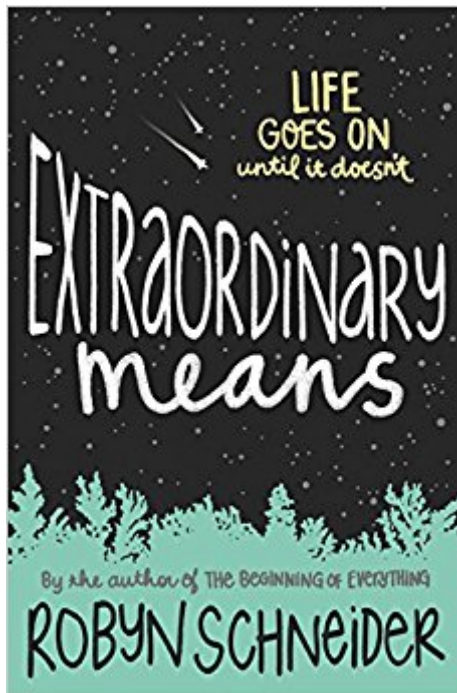




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# Extraordinary Means



## Synopsis

John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* meets Rainbow Rowell's *Eleanor & Park* in this darkly funny novel from the critically acclaimed author of *The Beginning of Everything*. Up until his diagnosis, Lane lived a fairly predictable life. But when he finds himself at a tuberculosis sanatorium called Latham House, he discovers an insular world with paradoxical rules, med sensors, and an eccentric yet utterly compelling confidante named Sadie—and life as Lane knows it will never be the same. Robyn Schneider's *Extraordinary Means* is a heart-wrenching yet ultimately hopeful story about the miracles of first love and second chances.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up—After being diagnosed with a drug-resistant form of tuberculosis, the cute but nerdy Lane is sent to Latham House, an isolated boarding school where there is plenty of fresh air, no homework or tests, and long rest periods between classes. Lane, who has been more focused on getting into his dream college than making meaningful friendships and high school memories, connects once again with the eccentric Sadie, a former summer camp intrigue who has already been quarantined at the school for over a year. With only a narrow chance at recovery, as romance unfurls, neither teen has fully come to terms with what it means to be terminally ill. Sadie, who has had a chance to reinvent herself with her close friends of TB misfits, isn't sure what life outside of Latham would mean for her, whereas Lane, who always felt fun could wait until college, is forced to slow down and now sees how little he has lived. Even with the grim setting, funny dialogue,

especially among Sadie's close knit group of friends, carries this story through its predictable paths. The novel is told in alternating voices, and Sadie's characterization often feels a little weak in comparison to Lane's. Still, their struggles will have teens wanting to read to the finish. VERDICT Schneider's subtlety, combined with themes about learning to live life fully, makes this an easy recommendation for those seeking titles similar in premise to John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* (Dutton, 2012).  
•Danielle Jones, Multnomah County Library, OR --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

"Schneider's subtlety, combined with themes about learning to live life fully, makes this an easy recommendation for those seeking titles similar in premise to John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*. (School Library Journal)" "Balancing the hope of new beginnings against the uncertain fates of victims, it's a novel that should prompt thoughtful discussions. (Publishers Weekly)" "Clever banter, self-deprecating humor and the distinctive characters ensure that this captivating book about life, death, fear, and second chances will fly off the shelves. (Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA))" "The perfect read-next for fans of the sick-lit trend and readers looking for a tear-stained romance. (Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books)" "Fans of John Green's blockbuster *The Fault in Our Stars* who are eager for more of that kind of story will likely be satisfied. (Booklist)" Praise for *THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING*: "Smart writing and a compelling narrator raise this book above ordinary depictions of high school drama. Efficient use of language, evocative descriptions and subtle turns of phrase make reading and rereading this novel a delight. (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))" "This thought-provoking novel about smart kids doing interesting things will resonate with the John Green contingent, as it is tinged with sadness, high jinks, wry humor, and philosophical pondering in equal measures. (Booklist (starred review))" "Schneider shows remarkable skill at getting inside her narrator's head as his life swings between disaster and recovery. (Publishers Weekly (starred review))" "Robyn Schneider can write. (New York Times Book Review)" "This is a wonderfully told story. The dialogue moves the plot along at a fast pace, and Ezra, with all his flaws, is a character to whom readers can relate. Teens won't want to put this one down. (School Library Journal)" "THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING is a tragic romance of the best kind that leaves the reader feeling as though they are part of the story, and wishing there was more. (Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA))"

