



Dear Life, You Suck

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“The shrinkadinks think I have a screw loose. Ain’t playing with a full deck. Whacked-out wiring. Missing marbles.”

Irreverent, foulmouthed seventeen-year-old Cricket is the oldest ward in a Catholic boys’ home in Maine—and his life sucks. With prospects for the future that range from professional fighter to professional drug dealer, he seems doomed to a life of “criminal rapscallinity.” In fact, things look so bleak that Cricket can’t help but wonder if his best option is one final cliff dive into the great unknown. But then Wynona Bidaban steps into his world, and Cricket slowly realizes that maybe, just maybe, life doesn’t *totally* suck.

Dear Life, You Suck Details

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From Reader Review Dear Life, You Suck for online ebook

Kristin says

I didn't enjoy this book for 2 reasons: the lack of an original story line, and the writing style/voice of the main character.

I felt overall that this story has been told a million times: Boy that grew up on the wrong side of the tracks falls for the popular girl, has a heart of gold, but only knows how to use violent behavior. Boy finds out he's good at something and that there's more to life than what his rough upbringing has shown him. This book is basically a modern day retelling of The Outsiders, but not nearly as well-written.

As for the main character's voice, I continually had to put the book down and walk away. The character did not sound believable or even that true to this generation's voice. One minute, Cricket was spewing out F-bombs, while the next he's using language heard on kindergarten playgrounds. His repetition of re-naming major characters, each with new adjectives to make sure the reader knows just how lame the character is in Cricket's mind, was tedious. We understood the first time that Mother Mary believes in tough love, that Moxie Lord is a hippie cougar, and that the principal is homosexual. Anyone can use a thesaurus, but that doesn't mean you should use it on every page. It was also very clear that the author was heavy-handed with alliteration, and I felt this book could have been edited much better.

Brett Casellini says

Cricket Cherapin grew up in an orphanage in Maine, United States. Grown up without parents life was tough for cricket going from school to school being kicked out of most of them. Cricket with a dark past and less than a year until his 18th birthday, tries to figure things out with prospects that range from a professional fighter to a drug dealer. With things starting to become worse Cricket starts to think about taking a "cliff dive into the great unknown," but then Wynona Bidaban steps into his life and opens up the brightness in Crickets life.

Christy says

I loved this book! Absolutely Loved! I think I fell a little in love with Cricket Cherpin. I laughed a lot and loved his old movie lines. He is a character that you cannot help but like and root for.

Jessica says

Scott Blagden has created a snarky, cynical and irreverent voice with Cricket Cherpin. He has been living in an orphanage run by nuns for the greater part of his childhood and is now on the verge of turning 18. As his 18th birthday nears, Cricket must make some life decisions. Unfortunately, the only thing he is good at is using his fists. His past has left him full of guilt and a wall around his heart. It isn't until an interest of a girl

and a near fatal accident that Cricket finally realizes life may not suck after all.

The creative language, sarcasm and profanity Cricket uses gave the book a unique voice. Although he was always getting into fights at school, Cricket has a tender spot for the younger boys at the orphanage. He looks out for them at school and tells them stories at night. Cricket also has issues with drugs, God and art. As Wynona starts showing interest in Cricket, he starts to let down some walls. When he does this, he starts to realize the other people in his life that care about him and see his potential.

"Saying I have a crush on Wynona is an understatement. She's been global warming my southern hemisphere ever since she moved here. She's only lived in Naskeag for three years, and that length of time don't count for nothing in Maine. Maine's glacial."

If you like creative language, sexual innuendos and irreverent teen boys that are hardened but gain hope again, you will love this book. Holden Caulfield meet Cricket Cherpin.

Sue Wargo says

As the back of the book states, "Cricket Cherpin's life sucks." This is one of the most engaging books I've read in ages. I am a HS librarian and this was an ARC I got at a book show. I was blown away by how authentic, tragic, yet comedic that Cricket is through out the book. Cricket lives in a group home in the middle of rural Maine. His house mother is a nun with an attitude wrapped up in her religious habit. She seems hell bent on keeping Cricket and the younger children in her charge on the right track. Cricket does almost everything wrong except when he writes and that is noticed by one of his teachers. Usually I am put off by rough or raw language and this did not bother me. While books don't come with ratings like movies, you must know that there is a LOT of swearing and a LOT of use of bad language such as calling people names that would be totally inappropriate and also a LOT of sexual talk and innuendo. But don't let that put you off of such a great story. Cricket is the rebel with a cause and deep down a flawed young man who you can totally see redeemed. I hope you will take the time to check out this new voice in YA lit. I loved it.

