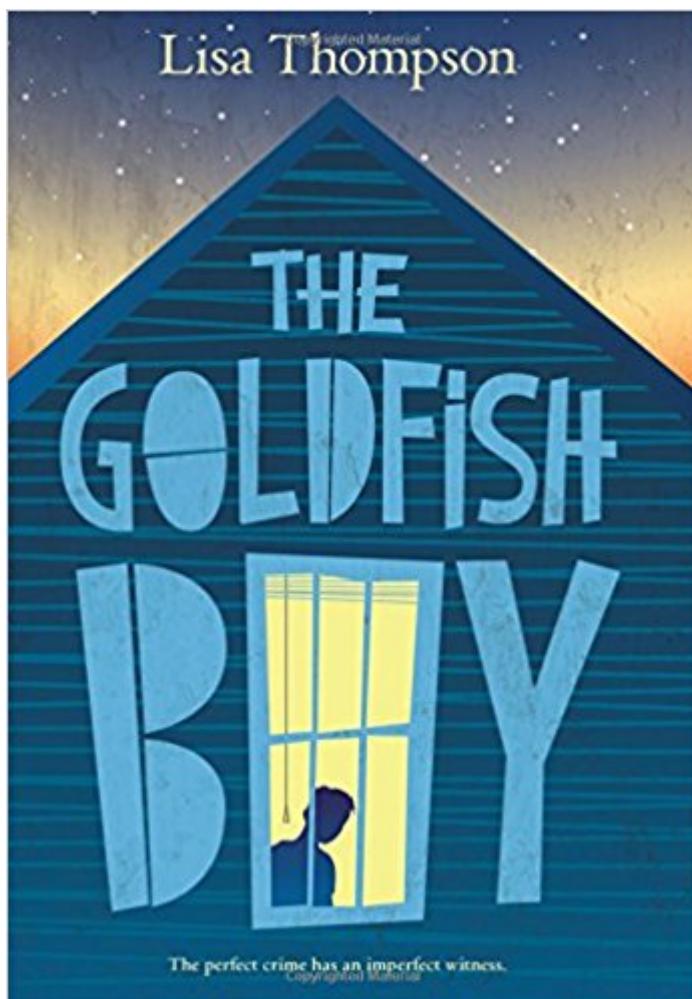


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The Goldfish Boy



Synopsis

Lisa Thompson's debut novel is a page-turning mystery with an emotionally-driven, complex character study at its core -- like *Rear Window* meets *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Matthew Corbin suffers from severe obsessive-compulsive disorder. He hasn't been to school in weeks. His hands are cracked and bleeding from cleaning. He refuses to leave his bedroom. To pass the time, he observes his neighbors from his bedroom window, making mundane notes about their habits as they bustle about the cul-de-sac. When a toddler staying next door goes missing, it becomes apparent that Matthew was the last person to see him alive. Suddenly, Matthew finds himself at the center of a high-stakes mystery, and every one of his neighbors is a suspect. Matthew is the key to figuring out what happened and potentially saving a child's life... but is he able to do so if it means exposing his own secrets, and stepping out from the safety of his home?

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 750 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 320 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 25 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #65,124 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #77 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Illness #157 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction #516 in Books > Children's Books > Mysteries & Detectives

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Gr 4-6 •Watching from his bedroom window, Matthew, called Goldfish Boy because he never leaves his room, is the last person to observe a neighborhood toddler before the child's disappearance. With his hands tightly secured inside rubber gloves, Matthew struggles with an intense fear of germs, brought on by the death of his baby brother. There are few characters who

interact with Matthew: his frustrated parents, a girl who lives down the street, and his adjoining neighbors, all of whom are suspects in the toddler's disappearance. The novel successfully weaves Matthew's personal struggle with obsessive-compulsive disorder and the search for the missing toddler into a compelling story with a hearty dose of mystery and adventure. Though the topic is serious, the tone is fairly light and the story well-paced, considering the setting rarely changes from Matthew's home. Readers will root for Matthew. VERDICT Recommended for middle grade collections and for use as a classroom read-aloud, ideal for building empathy. —Pilar Okeson, District of Columbia Public Library