This is the second book of Robyn Schneider. I bought it because of the first which was original, interesting and entertaining young adult novel. It contains a message unlike the majority YA books and the wit in the dialogs was refreshing. The second book of Mrs Schneider, alas, is like a recycling of the first. There is a very strong desire to write a hybrid between her first book using the same general ideas and concepts in character and plot creation and *The fault in our stars* (John Green, amazing book). The result is not great in my opinion.

"...I no longer believed in second chances, but in the moments before I drifted off to sleep that night, I wondered if maybe Lane was the miracle Latham had promised, and if that miracle would be big enough." The verdict is in, Schneider can write about young love. This book had that same great, tragically dark yet beautiful feel of Schneider's debut novel, yet it's not quite as emotive, in my opinion, although it is still great. The sub characters of this story are intriguing and flesh out this live story to be more than just that. This is a great book by a great writer who set the bar high with her first novel and bravely gives us something else great and unique to savor until the next comes along.

GRADE: B When Lane arrives at Latham house, a modern day sanitarium for teens with tuberculosis, he doesn't expect to make friends and fall in love. Sadie remembers Lane from summer camp years ago, and not fondly. Over the next few months, a cure will be within reach, while some of their group of friends worsen and may not live long enough. I love a writer who does great research and while the strain of TB and cure were fictionalized, Robyn Schneider did her homework. Be sure to read the afterword where she discusses the history of TB. Written from both Sadie's and Lane's points of view in alternating chapters, *EXTRAORDINARY MEANS* is a story about teenagers who are embracing their lives, despite their possibly fatal diseases. I wish Schneider had used more voices for the narration, I constantly forgot whose I was reading. Before Latham, Lane was a serious kid who never did much except study. Sadie is a rule breaker and her adventurous spirit challenges Lane to take risks, some dangerous, in ways he never imagined. While the characters weren't multidimensional, they also weren't stereotypes. I would have liked to know them better. Schneider did a great job with a diverse cast of minor characters. *EXTRAORDINARY MEANS* is an interesting story about living with, rather than dying from, a potentially fatal disease.

Not bad. I did enjoy this book, but what I picked up expecting to be a deep emotional novel about

love, death, and disease turned out to be a much lighter read. Knowing the author's background with infectious diseases and biology, she has the technical knowledge to have focused more on the TB and been more in-depth, but she chose not to. Too much fluff and filler and dumbing down, and not enough giving teens the intelligence they deserve. This book could have been phenomenal but instead felt watered down

I saw a few reviews for this book with the nickname The Fault in Our Alaskas. As a fan of John Green, this seemed appealing. There are quite a few similarities between this book and Green's work. The humor is similar, the characters are intelligent and witty, and the plot is well-paced. If prospective readers of this novel liked John Green's work, they will most likely enjoy this as well. I certainly did.

Beautifully written, the tragedies of loss and love meshed perfectly with the beauty of hope and youth. Extraordinary means is one of those books that I couldn't put down, and I am sure to read again. Touching, thought provoking, funny, and sad. An amazing story with a message that it isn't about how much time we have, so much as what we choose to do with it.

I really enjoyed this book. It was unexpected and felt like a breath of fresh air...with a little bit of TN thrown in! The camp aspect was interesting and the characters are really well done. I hope to read more by this author.

The problem with this book it felt like this writer just copied the storyline from looking for Alaska. It wasn't original and I never made a connection with the characters or the book.

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