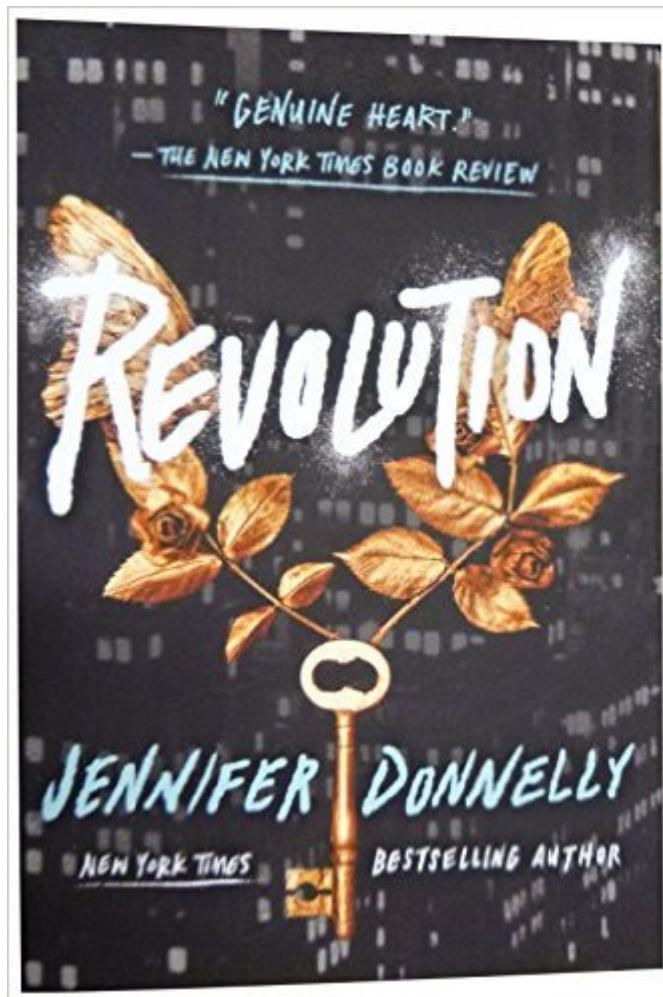


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Revolution



Synopsis

Readers of If I Stay and Elizabeth George will love Revolution by Jennifer Donnelly, author of the award-winning novel A Northern Light. Revolution artfully weaves two girls' stories into one unforgettable account of life, loss, and enduring love. Revolution spans centuries and vividly depicts the eternal struggles of the human heart. Andi Alpers is on the edge. She's angry at her father for leaving, angry at her mother for not being able to cope, and heartbroken by the loss of her younger brother, Truman. Rage and grief are destroying her. And her father has determined that accompanying him to Paris for winter break is the solution for everything. But Paris is a city of ghosts for Andi. And when she finds a centuries-old diary, the ghosts begin to walk off the page. Alexandrine, the owner of the journal, lived during the French Revolution. She's angry too. It's the same fire that consumes Andi, and Andi finds comfort in it until, on a midnight journey through the catacombs, words transcend paper and time, and the past becomes terrifyingly present. Praise for Revolution: An ABA Indies Choice Young Adult Book of the Year An ALA-YALSA Top Ten Best Book for Young Adults A Kirkus Reviews Best Book A #1 Indiebound Selection A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year A Bulletin Blue Ribbon Book A Chicago Public Library Best of the Best Book An .com Best Book of the Year... A sumptuous feast of a novel, rich in mood, character, and emotion. "SLJ, Starred Review... Every detail is meticulously inscribed into a multi-layered narrative that is as wise, honest, and moving as it is cunningly worked. Readers... will find this brilliantly crafted work utterly absorbing." "The Bulletin, Starred Review... Brilliantly realized, complete, and complex. The novel is rich with detail, and both the Brooklyn and Paris settings provide important grounding for the haunting and beautifully told story." Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In Jennifer Donnelly's exquisite new young adult book, Revolution, there's a juxtaposition of two young lives, lived two hundred years apart, and the idea and reality of Revolution. In modern times, Andi Alpers is a high school senior at the exclusive New York school St. Anselm's, and while her life should be one of ease and comfort, she's haunted by the sudden, tragic death of her younger brother Truman two years before. During the French revolution, Alexandrine Paradis is a teen whose very life depends upon her ability to be a convincing actress and spy. Brought together by Alex's diary, the two young women are on different paths to self-discovery, yet neither one may survive. Andi's a tragic figure in many ways, and her story isn't a pretty one. Never very close to her father, a Nobel Prize winning scientist, the death of Truman drives a wedge further into their relationship, particularly once he leaves Andi and her mother for good. Andi's mother retreats into a cloud of painting and depression until Andi's father is forced to place her into a mental institution; her pain is echoed in Andi, who also finds that popping prescription anti-depressants numbs her to the guilt she feels over Truman. In a life filled with drugs and soul-rending pain, Andi considers repeatedly taking her own life; the only force of good she feels is when she can retreat into music. It is this force that draws her to Virgil, a young man she meets when she's forced by her father to go to Paris with him while her mother is institutionalized. It is there that she finds Alex's diary, and her journey back in time begins.