Emily May says

2.5

Do you ever find yourself reading a book and thinking that you would probably have enjoyed it a lot more if you hadn't already read something that does the same thing but much better? That's how I felt for the majority of Dear Life, You Suck. It's a teen "problem novel" that attempts to be funny whilst at the same time delivering an important tale about the life of someone in an unfortunate situation. While I enjoyed it for the most part, I still find myself wanting to point people towards Tales of the Madman Underground instead. And, though the stories are different, they also have very much in common. So much so that reading one almost renders it unnecessary to read the other - and if you're only going to read one, you can guess which my vote goes to.

Cricket, at seventeen, is the oldest ward in his Catholic boys' home in Maine. He is troubled, foulmouthed, horny, occasionally violent when stupid people make it necessary, and he views life with a combination of

humour and cynicism. For me, he is almost exactly like Karl Shoemaker from Tales of the Madman Underground. Except, on some level, I don't think he was handled quite as well. Karl was such a vibrant, not-exactly-ordinary character and his constant cursing and sexual thoughts didn't feel out of place, despite their frequency. Cricket, on the other hand, occasionally seemed more like a caricature of a troubled teenage boy written by someone much older. His swearing and fighting was used as a tool to make him seem more interesting, where Karl's was a by-product of an already interesting character.

I had a few separate issues with the language anyway, but not the cursing. My problem was with the forced slang that felt out of place most of the time and the constant switching between the Cricket who speaks like this: "The shrinkadinks think I have a screw loose. Ain't playing with a full deck. Whacked-out wiring. Missing marbles" with made up words and fragmented sentences, and the one who contemplates life, religion and the universe like he is the wisest old monkey on the planet. It's a shame really because I enjoyed the discussions on religion and the comparisons between Cricket's parent situation and the relationship between Jesus and God - he ponders what kind of father could abandon his son when he needs him most. Very interesting, but completely at odds with other aspects of his character.

However, the main thing which I believe sets the two books I mentioned apart is the secondary characters. Tales of the Madman Underground had many colourful characters that interacted with the protagonist and made the story so much more interesting and funny. In Dear Life, You Suck, the only noteworthy character, in my opinion, is Cricket. Many others were introduced but not sufficiently explored, even in the case of Wynona - a waste of potential, if you ask me. I also think the lack of secondary character development highlighted Cricket's misogyny and the way he sees every female in the novel as a walking set of breasts and vagina. While I appreciate that Cricket has reasons for his behaviour and this isn't supposed to be a nice story about a good guy, I think if you're going to use misogyny in this way, then you really should develop said female characters beyond their anatomy. Maybe I would have felt differently about this if I'd found Cricket's romance with Wynona more satisfying.

To end on a positive, I am glad that there are still people catering for teen boys who read. And I do believe this book will find a place in the hearts of the right readers but, unfortunately, I am not one of them.

April says

There's something to be said for reading a contemporary book that it seems hasn't yet been widely reviewed by other book bloggers. I feel a bit like an explorer right now. Dear Life, You Suck is a debut novel by Scott Blagden. Set in Maine, Dear Life, You Suck follows Cricket Cherpin who has a depressing back story and a not-so bright future. When a new girl steps into Cricket's life, he realizes that it does not have to 'suck', that in fact there might just be happiness in store for him despite the circumstances.

[Read the rest of my review here](#)

Karen Rock says

Scott Blagden's breakout YA contemporary novel Dear Life, You Suck, will punch you in the gut as much as it tugs at your heart strings. Its wise-cracking protagonist, Cricket Cherpin, is a streetwise orphan who questions the life he's been given: parents who cared more about drugs than him and a misunderstood, hard knocks life growing up in a Catholic orphanage in Maine.

His first step towards making sense of it all is an English assignment in which he's asked to draft a letter to someone he's had issues with but never confronted. In Cricket's case, he has beef with life. In short, it sucks. So much so, he views his future in terms of an exit strategy, standing on the cliffs in the back of the converted prison now orphanage, imagining what it would be like to cast himself away.

Enter Wynona Bidaban, a hot (to Cricket) girl who just so happens to be the girlfriend of the bully he's recently pulverized. The funny thing is, she sides with Cricket as do a surprising number of people in his life. Cricket comes to understand that he may think life sucks, but LIFE does not return that sentiment.

It's beautiful to watch Cricket's transformation from a disillusioned, mistrusting teenager with little self-esteem to one who comes to believe not only in life, but in himself. The prose is stunning, the humor will make you laugh out loud, and the sentimental moments couldn't be less like Hallmark... but they still make you cry like a baby. I absolutely loved this book and would recommend it to fans of John Green, Sherman Alexie, Rodman Philbrick and Edward Bloor's works.

