

The Opposite of Falling Apart

Micah Good

Wattpad Books (Feb 25, 2020)

Hardcover \$17.99 (352pp)

978-1-989365-06-9

Micah Good's *The Opposite of Falling Apart* includes a meet-cute, angst, and lots of introspection as its characters confront weighty issues. Jonas, an amputee, and Brennan, a girl with severe anxiety, are hardly a perfect match, but across alternating chapters, their relationship unfolds.

When Jonas rear-ends Brennan's car at a stoplight, he just wants to put the whole incident behind him. But he and Brennan keep running into each other, and pretty soon they become friends. In the course of their relationship, Brennan works to control her anxiety, while Jonas tries to let his guard down. They go off to separate colleges and continue to face personal struggles, but they keep in touch through text and phone calls, facing some surprise twists.

The point of view alternates between chapters, resulting in an intimate view of the characters and their hidden challenges. Scenes overlap because of these two perspectives, and the reading experience is near omniscient thanks to their differing takes. Brennan's anxiety is so strong that it risks overpowering her audience, though this also results in a visceral sense of what she is going through.

The prose is heavy on descriptions and avoids easy caricatures. Authentic scenes capture their settings well; Jonas and Brennan have realistic conversations, and their actions are believable. The characters' struggles include post-traumatic stress disorder, physical disability, and severe anxiety; these are poignant issues, deep topics that bring nuance to Brennan and Jonas's personalities and that make their love story all the more compelling.

The Opposite of Falling Apart is a gratifying story whose sympathetic teen leads challenge each other to face their fears, let one another in, and recognize what's right in front of them.

JAIME HERNDON (January / February 2020)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.