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Nora's whole world plummets faster than the Cyclone roller coaster when her cousin Riley falls into a coma that Nora thinks is her fault in this warm, big-hearted debut middle grade novel from #1 *New York Times* bestselling author, Doreen Cronin.

Riding the Cyclone, the world famous Coney Island rollercoaster, was supposed to be the highlight of Nora's summer. But right after they disembark, Nora's cousin Riley falls to the ground...and doesn't get up. Nora had begged and dragged Riley onto the ride, and no matter what the doctors say, that she had a heart condition, that it could have happened at any time, Nora knows it was her fault. Then, as Riley comes out of her coma, she's not really Riley at all. The cousin who used to be loud and funny and unafraid now can't talk, let alone go to the bathroom by herself. No, she's only 10% Riley. Nora, guilt eating her up on the inside worse than a Coney Island hotdog, thinks she knows how to help. How to get 100% Riley back. But what Nora doesn't realize is that the guilt will only get worse as that percentage rises.

Cyclone Details

Date : Published May 16th 2017 by Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books

ISBN : 9781481435253

Author : Doreen Cronin

Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Childrens, Middle Grade, Realistic Fiction, Family, Juvenile, Fiction

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From Reader Review Cyclone for online ebook

Elsa says

Cyclone by Doreen Cronin is about two cousins, Nora and Riley. Nora want to go on this really old roller coaster for her summer homework. But, she needs a companion and Riley was her only hope. They wait in line for the coaster and by the time it is there time to get in, Riley backs out. But Nora finally convinces her to go. They get and and take off. Nora notices a sign. " IF YOU HAVE HEART OR BACK PROBLEMS, DON"T GO ON THIS RIDE." Of coarse that had nothing to do with them. When they get off Riley said she had so much fun. So did Nora. They go to take a picture together and Riley falls to the ground. Her parents and everyone freak out and they rush her to the hospital. The doctors said that Riley has a heart problem and she had a stroke. After Riley is settled in the hospital, Nora and her family go to see her everyday. Nora learns almost all the medical terms so that she can understand how Riley is feeling. One day, when Riley could talk and walk a little bit, Nora brings in her art notebook. Riley loved to draw so it made her feel right at home. And to recover faster! A couple days later Riley was ready to move into a new room. With another patient with her! Riley all the sudden starts to speak Spanish! The doctors said she probably pick it up from school. They could not believe it! They could talk to Riley! The next day Riley and Nora are in her room with each other for the first time by themselves with out an adult. Riley had to go to the bathroom and Nora had to help her get up and walk there. When they get there, Riley sits down on the toilet and when she is done, tries to get up by herself. She starts to fall and reaches for the hand rail. She misses. Her IV pole was not long enough and when she fell, it came out of her hand. Riley was panicking. The nurses came to help and when they got the IV back in, she was back to normal. Nora had so make a lot of discussions in this book but in the end, Riley returns home. She will never be the same. No one will. But at least she was better.

Alyssa Dillenburg says

I recommend this book to all middle schoolers! It is really interesting and it teaches you a lot about life in hospitals and medical terms. I rate it 4.5 stars!

Joanne Kelleher says

Really 3.5

The roller coaster on the cover of the book drew me in, and the beginning was so strong that I couldn't wait to see what happened.

Like so many other middle grade books, the topic is serious.

The Coney Island setting, including the Cyclone, was almost like another character in the story.

Some things I liked:

- Even though Nora's mother is a caring mother to Nora, we get to see her as a regular, flawed human in her interactions with her sisters during this stressful and emotional time.
- Riley's secret came as a surprise to me (more careful readers might have guessed sooner!)
- Both Riley and Nora made other friends during their time spent in the hospital, and these friends added to the story.
- Nora's reactions to everything going on seemed appropriately self-centered for her age.

Overall I liked this book.

Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

Nora couldn't wait to be tall enough to ride the Coney Island Cyclone, and now, at age 12, she is about to achieve her dream. It wasn't easy talking her cousin Riley, 13, into going on the Cyclone with her, but Nora finally managed to do it, not really hearing Riley's protestations and brushing aside her clearly apparent fear. And that ride was everything Nora dreamt it would be, right up until she and Riley were walking away and Riley collapsed on the sidewalk.

Rushed to a nearby hospital, Riley is treated for a stroke caused by an undiagnosed heart condition. Nora is riddled with guilt, convinced that she was the cause of Riley's stroke with the ride on the Cyclone. After all, she did finally have to resort to blackmail to convince her cousin to get on the ride. Luckily, Riley is young and got to the hospital quickly, so her prognosis is somewhat hopeful that she will recover her speech and use of her paralyzed right arm and leg.

