one (horribly hysterically so) and she didn't let go - not once. Not even after the last page. I could have read on and on, about Benjamin and his sweepstakes passions, his middle-school geekdom tribulations with Toothpick - best friend and budding videographer of horror shorts; Benjamin's relationship with his mother and grandfather were quite special, too. Touching and realistic, with bursts of laugh aloud humor, bits of tween rage, and bits of grieving sorrow.

Psycho was the first movie to show a toilet flushing. That scene caused scores of indecency complaints.

All the way around, it was a great story! On-point characterizations, dialogue, scenarios; I really felt like I'd been transported back to seventh grade - but as a geeky, gangly young man in Philly, instead of a wordy-nerdy Okie gal. Oh, and I loved her inclusion of toilet factoids prefacing each chapter. What a hoot!

Most toilets flush in the key of E-flat

Gephart definitely has an excellent grasp on tween passions, emotions, and nuances. She seems to be also well grounded in black-and-white realism, yet soaring in the creativity genius of 'what-if' possibilities. And that should keep her tween fans (and her adult fans) happily anticipating her next great novel.

FIVE ***** Jingle-Jive, Tween Terrific, Gobsmaking ***** STARS

Earl says

Hilarious middle-reader novel about a boy who enters contests in hopes of winning to help his mom

financially. It does have a dead dad and a grandpa going senile plus some serious bullying but I still found it more on the refreshing side. I enjoyed reading toiler paper facts that start off each chapter.

Teri says

This book was fantastic! I read it to my 4th graders because it had been on lots of review lists. The book literally had me laughing out loud, tearing up and everything in between. Really heartwarming story about a boy's intense desire to help his family. My class actually clapped when it got over because they loved too!

Piyali says

What a great story with well developed characters. And told in a wonderful voice. Absolutely loved this book.
