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Posted on 01 October 2019 By Meg Wolitzer

^READ KINDLE Belzhar ? PDF eBook or Kindle ePUB free

4.5 I was sent this book by PenguinTeen in exchange for an honest review. You know those books where you just go into them expecting eh, but come out of them like holy heck this

was amazing, and changed my mind set, yeah, well this was one of those books for me I found out this novel is greatly inspired by Sylvia Plath's book *Bell Jar*, which I have not read, but now really really want to We follow, Jam, a young girl whose first love died She's struggling with her situation, and is put in a boarding school for fragile, highly intelligent teens In her English class they're given journals to write in, and when they begin to write in them, they're transported to Belzhar, an idyllic world At first I was not liking the main character because it seemed like she was one of the many YA main characters who feel like they're nothing without a boy, but there's actual reasoning behind why she feels this way. I enjoyed all the side characters and their stories The author did such an amazing job with showing the many different types of losses. I loved the setting of the English class and how close all the students got through writing and sharing their experiences Belzhar was truly magical It's definitely a book that I'll be thinking about for sometime. CANT WAIT TO MEET MEG WOLITZER FRIDAY. See reviews at YA Midnight Reads I originally rated this 2.5 stars but screw it, it's been almost 2 months since I read this and I'm still majorly pissed off Lowered to 2 stars Belzhar is a very difficult book for me to review I've been sitting here in front of my laptop for than half an hour just fuming and raging inside because of this book Because I cannot talk about the cons just yet, let me just tell you guys what this book is about. This book is about Jam Jam's full name is Jamaica and yep, her parents named her after the place where she was conceived As amusing as that is, Belzhar is not an amusing book It is a dark and profound, for one of the first things we find out about our main character is that she was in love with Reeve Maxfield, and he died Jam soon becomes inconsolable and her parents end up sending her to The Wooden Barn which is a school for teens who are emotionally fragile, highly intelligent At The Wooden Barn, Jam finds out that she's been chosen to be part of Mrs Quenell's Special Topics in English class This is an extremely selective and arguably elite course where only a handful of students around 5 are selected to partake each year Jam's roommate, DJ, tells her that all the students who took Mrs Quenell's course in the previous years came out claiming that their lives had been changed forever, but no one outside the class really knows how and those who were in the class never seemed to divulge much So on the first day of her class, Jam is skeptical Soon, she and the other students in her small class are handed a red leather notebook, and what they don't know is how much that notebook will change their lives. Let's talk about the prose because it was one of the things I loved most here Meg Wolitzer's writing skills are clearly not lacking While I didn't have the best experience with this novel of hers, I am definitely going to check out her previous books Her writing, though rather simplistic, was coated in honesty and bleakness and some of these moments in this novel hit really close to home for me And I also know that pain can seem like an endless ribbon You pull it and you pull it You keep gathering it toward you, and as it collects, you really can't believe that there's something else at the end of it Something that isn't just pain. One of my two issues I had with this book was the superficiality of the characters and their relationships I didn't manage to gain

