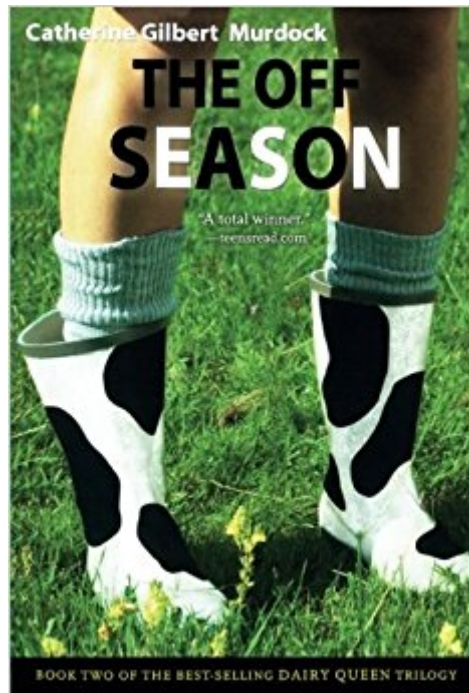


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The Off Season



Synopsis

Life is looking up for D.J. Schwenk. She's in eleventh grade, finally. After a rocky summer, she's reconnecting in a big way with her best friend, Amber. She's got kind of a thing going with Brian Nelson, who's cute and popular and smart but seems to like her anyway. And then there's the fact she's starting for the Red Bend High School football team—the first girl linebacker in northern Wisconsin, probably. Which just shows you can't predict the future. As autumn progresses, D.J. struggles to understand Amber, Schwenk Farm, her relationship with Brian, and most of all her family. As a whole herd of trouble comes her way, she discovers she's a lot stronger than she's ever thought. This hilarious, heartbreaking and triumphant sequel to the critically acclaimed Dairy Queen takes D.J. and all the Schwenks from Labor Day to a Thanksgiving football game that you will never forget.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (April 4, 2011)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 57 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #441,507 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #86 in Books > Teens >

Literature & Fiction > Sports > Football #899 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social

& Family Issues > Dating & Sex #1266 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Girls &

Women

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 7—10—This sequel to Murdock's Dairy Queen (Houghton, 2006) catches readers up with narrator D.J. Schwenk as she hits her stride in her junior year of high school. She's playing linebacker for her high school football team, hanging out with Brian (the rival high school's quarterback), earning passing grades, and pulling her weight on her family's struggling

dairy farm. But "a whole herd of trouble" is coming her way. First, D.J. and, by extension, Brian become the unwitting subjects of a People magazine article. Then D.J. suffers a shoulder injury that threatens her sports career, her gay best friend runs away with an older girlfriend, and D.J. notices that Brian isn't too keen on being seen with her in public. These problems are all put into perspective when D.J.'s older brother, Win, suffers a serious spinal-cord injury during a college football game. D.J. stays by his side in the hospital, a task made even tougher by Win's refusal to communicate, and accompanies him to rehab in Minnesota. There's no too-tidy ending here; readers gain a sense of the wait-and-see and grueling nature of physical rehabilitation. Though not as laugh-out-loud funny as the earlier title, *The Off Season* depicts a believably maturing D.J., a young woman whose character shines through even as she struggles to find her voice. Readers will root for her at every tragicomic turn, and will hope to hear from her again in future novels.

—Amy Pickett, Ridley High School, Folsom, PA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This funny, touching follow-up to *Dairy Queen* (2006), a 2007 Best Book for Young Adults, succeeds whether read on its own or as a sequel. D. J.'s junior year starts off promisingly: she has finally been accepted as a valuable player on the football team, and Brian Nelson, quarterback for a rival school, is still coming around to see her. Storm clouds gather, though, as her close friend is bullied for being gay, money problems on the farm increase, and an injury forces D. J. to choose between football and basketball, which could net her a college scholarship. She also begins to wonder why Brian makes out with her but never wants to take her anywhere. Then brother Winn is seriously injured on the football field, forcing her to gain some much-needed perspective. D. J. is an easygoing, likable narrator, full of self-deprecating humor and insight, and her struggles, whether they are everyday or life altering, will resonate with teen audiences.

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I really liked *Diary Queen*. It was a really good book and the main character (DJ Schwenk) is such a REAL person that you can immediately relate to. In this book, much like in *DQ*, DJ faces some troubles. Brian and DJ get a bit closer, and then something drastic happens that completely knocks DJ out of her shoes. There are many things that happen to DJ that I can never imagine happening to me. I would be too much of a wuss and complain too much. DJ doesn't do that. I think that is what

makes her an admirable person. SPOILER ALERT ----- SPOILER ALERT SPOILER ALERT -----
SPOILER ALERT If you are looking for more Brian/DJ romance, you will be a bit disappointed as it
doesn't progress THAT much. At one point, their relationship perks up and then we (well, I) am
sadly disappointed. END SPOILER ALERT ----- END SPOILER ALERT END SPOILER ALERT -----
END SPOILER ALERT All in all, a book I would recommend you get, but I didn't really like the
ending, because you then need to get the next book to get a proper ending. You know, what I
mean? It leaves in a bit of a cliffhanger, or so it seems to me. That kinda bummed me out. But, hey,
it was good while it lasted-- Still Obsessed

I'm 37 years old and I'll read any age level as long as it's good. This is great. I love D.J. She's tough
and decent and has a hilarious inner voice and is just a genuinely great person. At times she's given
almost too much for a teenager to handle but she does it because there's no one else and at their
core Schwenks go out there and get the job done. But what's really great about DJ is that she's not
perfect. She gets angry and resentful and bottles up her feelings and shoves her foot in her mouth
and thinks selfish thoughts. In other words she's a real, relatable person. Her family and the
supporting characters are all vividly drawn and believable. No one's a villain and no one's perfect,
just like real life. These books made me snicker and they made me cry and they made me smile
about remembering the feeling of first love. I really recommend both Dairy Queen and The Off
Season and I'm planning to send them to my nieces pronto because DJ's a pretty awesome role
model.

A seriously good sequel to Dairy Queen. Look, I could spoil it for you, but I think you should stop
reading reviews and just get the books - Murdoch has addressed so many issues in these books
that I can't do any of them justice without giving too much away. Suffice it to say that anyone with a
heart and a 4th grade education will benefit from this series. I'm a 58 year old, fairly normal guy
(aside from not caring about organized sports much, which should cast my opinion of these books in
an interesting light for you as they are all sports-related), and the author made me understand her
protagonist in ways I did not expect. I just wanted something to send to my "adopted nieces" for
birthdays. I fell in love with these, and so have they ... and their mother ... and my wife ... What else
can I say? Get them!

Great book hard to put down well written with characters you just relate to. You experience both
laughs and tears right along with other strong emotions all the way through reading this great story.

I love this series!! The Dairy Queen series is wonderful! Great writing Ms Murdock! I listened to the audio book and the narrator was also great!

Next, please. I love this down to earth story and seeing D.J. grow as a person. The author has done a fabulous job.

I LOVED THIS BOOK ! I definitely recommend this to anyone who read the first one, Dairy Queen. The plot is big and there are exciting twists and surprising turns. It is very enjoyable, even if you don't like football. I also recommend getting the 3rd book, Front and Center !

I love, love, loved the first one and was even more excited to learn about D.J's trials and tribulations. I wanted to see how her love life unfolded and which way she decided to go with football. Her family was still exciting to read and I can't wait to read the third book in the series. A must read, from beginning to end.

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