



Pieces

Chris Lynch

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A teen revives the legacy of his lost brother in this compelling novel from the author of *Inexcusable*, a National Book Award finalist.

When Eric's brother Duane dies, his world breaks in two. Duane was his best friend—possibly his only friend. And Eric isn't sure how to live in a world without Duane in it. Desperate to find a piece of his brother to hold on to, Eric decides to meet some of the people who received Duane's organs.

He expects to meet perfect strangers. Instead he encounters people who become more than friends and almost like family—people who begin to help Eric put the pieces of his life back together for good.

From internationally acclaimed author Chris Lynch comes a gripping and enduring exploration of loss and recovery—and a long-awaited sequel to the celebrated *Iceman*.

Pieces Details

Date : Published February 5th 2013 by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

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Author : Chris Lynch

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From Reader Review Pieces for online ebook

Seema ♥Nerdgirl♥ says

...it wasn't how I had expected to be...but I liked it.

When I saw this book, I was so excited to read it as you know I'm a brotherly love/bromance addict. I was expecting Eric to talk about his dead brother a lot for instance, memories, etc. But sadly, it was only very little. It wasn't that bad, though.

Jess says

[The car accident and Eric punching a guy out. Melind

Olivia Hennis says

SNAPSHOT:

Eighteen-year-old Eric leads readers through the year after his brother's suicide, as he wades through the mourning process, held back by the loss of his best friend. When he begins to meet three of the people who accepted Duane's organs, his life takes on more meaning—and the novel takes many strange, quirky turns.

A high point in the story is when Martha, Duane's long-time love who went away to Africa six months before Duane's suicide, returns at the end of act one. As she learns the news of her old flame's death, Eric experiences it all again for the first time. Including Martha's desire to meet Phil, Melinda, and Barry. Martha, to Eric's love-struck dismay, connects most with foul-mouthed Barry, he of the wandering eye and constant sexual innuendo.

Among the donor recipients, redheaded teenage Phil is the most endearing. Having received Duane's inner ear bone for one ear, he makes sweet jokes about Duane being able to hear his little brother if Eric talks into that ear; and Phil promises not to listen in. A bit of a shy guy, Phil opens up and gains more confidence through Eric's at-first-hesitant friendship. Indeed, Eric's own friendship with Phil helps him open up to the idea of a friend for the first time in a year.

The small but lovingly crafted cast filled with eccentric yet familiar characters is certainly the strength of this tale. Readers are likely to have their own favorite, and root for happiness for the lot of them. Ultimately, the novel ends abruptly but thoughtfully, leaving readers to answer on their own the question which plagues Eric throughout: who are these people to him?

Appropriate for ages 14+. Strong language, difficult subject matter, off-screen suicide. Social alcohol use and discussions of sexual situations.

Deals with death and loss, suicide, family, relationships, and identity.

GET IT ON YOUR SHELF:

If you...

- Love books that ask the hard questions
- Are a fan of the previous book starring Eric, Iceman
- Enjoy protagonists who grow to love themselves and others
- Have ever suddenly lost someone special in your life

[[Review originally featured at <https://youngentertainmentmag.com/pie...>]]

Jamie says

A little too wacky, a little too superficial.

Natalie English says

I didn't think the writing was that good. The book was kind of bizarre and unsettling. The characters were rather annoying and I thought parts were pretty unrealistic. It did have an interesting concept though.

Brenda Kahn says

Well! This was most certainly not what I expected of a book about grief and organ donation. Leave it to Chris Lynch to explore the raw, imperfect side of what everyone assumes to a noble deed.

Daniel Reeves says

Wow, I didn't expect to like this as much as I did.

In a mere 168 pages, Chris Lynch creates a bittersweet, charming, and funny story about loss, grieving, and the healing effects of community.

With colourful (and quite loveable) characters, adorable interactions, and a very well-paced narrative, Pieces is a beautiful book that not only provides for a quick read but also a memorable story that will surely stick with me.

Lara says

Such mixed reviews already! I can see why this wouldn't really appeal to some, but I actually really enjoyed it.

This is the story of Eric, whose older brother and best friend Duane is mortally injured doing something

really stupid. Eric's family decides to take Duane off life support and donate his organs, despite Eric's protests. Later, though Eric's parents are satisfied with the thank you letters they've received from the recipients of Duane's organs and have no interest in further contact, Eric decides that he wants to meet those that are willing and available. And this is where the story gets interesting, because these people...are characters. And Eric quickly ends up with a new sort of family that he never really anticipated.

There's not a lot of resolution here--the end is left pretty wide open--so if you're the type of person who needs things tied up neatly, this will probably frustrate you. To me, this story felt much more about the characters and the dialogue than it did about plot, which, honestly, is kind of messy and just...peters out towards the end. But I found Eric's voice compelling enough and his interactions with Phil, Melinda and Barry interesting enough that I just didn't even care where the story was going. And the humor worked for me.

So...not for everyone, but definitely worth a read for those that have the patience for open endings.