any emotional bond with any of the characters Sure, I felt incredibly sorry for them and I was thoroughly intrigued by their pasts and what led them to end up at The Wooden Barn, but if they died randomly, I wouldn't have blinked an eye What was of a problem, for me, were the relationships romantic and platonic I totally didn't get why Jam and Griffin ended up smooching during this book I mean, it was completely unnecessary and only took up pages when it shouldn't have Jam was trying to deal with the repercussions of her boyfriend's death, for god's sake This is just another classic example in YA books where someone meets someone else to help them move on As for Jam and Sierra's friendship, it felt incredibly abrupt One minute Sierra is completely closed off the next minute they're BFFs Please, just no. If I hadn't read the ending of this novel, I would give this book around 3 stars While I had issues with the characters and relationships, I loved the writing and the plot line especially the Belzhar otherworld aspect Unfortunately, the ending to Belzhar exists and I read it And now, I fully regret it I'm hiding this following part in spoiler tags to discuss why I hated the ending so much view spoiler I have two things to say about this ending 1 I am so so angry with the ending I feel cheated and manipulated into trying to feeling sorry for a girl who got obsessed with a guy who was so obviously not into her And 2 It's rather evident that Jam is delusional No, I don't mean it in the joking way, I'm saying that Jam had a Delusional Disorder Yes, that is a thing I actually didn't know myself about this until I searched it up on the web and it's a mental illness with many different subcategories I am really annoyed that the author didn't bother to fully address Jam's circumstances Her delusion NEEDED to be taken note of because it's something that happens to real people as well and brushing it off like that has kept me quite pissed off for the past few hours If you're going to deal with mental illness in a book, do it the right way hide spoiler It is astonishing how mediocre and immature this book is Wolitzer is supposedly a writer of some critical acclaim, so how could she write something so poor The plot itself is ok I guess a bunch of students with various psychological problems are learning to deal with them by experiencing their issues in a sort of hypnotic world of Belzhar really But EVERYTHING about this story is superficial exploration of grief and guilt, portrayal of first love obsession and mental illness, even teaching and critical reading of Plath is extremely simplistic Barely managed to skim through this. 3.5 stars Reading this so soon after having read Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* for the first time was an interesting experience If you can't tell from the title, Wolitzer pulls heavily from Plath's novel, but I wouldn't say this story is necessarily a remake or rip off of the original. In Belzhar, we follow Jam Gallahue, a sixteen year old girl who is sent to a school for students with issues, whether they suffer from emotional, physical or psychological trauma On her first day at The Wooden Barn the school, Jam finds out she's in a class called Special Topics in English a class that is only taught when the professor, Mrs Q, feels like teaching it, and only for a select group of students Jam, along with four other students at the school, is selected to participate and read Plath's novel and poetry over the course of one semester. Throughout the course of the novel and the

students semester, we come to learn about each character, to see them deal with their trauma, and grow close to one another. Alongside that is a plot surrounding something called Belzhar which I won't disclose in this review. But it's a unique and satisfying premise that relies enough on Plath's original work to introduce the themes but does most of the heavy lifting itself to develop each character, their growth and ultimately their conclusions. I found Jam's situation to be the least compelling from the outside compared to the other students in her class, but because we see everything through her eyes, I came to really enjoy her narrative. It could've easily become something off-putting, but Wolitzer manages to create a vivid character that you can root for. It's not the most mind-blowing book ever, but if you're a fan of Plath or at least have read *The Bell Jar* before, I can definitely recommend this one. It's got a great diverse cast of characters without feeling like it's checking off boxes, and they each have an important story to tell. Perhaps you'll find one that you can relate to. It took me months to get through this one, I kept forgetting I was even reading it, so let's just say it wasn't a memorable read for me. It is unique, don't get me wrong, but I just didn't really care about any of these characters. Then when the magical element got introduced, it made the book even less interesting, not as I had hoped. Ok so let's start with this premise. After her boyfriend dies, Jam gets sent to boarding school for troubled teens, and in one of her classes she's given a journal that, to her surprise, sends her to a magical place whenever she writes in it. This place is free of pain and heartache; it's a world where the tragedy that brought them to this school has not happened. Although this might sound cheesy, I thought it was a really creative premise with tons of potential. I expected a lot of depth and soul-searching, but instead I found myself getting bored while we did nothing but skim the surface, emotionally. The characters themselves were not bad, but they weren't especially interesting either. This deep bond that apparently connected them was brought up so much it only made it feel forced. So in turn, I quickly grew frustrated with it all. This might just be my being used to extreme emotional situations in the books I read, but I couldn't stop from rolling my eyes at a few aspects in this story. Look at this class of people, for instance a handful of teens selected from a pool of damaged kids because the teacher thought they needed special help to get through this difficult time. One is there because she was in an accident and got paralyzed, another is there because she's blaming herself for her brother's disappearance, and then we have this guy who's there because he found out his father cheated. Oh and also, because he's now getting Cs instead of As. Umm ok. That sucks and everything, but that hardly makes you a tragedy. Another instance that made me roll my eyes until they hurt, I unfortunately can't talk about. It's the big reveal of what really happened during the last day of Jam's boyfriend's life. And oh my freaking word you are not freaking kidding me. Kudos for being unpredictable, at least. Then there were added details and subplots in the book that were not really necessary and only distracted from the main storyline. The a cappella thing, the whole deal with her brother's snarky changed behaviour, a freaking doe giving birth. Why I get that it can help to develop

characters and give them a realistic life with family dynamics and such, but it just felt like pointless plot additions in this case All in all, Belzhar is an intriguing read, one that uses anticipation and curiosity in a way that makes you want to keep reading to find out the truth With that said, despite my problems with it I do think it deserves 3 stars It simply falls short emotionally and failed to live up to my expectations at the end An advance copy was provided by the publisher for review. For of my reviews, visit my blog at Xpresso Reads

