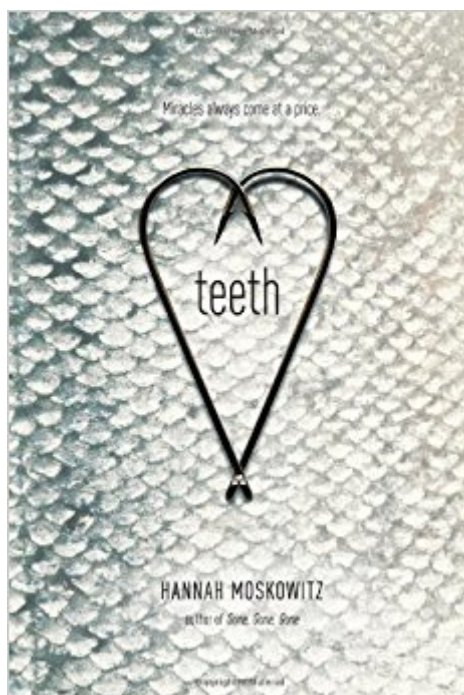


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# Teeth



## Synopsis

A gritty, romantic modern fairy tale from the author of *Break and Gone*, *Gone, Gone, Gone*. Be careful what you believe in. Rudy's life is flipped upside-down when his family moves to a remote island in a last attempt to save his sick younger brother. With nothing to do but worry, Rudy sinks deeper and deeper into loneliness and lies awake at night listening to the screams of the ocean beneath his family's rickety house. Then he meets Diana, who makes him wonder what he even knows about love, and Teeth, who makes him question what he knows about anything. Rudy can't remember the last time he felt so connected to someone, but being friends with Teeth is more than a little bit complicated. He soon learns that Teeth has terrible secrets. Violent secrets. Secrets that will force Rudy to choose between his own happiness and his brother's life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9-11-The premise of this book is that a magical fish impregnates a young woman, resulting in the birth of a half human/half sea creature. These fish, if eaten, can cure all kinds of diseases. Teeth rescues the fish he considers to be his brothers from fishermen's nets. When he is caught, he is beaten again and again, but always manages to escape. Rudy's family has moved to the island seeking a cure for his younger brother's cystic fibrosis. Rudy is so alone, restless, and bored that meeting Teeth results in an instant curiosity and connection. Diana, Teeth's sister, is lonely, too, and initiates contact with Rudy, apparently the only other teen on the island. This is a story of Rudy's path to identity and making choices in complicated circumstances. He loves his brother and is

grateful when the fish help stem the disease but also understands Teeth's desire to rescue the fish from the nets. To allow Teeth to continue his mission will spell sickness for the islanders who have come to rely on the healing ability of the fish; to allow the fishermen to slowly beat Teeth to death is clearly wrong. In addition to these dilemmas, Rudy wonders about going to college and about how his family has changed since being on the island. This is an unusual story, narrated by Rudy, but his frequent use of obscenities seems unnecessary. In the end he finds a way to save Teeth, help his brother, and accept his place in life.-Joanne K. Cecere, Monroe-Woodbury High School, Central Valley, NY  
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*\*Starred Review\** Moskowitz's best novel since *Break* (2009) is actually reminiscent of that (literally) smashing debut: both books feature a teen struggling to protect his sick brother, and both deal with the extreme limits of noble self-harm. Rudy, 16, and his family have moved to "a place for last resorts, a remote island that is the home of the rare silver Enki fish, purported to have unsurpassed restorative powers" just what Rudy's 5-year-old brother, Dylan, needs to stave off death from cystic fibrosis. It is within the frigid ocean waves that Rudy encounters Teeth, an ugly, foul-mouthed half boy, half fish who is perpetually bruised and bloody from violent late-night encounters with cruel fishermen. The two become friends, maybe even more, but Teeth considers the fish his siblings, and Rudy needs the fish to feed his brother. Therein lies the conflict: how much is one of them willing to give up for the other? Despite the fantastical elements, this reads as realistic, even gritty, drama, fueled by Moskowitz's brand of stream-of-consciousness wonder, tumbling emotion, and dark undertones. Her handling of each character's sexuality is particularly impressive in its refusal to generalize or simplify. Moskowitz's prose has always had charm; pair it with a great plot and this is what happens. Grades 9-12. --Daniel Kraus --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

What in the fudge did I just read? I have no idea. I distinctly remember reading this book, but I'm at a loss for words or feelings or just anything that requires thinking. Teeth is the epitome of WTFery. I've heard it called gut-wrenching, beautiful, and haunting, and so many people have raved about it, but I just don't get all the fuss. Teeth has a sharp bite, but I'm not entirely sure why I'm hurting and to what purpose. I am a crazed hunter of mindf\*\*\* books, but this one was just perplexing on so many levels. Enter stage left: older brother Rudy who is trapped on an island while his family tries to cure his brother's cystic fibrosis with magical flipping fish. You heard right. Magical fish. This aspect