What I thought would be a rather trite novel of two teens with evolving emotions divided by 200 years, this book was anything but commonplace. I was surprised by the intensity and originality of the author's melding of societies and out-sized passions. Ms. Donnelly demonstrates respect for the intellect of young women. From the articulate first chapter where she describes Andi Alpers, who is not always lucid, to the final sentence, I was impressed with Andi's perception of her peers and her own insurmountable grief. Despite her haunting sorrow and guilt, she holds on to her astuteness and ability to learn. A gifted musician, Andi is suffering from the loss of her younger brother, her guilt has sent her in a tailspin of drugs and self-loathing. Donnelly captures Andi in the first few chapters and the readers are aware they are dealing with a brilliant, 17-year-old girl who is on edge of suicide and appears to be floating from minute to minute in agony. She reaches out to her mother, an artist, who cannot overcome the death of her son, Truman, and placates her with kindness and gifts. Her

father, a successful Nobel Prize winning geneticist, sends her mother to a mental hospital and takes Andi to Paris. Placing her mother in a mental hospital is an affront to Andi and she fights her father for her mother's dignity. One of my favorite lines occurs when Andi corrects Dr. Becker (the hospital's psychiatrist) grammar and usage. Her father has his rules: she is to work on her thesis to graduate from her elite school by creating a plausible outline and plan in order to graduate. So how can Andi use her brilliance to overcome her grief and re-enter the world? Her father drags her to Paris where he is working on a secret project and the story begins.

In REVOLUTION, Jennifer Donnelly tells the story of a teenage girl (andi) who is struggling through grief after the death of her younger brother. While visiting Paris, Andi discovers a lost journal from the French Revolution. As Andi pours over the journal, makes new friends, and stumbles into another world, she begins to find the healing she so desperately needs. I'm a sophomore in college and I divide my spare time between classic literature and young adult books. I was excited about the premise for this book because I love history, love time travel, and love young adult novels. I appreciated Andi and the cast of characters at the beginning. However, as I continued to read I found it harder and harder to overlook certain plot devices. By the end I was just reading so I could finish and return it to the library. The turn for the worse began when she found the journal--the point I had been excited about all along. I'm no expert, but I read a lot of classic literature, and I feel confident enough to say that Alex's voice in her journal does not sound like the voice of an 18th Century teenager. Even the sentence structure was almost completely the same as 20th Century Alex's narrations. I was also skeptical of the journal's form. Most of the time, it didn't read like a journal, it read like excerpts from another story. Maybe it's just me, but I don't write in my journal as if I'm writing a novel, with dialog and everything. This skepticism of the journal bloomed into outright disbelief when I read the last entry. Let's just say, if I had something really, really important to write down and a limited time to do so, I would write the important thing first and go into details later.

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