Nicholas May says

I read a lot of books. I mean, ALOT of books. But it's rare that I want to start a book over the second I read the last word of the last page. Cricket Cherpin, he of the cursedly unfortunate name and infinite sarcasm, struck such a chord with me personally that I wish I could give more than 5 stars.

He is infinitely flawed. Damaged physically and emotionally. Yet, he stands up for what he believes in. He stands as protector for those that are too weak to do so themselves. He does it all while being grotesquely horny and hilarious!

While there are many sexual innuendos in this book that may make some parents afraid to let their daughters read it, I think this is a great insight into the mind of an adolescent male, for good or for bad. While he is certainly a raging ball of hormones, he is still driven by his heart, which most people overlook when they think of the adolescent male.

I've already suggested this book to my teenager daughter, and would suggest it to everyone. Young, Old, In-between... this ones for you.

Kelly Hager says

I wanted so badly to love this book and I just couldn't do it.

I will admit that part of this problem is likely the fact that I am neither a teenager nor a boy, so instead of finding Cricket clever, I mostly just found him obnoxious.

But then he'd do something completely sweet and I would like him...but then he'd go out of his way to be an even bigger creep than before, so then I'd hate him again.

To be fair, I know a lot of it has to do with his backstory (two awful parents and a dead little brother) and so yes, a lot of his swagger is to keep people at arm's length so he doesn't run the risk of being hurt or left again.

But understanding this doesn't make liking Cricket any easier, and it's very hard to like someone who goes out of his way to annoy other people.

This is still an interesting book and I know a lot of people enjoyed it (including my friend Darby!) but it wasn't for me.

Melissa says

Well Cricket manager to get a goofy grin on my face more than once :)

Kelly (and the Book Boar) says

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

Cricket Cherpin (seriously) has lived in an orphanage ran by nuns for the past 8 years. Now 8 months away from timing out of the system, he is contemplating his future. Cricket sees three options for himself: (1) move up from being an assistant to his drug-dealing best friend to being a full-fledged dealer himself; (2) take all of his mentor, "Caretaker's", training and start boxing for money; or (3) step off a cliff.

If you fall into the category of "I can't stand YA books that take this not-really-that-intelligent lead character but yet give him the voice of a genius" you probably aren't going to like *Dear Life, you Suck*. Cricket's voice is brilliant. Foul-mouthed and filled with a vocabulary straight of a thesaurus, he's not your average 17 year old. If you fall into the category of "I can't stand YA books that have an oh-so-traumatic event that happened upteen years ago that the lead character is struggling to get over", you might not like it either. Cricket suffered trauma, he tells you he's f'd up and you know he is either going to have to come to terms with it or just end it all. I generally fall into Category #2, but somehow Scott Blagden produced a novel that didn't make me want to pull my hair out waiting for the moment where Cricket's past is finally revealed.

While there are other YA "trauma" books that, in my opinion, are better – this one held its own pretty well. Recommended for older teens for vulgar language, drug/alcohol use and heartbreak reality.

Liviania says

If the title isn't enough to convince you to pick this book up, then this might not be the book for you. But trust me: you're missing out on a real gem. Scott Blagden's debut novel DEAR LIFE, YOU SUCK is the story of Cricket, who is about to age out of the boys' home he lives in.

Cricket is an amazing narrator. His voice is absolutely absorbing, and plot relevant! He's definitely a teenager, and shoots himself in the foot sometimes. (I absolutely adored one scene where he realizes his actions caused him to miss out on an opportunity.) He has anger issues, and is perhaps a bit too laid back about drug dealing. At the same time, Cricket's got a lot of positives in his personality too, and he grows as a character throughout the story. The first thing that really drew him to me as a reader is also what endears Cricket to his crush Wynona: he totally loves and cares for the younger kids in the home. Aww.

Honestly, I don't have much to say about DEAR LIFE, YOU SUCK. It fits into the vein of books like Dale Peck's SPROUT, Michael Hassan's CRASH AND BURN, and Andrew Smith's WINGER. It's a realistic contemporary that deals with some of the harsher facts of life (and being a teen), as told through the eyes of a witty, talented young man. But I really liked it. There's so much personality in this novel, from the unconventional family to the sweet romance to the slightly melodramatic but fitting ending.

Therefore: love, love, love.

Andrei Mocanu says

The lack of an original story doesn't matter so much when the book makes you laugh every step of the way. Predictable, with too much sentimental bs at times, but definitely one of the funniest I've ever read.

Lorrie says

I think Cricket is one of my favorite characters of 2013. I either had a smile on my face or a lump in my throat. I loved the relationship between he and Mother Mary, and also his relationship with the Little Ones. The last two 'Dear Life' letters he wrote tugged at my heart. The ending was wonderful!
