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Keeping The Beat



Synopsis

It was supposed to be the best summer of her life. Instead, seventeen-year-old Lucy finds her best friend, Harper, shot dead in an LA swimming pool. How did things ever go so wrong? The story circles back to trace the steps that led to this disaster. Only Harper McKenzie could have taken five girls from their school and reinvented them as Crush, the top prospect to win the international talent contest Project Next. As soon as the band finds its footing, it scores a huge win in the UK semifinal. Next stop, LA! The girls will spend a luxurious summer in Hollywood, living as reality TV stars while they prepare for their performance in the Project Next final. With a mansion to themselves, they're the toast of the town ... living every girl's dream come true. It's way too late when Lucy discovers that Harper's heart has never been in Project Next at all. Joining the competition was just part of Harper's elaborate ruse to reconnect with her no-good ex-boyfriend. Harper will risk anything --- from her friendships to the band's reputation --- to get him back. Meanwhile, the other members of Crush are throwing themselves headfirst into sex, drugs and rock and roll. With the band in crisis and the final approaching, Lucy must decide whether she wants to play to Harper's beat or set the rhythm for the rest of the band. This fast-paced story takes unexpected twists, unraveling the mystery of Harper's murder and exploring the complicated relationships among members of the band. Writing team Marie Powell and Jeff Norton --- with many years in the entertainment business between them --- deliver one-part wish fulfillment and one-part cautionary tale as they go behind the scenes to reveal what no one sees on ?reality? TV.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

... a page-turning thriller ...
Publishers WeeklyThe theatrical plot, easy-to-read dialogue, and fun cast of showbiz characters make the book a quick read.
Quill & Quire

Jeff Norton is a UK-based Canadian author. A reluctant reader as an adolescent, Jeff started writing to create the types of books that would be as addictive and compelling as the very best of film, TV and video games. He is the author of the award-winning thriller series *MetaWars*, the comedic *Memoirs of a Neurotic Zombie* books, the picture book *Stomp School* and the upcoming sci-fi middle-grade comedy *Alienated: Grounded at Groom Lake*. Originally from Burlington, Ontario, Jeff now lives in London, UK, with his wife and two young sons.

3.5 stars
This book reminded me of that episode of *Saved By the Bell* where the Zack Attack band discovers fame and fortune and then it all comes crashing down. In *Keeping the Beat*, a group of five teenage girls form a band and within months are apparently good enough to win the Project Next reality tv contest in England and are invited to compete for the top title in the United States. While in LA, the girls start to enjoy the showbiz life a little too much and soon the band's chances of success are threatened. There's also little bit of mystery going on because within the first few pages of the novel, you find out that one of girls, Harper, will wind up dead in 8 months. I think this book is a fun read if you don't take it too seriously. There's some ridiculous stuff going on including having to accept the fact this band is so amazingly talented despite not having much experience. And there's a few situations when you can't help but think in real life that would never happen. But if you can go with the flow and not over analyze, it's an enjoyable read. I do think though, that the book could have been improved if it eliminated the character of Toni. Her storyline was the weakest and there were already too many other characters in the book. I received a free copy of this book from Kids Can Press but was under no obligation to post a review. All views expressed are my honest opinions.

For anyone who's ever wondered what it'd be like to be a rock-star, this juicy, addictive read will have you turning the pages and reading late into the night while living vicariously through Lucy, Harper and the other members of the girl group, Crush. Being awesome Brits to boot, it's like a rawer of version of what being a Spice Girl must have been like ;)

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