Praise for The Goldfish Boy* "Thompson strikes the perfect balance, seemingly without compromise, between an issue-driven novel and one with broad, commercial appeal. This empathetic debut is a middle-grade whodunit with a very special heart." -- Kirkus Reviews, starred review

it fairly boring and a not fun book to read. Lisa Thomson is a good book writer, but this was a bad subject for a book. Three stars

Wish it was an ar book so that my kids would read it. I am a special ed teacher and I loved this book

The Goldfish Boy is about Matthew, a boy with extreme OCD. He is called the Goldfish Boy, because he is afraid to leave the safety of his room and is thought of as a goldfish in a tank. Because of his mental condition, people don't understand him well and when a young child goes missing, Matthew is caught in the middle. I found this to be an interesting book that was quick to read. The action moves at a quick pace and keeps the reader engaged, especially since the text is broken up with emails. Matthew is a fascinating character and I was really rooting for him to solve the mystery of the boy's disappearance. My kids also read this book and enjoyed it. It's recommended for 8 to 12 year olds. I'd guess that some younger readers may be bothered by the disappearance of a young child, but the author handled it well and it's not a major disconcerting plot point. The story mainly focuses on Matthew and how he deals with his OCD. I think the book would be good for older readers too, like those in middle school.

Like a goldfish in a bowl 12-year-old Matthew Corbin sits in the second story windows of his house and witnesses life going on around him. He is unable to wander far or often from his home-bound

world due to the paralyzing effects of his Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). At the heart of the book is a mystery involving a missing toddler, with Matthew being the last person to see the child. Matthew lives on a small cul-de-sac which is also home to a group of interesting and diverse characters. Readers become privy to many of the characters' stories and secrets as the mystery of the missing toddler unfolds and everyone begins to look like a suspect. Thompson has written engaging and well-rounded characters and Matthew is an easy kid to like. He's a regular kid with extraordinary burdens to bare. Thompson provides her readers with enough of a description of OCD for them to understand without inundating them with too many facts. She describes Matthew's daily struggles to live within the confines of his OCD, his triggers and how these compulsions influence his life and the lives of his loved ones. His struggle to balance his compulsions with the need to find the missing toddler was handled well and felt believable. He has a couple of quirky sidekicks, who are also in the outer fringes of the tween social spectrum, but it was heartening to see how these three 'misfits' gain confidence and support from one another. While this book is a mystery, it also has a lot of heart as it deals with several issues. Readers will feel for Matthew as people misinterpret his OCD behaviours as well as his parents who struggle to understand and deal with their child's perplexing behaviours. Other issues, such as bullying, social effects of food allergies and loss, are handled with sympathy, knowledge and heart. I simply loved this book. Whether you're looking for a mystery, a peek into a young life with OCD or a group of characters that will stay with you, this book has something for everyone.

This was a very enjoyable children's book for older elementary school readers. The main character is a boy struggling with obsessive compulsive tendencies and was a very well drawn, and at times heartbreakingly, character. The author does a great job creating his lonely world where he spends most of his time (when not obsessively cleaning himself) looking out various windows of his house. There is a mystery involved when a small boy goes missing, which was fairly interesting and as an adult I didn't even guess until the very end. I found myself often putting myself into the shoes of the parents and I was truly heartbroken to see them so helpless. The book does tie up the mystery, but does not just tie a bow on the boy's OCD problem, which would have been misleading and so I'm very glad the author didn't go there. The ending is not tragic either, but leaves you hopeful for the boy's future. I do feel 8 is a little young for the recommended audience (my son is 6 1/2 and would in no way be ready to even have this read to him in a year and a half). I would say 10-12 or 9 for more precocious children.

Goldfish Boy is a really sweet book! It kept my interest and I couldn't put it down until it was finished. Matthew tugged at my heartstrings and I wanted so badly for him to feel better about himself. The ending seemed a little rushed, but overall it was a very satisfying read. The plot itself isn't very complex, although I was fooled when I thought I had it all figured out. However, the real story is Matthew and how he struggles with his OCD. Most of the characters have well defined personalities and they are easy to visualize. No one really understands Matthew and it's sad to see how easily they judge him without helping him. I think we've all probably known a Matthew in our lives. The ending of this story felt rushed and I was left wanting to know more about the culprit's motives. Without giving too much away, I would have liked to have seen a 'flash forward' into Matthew's life. Still, it was a very enjoyable book and it flowed well. This book is currently making the rounds with my grandchildren and we've all been pleased with it.

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