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Bittersweet

Lisa Packard

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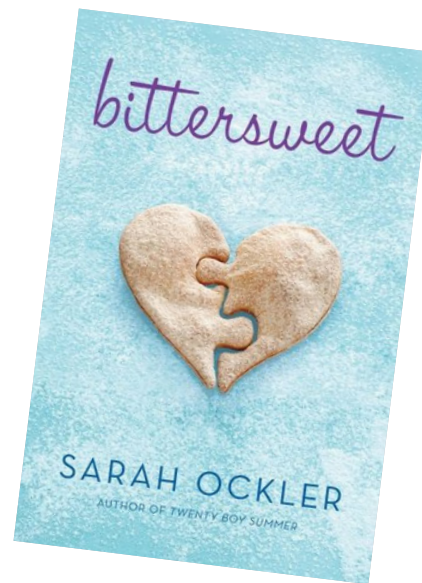
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Book Review

Title: Bittersweet
Author: Sarah Ockler
Reviewer: Lisa Packard
Publisher: Simon Pulse
Publication Year: 2014
Number of Pages: 378
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Excellent



Review

Hudson Avery loves ice skating. But at the peak of her high school career she finds out her dad has been cheating on her mom. Distraught, Hudson gives up skating and hides behind baking cupcakes. While working at her mom's diner, she's dealing with feelings of being betrayed and abandoned by her dad and disappointment in herself for giving up something she loves. One day she receives a letter from her old ice skating instructor inviting her to compete in a skating competition to win a scholarship for college. As Hudson prepares for the competition, she starts to question what she really wants in life. Does she want to be a skater? Does she want to go to college? Does she want to own the diner? When she goes to the competition, she realizes that she has grown up and moved on. She is the Cupcake Queen and she works at a diner. She doesn't need to go to college or leave town to be what she wants to be. Hudson realizes who she really is inside and there's no need to look at the past and become bitter. Now she can move on and become better.

Ockler brings a wonderful story of a teenager wanting to be grown up, like anyone during that time. Hudson's thoughts and actions are true to the confusing and difficult time she is going through. As the reader, you want her to go for her dreams, but you also want her to move on and realize what she's missing out on. This is a great read for anyone trying to find what they really want, who they are inside, or dealing with a loss, like Hudson losing her dad to a divorce. Ockler does a wonderful job of describing the surroundings as well. As Hudson skates and works on her twirls and turns, you can feel the exhilaration yourself as you make daring leaps above the ice and turning at the last second before hitting a wall. Not only did Ockler have a clever title for her book *Bittersweet* (reflecting both Hudson's feelings and her cooking), but even her chapter headings have to do with cupcakes. Sometimes referencing her anxiety or something going on with school, each title gives a clever description of cupcake ingredients. This story may seem very familiar to some readers as it is very similar to the movie *Ice Princess*.

*Contains moderate language and moderate sexual content