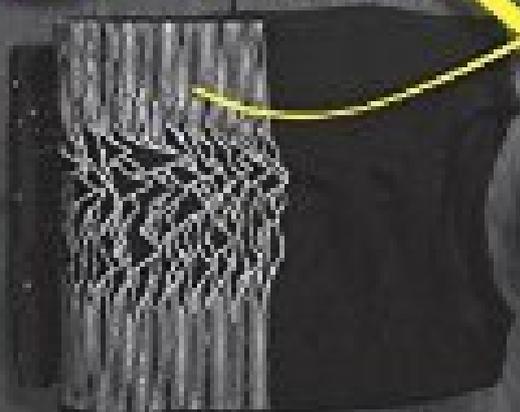
Forced, predictable, patronizing, trite Just no I have never been so disappointed in an author I kept reading, hoping she would redeem herself Nope. If you re already skeptical about a person someone being in deep, dark mourning lasting a year over someone they knew for only a few weeks then this is definitely not going to be a book for you Although normally that would put me off I really, really wanted this book to work Considering Wolitzer is well established in adult literary fiction, I suppose I figured she was likely to have a shot at creating a truly wrenching story of lost love even if that love was so brief There were a couple of clear ways this scenario could work and I was curious to see if Wolitzer would pull it off She didn t Everything about this story is surface level only There is no depth of emotion, no character development, limited growth, stunted pacing, and one hell of an obnoxious ending that had me going, Seriously Full review at The Midnight Garden.

Incredible I inhaled this It is like a dream It is LITERALLY like a dream, and like a dream you cannot put it down Sad, fascinating, funny, profound, real.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
MEG WOLITZER
READ BY JORJEANA MARIE



Belljar



AN UNABRIDGED PRODUCTION

i had a very medium response to this book i m conflicted about a number of its different elements, annoyed perplexed by others, but also pretty impressed by the big reveals ability to genuinely surprise me however, that initial pleasantly surprised feeling morphed into additionally conflicted feelings once i processed the turn, so it s all a jumble of contradictory and confusing feelings. which means i am in the same emotional state as all the characters in this book, so let s call it a 3.5 for that. this book has several components that are real karen grabbers smart troubled kids at boarding school, secret history ish situation, magical elements creeping into the everyday this is ordinarily the way to my heart and since, after reading How To Be a Heroine, i d decided to give The Bell Jar another chance to win me over, it seemed timely to read this since the title of this book is meant to be pronounced like bell jar, it led to a couple of confusing conversations oh, you re reading The Bell Jar no, i m reading bellzzjjhhar that s what i said oh, the hilarity of miscommunication here s another fun conversation i had about this book, this one with greg upon looking closely at the cover

