

The Twitch

Ken Konor

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Kevin doesn't get much sympathy for his strange symptoms, especially from his former girlfriend, Jane. What would you say if someone else told you they had a twitch and couldn't do the shopping—you'd laugh and say it was hysterical, Jane tells him.

It began as a twitch on my right hand just behind the knuckles, says Kevin, who narrates Ken Konor's debut novel. The twitch spreads to other parts of his body, including his left hand and the back of his neck. In addition to twitching, his problem also causes rigidity, strange positions, and difficulty performing common activities. For example, after grabbing the center pole on a double-decker bus in order to climb to the second level, Kevin finds that he can't let go.

Jane, who lives with Kevin at the beginning of the novel, participates in quota-yoga, which uses Chinese yoga in everyday activities. Kevin thinks that the term quota comes from the French word *quotidien*, which means daily, and members of the group are called squotas. One disillusioned squota raises suspicion in Kevin's mind about the legitimacy of the squotas' motives, and he searches for evidence that the squotas might be using mind control to cause his symptoms. Dr. Oaks, an engineer whom Kevin consults about his twitch, has developed a theory that says muscles control mental processes, and Kevin finds out that his book on movement is similar to a book written by the squota guru. Dr. Oaks asks Kevin to do exercises that involve copying other people's actions to control them.

Konor, a Canadian psychotherapist who utilizes movement and drama therapy, is also an actor, teacher, and philosopher. *The Twitch* reflects life's inconsistencies and the blurry line that separates reality from the unrealistic. Readers will enjoy the story's many humorous situations. For example, when squotas come to Jane's flat, they put their coats on Kevin's bed, even when he is in it.

Typographical, punctuation, and grammatical errors may distract readers. Commas often inappropriately join sentences, and many necessary commas are missing. Some of this may be intentional to represent the way Kevin writes, and unusual wording may denote a dialect or the characters' unique manner of speaking.

This novel is especially appropriate for adults who are familiar with new age beliefs. Some of the characters talk about past lives, and Kevin's spiritualist landlady holds séances. Since the book is set in England, American readers will appreciate the glossary, which defines a number of British terms.

Even though Jane fails to give Kevin sympathy, he will get it from readers who will vicariously experience Kevin's struggles as he tries to cope with symptoms that don't make sense.

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