actually intrigued me, but let's go on. Said boy meets two people about his age while he is on this island. One is a girl named Diana who is kind of a homebody, seeing as her mother never lets her go out into the big, scary world. We can definitely tell this by her awkward social skills and the fact that she's learned everything from books and not personal experience. The other is half human, half fish. This just keeps getting more and more interesting. Rudy is torn between his brother's need for the fish in order to survive and Teeth's vehement protests against killing his brethren for the sake of the humans he hates. Rudy was such a tool. He is a very realistic, angst filled teenager who thinks about sex frequently. Half the time, I wanted to punch him in the face. The other half, I admired his deep love for his brother and his concern for Teeth's welfare. I actually think the island made him a better, stronger individual; it gave him some much-needed perspective. He sounded kind of like a douchebag before his isolation. But after the move, he started focusing more on what mattered and showing redeemable qualities. He began to question overfishing in the area and many of his core beliefs, and all because of Teeth. Teeth had to be my favorite character because he felt so strongly about his cause. He was such a complex, mind-boggling character. Sometimes he was a brat and immature, but he had even less experience than Diana with the outside world, and that was just how he reacted to the unfamiliar. He had learned everything he knew from eavesdropping, and that wasn't a whole lot. I grew to love him and I wanted to protect him somehow since he was so vulnerable and, despite his suffering, innocent. Just as Rudy couldn't bear his pain, I too wanted to silence his screams. For me, Teeth was the reason I could keep reading because I needed to know what happened to him. I loved the magical element of the fish's healing properties, but I can't say that I particularly enjoyed much of the book. It was painful, and when I reflect back on some of the more shocking moments, I found no meaning in them. Did they have a metaphorical purpose? Of course. But I was too turned off from the story to grasp what Moskowitz was trying to communicate. I have my guesses about environmental concerns and sexuality, but there's nothing concrete. For some reason, Teeth did not resonate as deeply with me as it seems to have done with other readers. It is a book that readers can finish and then discuss at length. In fact, they can discuss it till they're old and gray and never come to an agreement. The author leaves it up to her audience to discover the meaning behind the story, and that actually frustrated me beyond belief. Can you throw me a bone here, Moskowitz? If anything, I think Moskowitz tried a little too hard for complexity, sacrificing a deeper understanding for myself as the reader. I wanted so much more from the secondary characters, such as Diane, her mother, Rudy's parents, and Dylan. I felt like Moskowitz was leading somewhere with all of them, and that there would be some development for them, but Moskowitz missed so many opportunities for characterization. It seemed like all other interactions

paled in comparison to the relationship shared between Rudy and Teeth, which I understand is the main focus, but the other characters were just flat. I needed Moskowitz to breathe some life into them. Maybe it's because we only see them through Rudy's eyes? And Rudy is definitely all about Teeth. I knew this tale would be dark and gritty. I was warned. It explores the darker sides of humanity, and there are quite a few disturbing scenes. I had no qualms with the darker aspects. I just was not feeling it at all. If you want a challenging read that makes you think long and hard, I'd say go for it. But if you're looking for something more straightforward, I'd say stay away from Teeth.

This book was the weirdest, strangest, most disturbing book that I've read.....Ever?Yes, ever. That is an accurate statement. Most of the story of Teeth is about the relationship that grows between Rudy, the main character, and Teeth... a half fish, half boy... but throw out any thoughts or dreams of Ariel from The Little Mermaid because Teeth is not a cute merman... He is literally half of a human fused to a fish - specifically, the magical kind of fish that heals the sick on the island. Born from a rather... disturbing (how many times am I going to use this adjective? I need a thesaurus...) encounter between his mother and one of the Enki fish, Teeth is one of a kind. He hangs on the fringes of the human world - a young boy who has sentient thoughts, emotions, a sense of humor and anger - but has no true place in the world. Teeth is either exploited in the most terrible of ways by a few of the people on the island or completely ignored, written off as an urban legend of sorts. And when I say exploited, I mean to say raped. Repeatedly. The screams that Rudy hears during the nights? Those are Teeth's screams while he is being raped. Hannah Moskowitz really explores the dark side of humanity in Teeth. Nearly everyone on the island knows of Teeth's existence and can probably guess that it is him screaming in the night... but no one attempts to help him, much less care to figure out why he is screaming insistently. Even Rudy, Teeth's only friend, who knows what is happening to his friend, chooses to ignore the screaming night after night... Moskowitz really called into question where we as humans draw the line between right and wrong, action and inaction. All in all, I really enjoyed this book. It was extremely dark, haunting and made me feel physically ill at some points... but it was unique. I do not think that I will ever forget this book. Teeth is definitely not for everyone - classifying it as young adult is a serious stretch. There is some serious language (totally inappropriate for young readers) and recurring sexual violence. Proceed with caution, you've been warned!

As always, Hannah Moskowitz pens a poignant tale about love, loneliness and sickness. Teeth is the unusual story of a brother, Rudy, forced to move to a faraway island whose waters hold magical

fish, the cure to his little brother's cystic fibrosis. The writing style might be a little jarring to some, but I feel like it fits the emotion and turmoil that Rudy goes through throughout the story. Same with the language. Some might complain upon seeing the F word so often, but that's how many teens talk. I think it makes the dialog seem more realistic. Teeth is the emotional ride of a teenaged boy trying to come to terms with what his life has become due to circumstances out of his control and the struggle between trying to help those around him without hurting others at the same time. It's definitely a unique story with characters you'll come to feel for and suffer through heartbreak with.

..it really is very unique, and I loved it. It's a lot grittier and darker than a lot of people expected, but I ended up caring about the characters more than I planned partially for that reason. I also found it very refreshing that the development of the characters and their relationships with one another happened very naturally and honestly, since tropes like "insta-love" can be overdone and tiring in the YA genre. It's definitely not for the very faint of heart, but it's more realistic than I ever thought a story with magic fish could be. Some of the imagery from this book is sure to haunt me, but overall I am happy to keep this story and certain scenes with these characters in my memory.

But then as I got more and more into it, the book drew me in. I don't know what it was but it was a very interesting book. Hopefully she makes another book about teeth because now I'm wondering if they find each other again. Or if Rudy gets off the island!

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