so, this is about sad kids DING DING DING greg wins the summarize a book by its cover game and i liked it a lot at the beginning jam short for jamaica is a sixteen year old girl whose boyfriend, the british exchange student reeve maxfield sooo not in love with the names of characters in this book , died forty one days after they met, where roughly only half of those days constituted the span of their relationship a year has passed, and jam is in no way over her grief she fetishizes this tiny jar of jam get it he gave her, she mopes around the house, staying in bed for days, wearing the same clothes, avoiding her friends, skipping school, and making gloomy pronouncements, like this one in a conversation with her twelve year old brother It ll suck without you in the house You d better get used to it, I said to him Our childhood together is pretty much over That s mean, he said But it s true And then eventually, I went on, one of us will die And the other one will have to go to the funeral And give a speech dude, bleak.the reason she s moving out of the house is that she is being sent to vermont to attend the wooden barn, a therapeutic boarding school for emotionally fragile, highly intelligent students where they can recover from the lingering effects of trauma jam is one of five students chosen to be in a class called special topics in english an extremely selective course taught periodically by the formidable mrs quenell, around which and whom mysterious rumors have always swirled former students have claimed the class was life changing, but have always been very secretive about why or how, or what the class even studied and jam s about to find out but first, she s going to moon on and on about her dead boyfriend and her pain actually, although i snark, i didn t mind this part i thought it was a very authentic description of a teenager losing their first love, as brief as it was time is different for teenagers, and the length of a relationship is in no way commensurate to the emotions it inspires and her attraction to reeve made sense a shy and quiet good girl being seduced by no than an accent, a slouch, and some skinny black jeans i loved that she described his voice as having a scrape to it i loved this paragraph He looked like a member of one of those British punk bands from the eighties that my dad still loves, and whose albums he keeps in special plastic sleeves because he s positive they re going to be worth a lot of money someday Once I looked up one of my dad s most prized albums on eBay and saw that someone had bid sixteen cents for it, which for some reason made me want to cry.i thought that was a great detail, because jam is at that age where she is transitioning from a child s whole world love for her parents to feeling sorry for them, and protective of them but back to reeve always back to reeve she spends her time remembering each and every conversation they ever had, greedily sucking the marrow from each precious memory but she never talks about the day he died or how it happened in a school full of emotionally fraught teenagers i mean, than your run of the mill emotionally fraught teenagers , everyone is very respectful of each others pasts and secrets, and some are open than others about disclosing how they ended up at the wooden barn.jam is friendly with her roommate dj, but once she begins attending her special topics in english class, and its mysterious life changing experiences begin to manifest, she bonds in a much cultish way with the other

students in the class marc, casey, griffin, and sierra as the year goes on, extraordinary things begin to happen to them, things that can only be discussed with each other on the first day of class, mrs quenell enigmatically requests that they look out for one another, and that s exactly what they do sharing their past and current experiences and being there for each other in that always to me effective breakfast club scenario some of the difficulties i had were with the disparity of the characters trauma now, i know grief operates on a sliding scale, and everyone has different emotional responses to their experiences, but pitting casey s history against marc s it s not even in the same ballpark it s not even the same sport and when jam s REVEAL is REVEALED at first, it s kind of awesome, i gotta say just because of the shock of it all and there s that wonderful experience of readjusting your reader thinking and doing that whole, okay, so where does that leave us reevaluation, but once i was steadied, i gotta admit, i was much less sympathetic to jam and that might make me a monster, but rereading the earlier parts of the book, i find that my bafflement perfectly aligns with the bafflement of jam s former friends, so i think i m okay most of my other niggles were minor, and involve too many plot specifics to be useful here one positive note view spoiler i loved the detail that nothing in belzhar could occur that hadn t happened in the real world, and i absolutely loved the gradual distancing she experienced with reeve how she was moving on in life while he was staying exactly as he had been during their time together, and how his sameness began to bore her despite her equally powerful need to cling to her memory of happiness or imagined happiness, as it were i thought that was a very real depiction both of growing up and outgrowing the things you used to cherish about a person, but also of the healing process itself how, as new experiences accumulate, the pain recedes just a little further, and the memories become bittersweet instead of just bitter of course, once the inverted commas are slapped around memories, it gets messier, and the belzhar experience for jam is just sustaining her delusions and it gets much murkier and problematic for me hide spoiler ^READ KINDLE ? Belzhar ? If Life Were Fair, Jam Gallahue Would Still Be At Home In New Jersey With Her Sweet British Boyfriend, Reeve Maxfield She D Be Watching Old Comedy Sketches With Him She D Be Kissing Him In The Library Stacks She Certainly Wouldn T Be At The Wooden Barn, A Therapeutic Boarding School In Rural Vermont, Living With A Weird Roommate, And Signed Up For An Exclusive, Mysterious Class Called Special Topics In English But Life Isn T Fair, And Reeve Maxfield Is Dead Until A Journal Writing Assignment Leads Jam To Belzhar, Where The Untainted Past Is Restored, And Jam Can Feel Reeve S Arms Around Her Once Again But There Are Hidden Truths On Jam S Path To Reclaim Her Loss FromNew York Times Bestselling Author Meg Wolitzer Comes A Breathtaking And Surprising Story About First Love, Deep Sorrow, And The Power Of Acceptance

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