



2010

Crazy

Debbie Barr

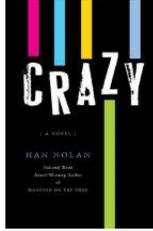
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Nolan, Han. *Crazy*. Harcourt, 2010. ISBN 9780152051099. \$17.00. 352 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fiction; Contemporary Realistic Fiction;

Subject: Mental illness—Juvenile fiction; Grief—Juvenile fiction; Friendship—Juvenile fiction; Books—Reviews;

Ever since Jason's mother died, his mentally unstable father has gone off the deep end, leaving Jason as the only one to take care of him. After acting out in class, Jason is sent to the school councilor where he meets Shelby, Pete, and Haze—three other teens having a hard time. As his home-life worsens, Jason is forced to turn to the other students for help. Shelby tells their councilor about his living conditions, and Jason's Dad is sent to the hospital while Jason is put in foster care. Angry and hurt, Jason is forced to sort out his life and understand his need to protect his father. After several emotional weeks, Jason realizes that he doesn't have to take care of everything himself. He has friends to support him. With this in mind he lets go of his anger and moves forward with life.

Crazy maintains humor and wit even while describing the most devastating situations. Though Jason's coping methods are faulty, readers will understand his actions and cheer for him as he struggles with his emotions. The journey of the book is less about the fate of Jason or his dad than it is about Jason's psychological growth. Nobody has a clearly-defined, black-and-white life, but instead everyone's life is composed of shades of grey where they are trying to cope as best they can. With deep insight and a character teens will cheer for, *Crazy* discusses the difficult issues of foster care, mental illness, and death in a way teens can enjoy and think over.

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