Laurie Thurston says

I've long been a fan of Chris Lynch and I really enjoyed *Pieces*...Sibling stories are one of my favorite themes and this tale of Eric meeting the recipients of his brother's donated organs was unique, quirky, touching and irreverent.

Suzanne says

As books about troubled young men facing tragedy go, this one isn't bad, but it didn't wow me. I'm not sure if could make a positive difference in too many of the lives of my students. In a year that features , just how many books can measure up?

There's probably a place for this one, though, for the slightly less cerebral readers or those looking for a more rough and tumble protagonist and fewer pages. Pieces is a nice title, most obviously referring to the parts of Eric's older brother Duane only reluctantly shared in organ donation after the big personality snapped his neck with a daredevil dive into a quarry pond. Agreeing to pull the plug was bad enough, but harvesting him for others seemed just another indignity--at first. Months and months later, though, Eric is the only one who wants to meet some of Duane's recipients: his parents are grieving and trying to recover in their own way and have no interest.

So Eric finds himself having tea--yes, high tea--with three people whose lives were improved with pieces of Duane. A red-headed teenager named Phil now has Duane's inner ear bones while an asshole named Barryy seems determined to drink Duane's liver away while pursuing the female population of the greater Boston area--maybe even to include young mother Melinda with a new lease on life from Duane's kidney.

After one meeting, Duane feels pretty much done with seeing how Duane's death extended life for some, but when Duane's girlfriend Martha comes back from South American relief work, her shock and need compel more interaction with the pieces of Duane, keeping Eric's brother sometimes painfully close for him.

With "Duanisms," pieces of philosophy to open each chapter, and the mighty love felt for him by our

characters, Lynch does a nice job of bringing the original Duane to life for readers, but the focus is on Eric, a young man hurting and facing a whole long future without his anchor. Not sure if the Navy is his best course or whether he will be able to navigate a future at all that goes beyond one day at a time, Eric's story will appeal to some teenagers facing decisions and tragedies big and small

Amy says

No, no I won't pull life support from my brother. No, no you can't take parts of my brother to give to other people. No...

Duane has been fatally injured in a diving accident and his family is making the decision to pull him off life support and whether or not to donate his organs as the book begins. Eric feels like his older brother is the only person in the world who understood him. Duane wasn't perfect. He had flaws. Major ones. But he was all Eric felt that he had to back him up. And now, one year later, Eric has this sudden notion that he needs to meet the people who benefitted from Duane's "pieces". He contacts the organ donation agency and she sets up a gathering. Only three of the seven beneficiaries of Duane's organs agree to meet. The tea brunch where everyone meets is awkward, but what did Eric expect? Who are these people to him? Why does he feel like he needs to have a connection to them?

Phil, who is ironically a redhead (Duane used to tease redheads), is a 17-year-old lanky, nerdy boy who received some of Duane's internal ear bones. Barry, a complete jerk and idiot who orders alcoholic drink after drink at the brunch, has (again) ironically received Duane's liver. And Melissa, hot, single mom Melissa received Duane's kidney. All of them form a kind of friendship which later includes Martha, who had been Duane's girlfriend at one time but leaves to volunteer in Central America about a year before Duane's death and doesn't find out about his death until she returns.

What I really appreciated about this book was the humor used in what could've been a very heavy topic. Lynch is a master at the "one-liner" kind of jokes or sarcasm he incorporates into his writing. His characterization, especially of Phil, was also very well done. Some of my favorite lines include:

pg. 15 "How 'about that. Duane's heart is a year older than Duane ever was."

pg. 67 "Phil tries to answer, but his hands, his mouth, his eyebrows, all look like they are taking instructions from different air traffic controllers, because all he can do is splutter and stammer and gesticulate nuttily."

pg. 84 "Each minor success produces results as the machine spits out tickets, which can later be turned in for indescribably cheap-looking prizes. The tickets themselves probably have more intrinsic value than the toys they will be exchanged for, but no matter, no matter at all."

pg. 129 "And Phil is so excited to get in (to the Children's Museum) and relive his childhood-which was still operational probably three months ago- that he is doing this odd stretching thing where he stands on tiptoe for three or four seconds, goes flat, up again on the toes, etc. 'Please, can we go in now?' he says anxiously, trading the toe-ups for a subtle running-in-place thing." (This one made me laugh out loud!)

I also really liked that Eric's parents seemed to step up to the plate at the end, encouraging Eric not to join the military after all. Throughout the book, I got this feeling that they had been rather absent parents for Eric and that's partly why he felt such a connection to Duane. It was nice to see that they showed him support towards

the end.

The seemingly unnecessary violence was something I didn't appreciate about this book. The incident when Martha and Eric, on the way to Dean's birthday party, rear-end the guy in the pickup-truck and Eric ends up beating him up, was unnecessary, I thought. I understand that Lynch was trying to show us what Eric's reaction to the little boy who saw the fight was and how that related to his relationship with Dean, but I think that could've been done differently, maybe including Reg more. I also am confused about Melissa and Eric. Was there a thing between the two of them, or not? And finally, I really did think that maybe there was potential for Eric and Martha to have a relationship and was a little disappointed in her running away again. There's a few things in this book that would make me skeptical to recommend it to my junior high age kids but I am aware that Lynch writes mostly for upper high school ages and I think the same is true for this book.

