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Rash



Synopsis

Consumption of alcohol: Illegal. Football and other "violent" sports: Illegal. Ownership of guns, chain saws, and/or large dogs: Illegal. Body piercings, tattoos: Illegal. It's late in the twenty-first century, and the United Safer States of America (USSA) has become a nation obsessed with safety. For Bo Marsten, a teenager who grew up in the USSA, it's all good. He knows the harsh laws were created to protect the people. But when Bo's temper flares out of control and he's sentenced to three years of manual labor, he's not so down with the law anymore. Bo's forced to live and work in a factory in the Canadian tundra. The warden running the place is totally out of his mind, and cares little for his inmates' safety. Bo will have to decide what's worse: a society that locks people up for road rage, or a prison where the wrong move could make you polar bear food.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 8 Up
In 2076 in the United Safer States of America, verbal abuse, obesity, and dangerous activities are against the law. Helmets and health food are de rigueur, and sports are either outlawed or radically changed (runners' track times have slowed appreciably because of the bulky safety equipment required). The penalty for breaking any of the rules is a lengthy prison term, and 24 percent of the population is incarcerated and responsible for doing much of the country's manual labor without pay. For Bo Marsten, 16, the punishment for allegedly spreading a rash through school is a prison sentence, which is suspended, but he then goes to jail for lack of

self-control after he hits a classmate. Bo has the opportunity to reduce his sentence when he's chosen for the prison's (illegal) football team, but the sadistic coach is determined that his players win at any cost. This odd pairing of satire and sports thriller is carried along by the protagonist's confident narrative voice. The angry teen is struggling to explore his options in a world that has little concern for his emotional well-being. The satire is obvious but astute, and Bo's development is convincing. The many threads that run through this book may overwhelm some readers, but there is much for them to ponder and the overall effect is fresh.

—Sarah Couri, New York Public Library Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Starred Review Gr. 9-12. It's very likely that the world has never seen a sports novel quite like this one, which evokes Louis Sachar's *Holes* (1998), M. T. Anderson's *Feed* (2004), and Chris Lynch's explorations of male aggression in *Inexcusable* (2005), all the while avoiding the merest whisper of predictability. In the United Safer States of America of the late twenty-first century, a national obsession with safety has criminalized even minor "antisocial impulses." Bo's dad "was put away in '73 for roadrage

It's late into the 21st century, and USA is now the USSA: United Safer States of America. Multiple laws have been passed to increase life span and safety. Personal protective equipment is required for most activities, and french fries are illegal. The USSA mostly churns out citizens who are overly cautious and fearful. However, a quarter of the citizens are serving time for violating the rules of this safe society, creating a large free workforce for corporate USSA. Prospects don't look all that great for Bo Marsten, with 5 members of his family doing time for various offenses. Initially, Bo blames his temper on his father, who is serving time for a road-rage incident shelling shrimp in Louisiana. Bo's attitude about his anger is somewhat of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Although it seems that you can get sent up for other offenses against yourself or others, like overeating. Once that happens, the safety rules of society no longer apply in the penal colonies. Although the penal system does not really prepare Bo to re-enter the society that he left, he does learn some self control there. The problem is figuring out just where he belongs. It was an easy and entertaining read, that makes one question the consequences of the so-called Nanny State.

The book *Rash* is very interesting as it takes us into the future. In the future, Bo Martsen, the main character starts out running a track meet for school. He then is blamed for causing a rash by the

health department. He is then sent to Canada to work for the pizza company know as McDonalds. He then discovers the game of football, bears, and wondering how to get home. Football was illegal in the future, which most people would disagree today. Bears were all over the place in Canada. In the beginning he was acting all stubborn, and then realizes how he needs to treat others with respect. His family were somewhat interesting. Bo's grandfather is as almost as stubborn as Bo while Bo's mother cares for Bo's family. His other family members were sent to jail early in the book. The author describes the story very well. I would recommend this book for teenagers and over for language and action. There are alot of good things in the story Rash.

This book is absolutely one of the best stories I have ever read. Set in a time where we are no longer the USA, but the USSA (kind of a huge parallel there) Second S stands for Safer. Here, Alcohol is illegal, as is football, running without elbow and knee pads, and pretty much ANYTHING that has the slightest potential to harm someone in anyway. I used parts of this story as a reference for one of my papers in college as well and my professor loved it! I absolutely adored the characters and Pete Hautman does a great job at grabbing the reader in. 100% recommend.

This book is both intriguing and engaging, showing us a world of complete safety and the outcome of that decision. The author has created a dystopian world that is one to remember

Rash is a terrific book for opening up discussions about just how "safe" we want to be, what are appropriate punishments, and who should be running our prisons. The audio version is very well done and appealed to my students.

Hautman asks a simple question: How much safety is too much? He also asks a related question: When something (even safety) is overdone, who will benefit from it? "Rash" is funny and thought provoking. The hero starts out sounding like a loser, but at the end, I was cheering for him!

Normally I don't buy hardcovers but in this case I found a used hardcover that was about 1/3 of the price of the ebook version including the shipping. Have to say that I am a total ebook convert but in this case saving \$6 was worth the purchase of the hardcover. My daughter read this as a part of a school project. Her feedback was that it was "weird" and like the other reviewer said "forced." Not a book or genre she would normally read if selected on her own. Might appeal more to a male teen audience.

I'm an extremely picky reader. I get bored easily too. This book was able to keep me hooked right from the start. Also it didn't feel like the other books I'd read. It went ways I didn't expect and was a fast read which was both good and sad. That in itself is a good thing. It means I wished the book longer. I'd recommend this to you. Yeah you the person currently reading this. :3

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