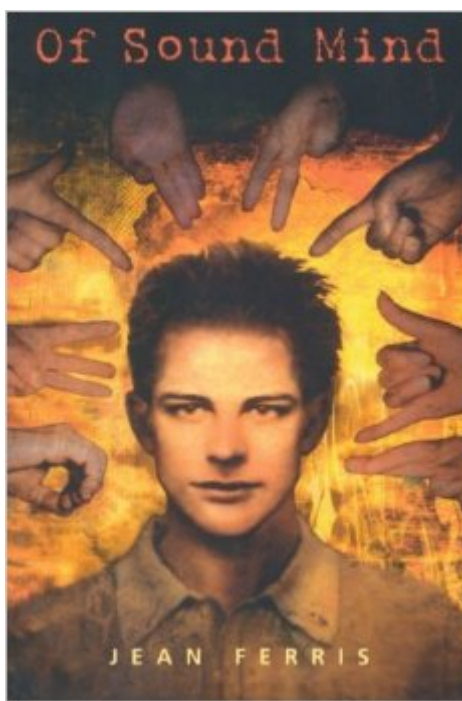


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Of Sound Mind



Synopsis

A poignant novel partially set in a world of silence. High school senior Theo is fluent in two languages: spoken English and sign. His parents and brother, Jeremy, are deaf, but Theo can hear, which has over the years cast him in the role of interpreter for his family. Unfortunately, it's not a welcome duty, especially in the case of his mother, Palma. She is a successful sculptor who, being deeply suspicious of "hearies," expects Theo to act as her business manager. And Jeremy relies on Theo for company and homework help. It's become especially frustrating lately because Theo has met a fascinating new girl at school, Ivy, with whom he wants to spend as much time as possible. Theo's father, Thomas, is the only one who has never burdened him, but that changes when Thomas has a stroke. Palma, frightened and self-absorbed, cannot bring herself to nurse her husband, leaving Theo with the full burden to bear. But with the help of Ivy and some of her friends, Theo is finally able to change his family's dynamics and find time to plan his future.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 730L (What's this?)

Paperback: 224 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.6 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (19 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #65,941 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Special Needs](#) #70 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Parents](#) #74 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Siblings](#)

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Of Sound Mind doesn't fit into any neat little box in my head. Though there is a sort of romance in it, it isn't anything like a typical teen romance book. The real story is about family relationships. It's a young adult novel, best for around age 12 plus. It's contemporary fiction, and a good read for both

genders. The central character is a high school senior named Theo. Theo is a gifted math student, but otherwise we know very little about his life at school. The majority of the novel is set at Theo's home, where he is the only hearing person. His high-strung, artist mother is deaf, as is his more level-headed Dad and his gentle younger brother, Jeremy. Theo is the family interpreter, a role that he resents yet is also proud of fulfilling. He's been the main source of communication with the hearing world since he was very young, and he has perfected the art of selective translation. When his mother signs rudely and accuses her dealer of not preparing adequately for her upcoming art show, Theo paraphrases her concerns very creatively. Thus he is not just passing on her words and changing them from ASL (American Sign Language) to spoken English, he is also thinking on his feet and ad libbing. It's no wonder that Theo finds interpreting for his mother to be exhausting! Theo meets a girl who recognizes his ASL "muttering" and his initial reaction is to stay away from her. He's uncomfortable being known as the kid with deaf parents, and he feels like he fits neither here nor there, not quite belonging to either the deaf culture or that of the hearing world. He doesn't want to be seen at school talking in ASL. Nevertheless, he begins to watch for this new girl, and soon enough, they are good friends. Ivy helps Theo to see everything in a new light.

For Theo, dealing with deafness is simply a way of life. Being the only hearing person in a family that includes a deaf father, deaf mother, and deaf younger brother has taken its toll on Theo--he doesn't have his own life, not really, since he's always dealing with interpreting for his family. His mother, Palma, is a famous sculptor, and she depends on Theo to make her phone calls, deal with galleries, and basically do anything and everything that she asks. His father, Thomas, is a furniture maker who was born being able to hear but lost his hearing later in life. Thomas hates asking Theo for anything, trying his best to communicate with hearing people on his own. His younger brother, Jeremy, needs Theo's help almost daily with his fifth-grade homework. For Theo, life is pretty much divided into two categories--talking with his voice to people who can hear, and talking with his hands to those who can't. But then Theo meets Ivy, a girl in his school who can also hear and sign. Her father is deaf, but her mother, who abandoned the family long ago, was able to hear. Ivy is a nurturer with her own small catering business, and soon her world is intertwined with Theo's. Her dad, who builds model airplanes for a hobby, even gets Thomas and Jeremy interested, and soon they're getting together as often as they can. Then tragedy strikes when Theo's dad has a stroke. Suddenly, his demanding, diva-ish mother is acting even more incompetent than usual, refusing to even be alone in the same room as her husband once he comes home. Theo is forced to do everything from making sure his brother gets fed and off to school to hiring new caretakers for his father every time

his mother fires one.

Of Sound Mind is a novel about Theo, a senior in high school, and his deaf family. He is the only in his family that can hear. He is often stuck translating and doing most of the work around the house. Theo is having complications deciding whether or not he will attend college, or stay around to help care for his family. Going to MIT has been Theo's lifelong dream. After an unexpected death in Theo's family, he feels that he could never go to college and leave the remainder of his family. Theo's girlfriend, Ivy, also has a deaf father. Ivy helps Theo to understand that his life is important also. She helps Theo to make decisions that will better him for the future. In the end, Theo has to decide whether or not he is going to live his life for his family, or if he's going to live his life for himself. Of Sound Mind is a book written for anyone who has not made a decision about something important in his or her life and needs to make a decision before time runs out. This book is very appealing because you are left in suspense all throughout the novel. You never know what's coming next, and you are definitely left in the dark about what Theo's final decision will be. Of Sound Mind is a book for both male and female audiences. It can be helpful to both sexes. There is actually a love story taking place, but you get the chance to explore the love story from a male's point of view. Of Sound Mind is a great novel that is destined to become a classic young adult book. There are not many authors who write novels about deafness, blindness, or other handicaps that are a reality. People of all different ages, races, sexes, and conditions can relate to this novel.

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