Whitney Summers says

I read this book particularly because of the author. I was required to read a book by Chris Lynch and wasn't interested in his most popular novel, *Inexcusable* so I chose *Pieces*. I liked this novel, I mean it wasn't life changing or mind blowing but it was a good coming of age story. Its about this young man who has to deal with the death of his brother and the donations of his organs by meeting all those who received a part of him. Through the lives of those who struggled for so long he truly understands more about not only himself but his brother also.

It definitely teaches you how to deal with some pretty difficult decisions. It wasn't really what I thought it was going to be but yeah a good read. For some reason I had a flashback to the will smith movie *Seven Pounds*. I would recommend this to anyone struggling to know how to deal with the death of a loved one or who needs to understand the affects of organ donation, or I would even recommend it to someone just struggling to recognize the wonderful things life offers. This book is one for teaching you how to stop and smell the roses.

WARNINGS:

Violence: there is some violence, several fights or talks of fights

Language: There is some language, I mean it is told from the perspective of an angry and grieving teenager (17years)

Drugs: There is plenty talk and doing when it comes to alcohol.

Sex: no sex but talk of kissing and possibly some illusions to sex but nothing obvious.

Jason Whang says

I would recommend *Pieces* by Chris Lynch to everyone that is up for a suspenseful journey of loss and recovery. What make Lynch's novel amusing because he crafts interesting and unique characters, orthodox, but questionable story structure, and lastly, adding unconventional elements to the setting and plot that gives readers mixed emotions. The story begins with the protagonist's brother Duane dying. The protagonist Eric has lost the sense of life. He had lost hope and grieves over the unfortunate loss of his brother. To overcome the grief of Duane, Eric sets off on a journey with Duane's ex-girlfriend, Martha, to talk to the people who have received Duane's organs. Eric first meets the organ receivers through the organ donation organization and treats them tea. This is when the author first introduce the characters that serve an important role in this

novel. Meeting shy and timid Phil, brassy and brazen Barry, sweet-single mom Melinda, Eric starts to question these characters. As the reader, I also question the author's purpose in creating these characters. What fascinates me is that the personalities of these three people are so different, and very different from a 'stereotypical' organ transplant patient. Each character is so bright in their own way, and Chris Lynch breaks the common stereotype of how all patients are sad and gloomy. This story is recommendable because of its orthodox, but questionable story structure. It is an orthodox novel because it has all elements to the story structure, but we are left with a questionable resolution. To avoid spoilers, the ending mustn't be given away, but leaves the reader with an unsuitable/irrelevant cliffhanger. Lastly, Pieces is recommended because of its delivery to readers. The author delivers such strong message with unique writing techniques. For example, in parts of the book, the author makes the reader think and ask questions about the character, setting, and plot. In other words, you have to read in between the lines. When Eric first meets the characters and starts to get along with them, Eric's true feelings aren't written in text, but needing to infer and analyze in a different/deeper level. Also, the author evokes strong emotions of the reader. While reading this book, there were many times where I felt hatred, anger, grief, and loss. The author allows the readers to make connections and bonds with the character, and makes us feel how the character is feeling. When Martha's ex-husband and she fight, the reader feels personal sense of rage towards such evil character. Also, when Barry shows up with such brassy attitude and treats the gift he received (the organ) like a toy, Eric gets frustrated but as the reader I get frustrated too. Therefore, this book is a good one because at many occasions, we can make personal and relevant connections with individual characters. All in all, I would recommend Pieces by Chris Lynch because of its unique and distinguished characters, orthodox, but questionable story structure, and the effective delivery techniques used by the author - especially the ability to make personal connections with individual figures in the story.

jade says

"Pieces" is a good book. There is no straightforward, completely planned out motive, just a series of interactions that equal the story. It's quite a level read, no huge climax or plunge. It seemed less substantial than other, similarly themed realistic fiction novels, yet I think it left me more satisfied. Not so much the events, but the feelings-- the raw emotions (which of course are mostly inferred since the narrator *is* a teenage boy) are very relatable, understandable, and not so far fetched. Eric himself is described by his actions and decisions and thoughts; not by words. He comes alive, but does not take up a physical representation in my head, simply a thoughtful presence that lingers. What Eric really craves is needing someone and someone needing him, though he never really fully realizes this. The closest he gets is always coming back to one word: stay.

This book is like a snapshot. It only covers Eric's life for maybe a week or so. There are no picky details and no excessive adjectives. A bunch of his actions are depicted, but without any further consequence or explanations. I enjoyed this light feeling of the book as the topics just seemed to breeze from one to the next. The world within our reality he created was fantastic to be immersed in. A sort of moral was thrown in at the last moment and doesn't exactly connect well, however the end still left me contentedly sighing.

Michael says

When a beautiful woman places your hand on her hip and tells you to feel your brother's kidney, yeah, things get wierd. Darkly funny and oddly disturbing, Chris Lynch's quick read will keep you so off balance you'll be clutching for the seasickness pills.