Riley's mother Maureen, and Nora's mother Paige are soon joined by their sister Elayne, but not Riley's father. When he left, Riley had told Nora, he was as good as dead to her. But, as the family gathers at the hospital to support Riley, as Riley struggles to recover her ability to communicate, old family tensions mount as new ones are created, and secrets and truths are revealed.

One of the things Cronin does really well in this novel is to look at problems of communication within this family's dynamics, a dynamic Nora is just becoming part of when she uses blackmail to get Riley on the Cyclone. I liked that way she used Riley's stroke to take them all back to square one and begin to learn how to communicate with each other openly and honestly. And it is through this process that Nora realizes she needs to start listening to what people are saying to her and not be so wrapped up in herself. A case in point is Jack, a boy Nora meets in the CICU (Children's Intensive Care Unit) family room. Jack tells her he is there for his brother Colin, who has leukemia. But Jack is a boy she never really listened to until she is forced to learn his truth.

I did find the many, many footnotes a little annoying and a lot pedantic. But our narrator is Nora, a 12 year old, who tells the story of what happens in her youthful way. So, while I was able to skip most of them, I realize Nora, like most of her readers, would not have the experiential knowledge an older person has. And, the footnotes do serve to let readers appreciate the seriousness of what happens to Riley (and other hospitalized kids).

Cyclone is Doreen Cronin's debut middle grade novel. I found her writing to be clear and straight forward, her characters are believable, and her plot well constructed, so much so, that I read the novel in one sitting. I also thought that using the Cyclone as a symbol for the ups and downs of family relationships was brilliant. This is a book I would recommend to young readers who are looking for good realistic fiction.

This book is recommended for readers age 10+

This book was an EARC received from EdelweissPlus

PS - if you like roller coasters, the Cyclone is one you shouldn't miss, if possible. It's not the biggest, but it is 90 years old, and made of wood, so it really does make the click clack sound as the cars go over the wooden track ties. I have ridden it three times in my life as a child while my mother was in the hospital giving birth to my brother. Years later, my brother proposed to his wife at the summit of the first drop.

This review was originally posted at Randomly Reading

Hoover Public Library Kids and Teens says

The thrill ride that should be the height of summer awesomeness takes a tragic turn.

Christine H says

What would you do if it were your fault that your cousin is in a coma? I received a bunch of books all at the same time as Cyclone, but it jumped to the top of my list when I read the blurb.

1. Squinks, I can't imagine feeling the kind of guilt that Nora does. It would be so overwhelming that I wouldn't be able to breathe. Not only does she feel guilty, but she can't tell anyone why Riley agreed to ride a roller coaster she was afraid of to begin with.
2. I love that Nora and Riley have a really close relationship. I have cousins I love and speak to from time to time, but they live far away, and we only see each other maybe once a year. How lucky that these girls are close enough in age to find a friend in one another.
3. Okay, so I was lured in by Doreen Cronin's blurb at the back of the book, but I have to tell you ... she had me hooked to the story from the get-go. I really liked how easy it was to put myself in Nora's shoes. Every time a chapter ended, I just wanted to know more: Will she ever reveal what forced Riley to ride the Cyclone with her? Who is that mystery guy? Will Riley get better?
4. I loved, loved, loved, the storyline around the three sisters. It adds an interesting and emotional layer to Riley's ordeal. I really enjoyed the idea that it takes Riley's situation to bring the sisters back together again. The three of them have such different personalities, but can they find a common thread? Sisters. Family. Love it.
5. The scenes where Riley talks to Sophia in Spanish broke my heart. I teared up a bit, thinking about how Nora's heart must have been breaking, too. All the feels.
6. Parents/teachers, there are so many teachable moments in this story, from how to deal with guilt, how to handle secrets, the oddness that is family, and even how to talk to people who have family members in the hospital.

Lynn Plourde says

This book was a perfect match for me! I was grateful to win an ARC of the book in a Goodreads giveaway. Nora is the 12-year-old narrator and she pressures her cousin Riley into going on a Cyclone roller coaster ride with her, but then Riley has a stroke. Kids aren't supposed to have strokes. But some do! Nora blames herself. This is Doreen Cronin's middle grade debut, and she can definitely write about more than "clicking" and "clacking" and "mooring." Nora's voice rings true, the use of footnotes in the story is a fun extra and informative component, Cronin got "strokes" right (I know as a former speech therapist who used to work with stroke patients in the hospital), she also got Intensive Care Units right (I know because my brother was in one for a long time a few years ago). Cronin based the story on her own personal experiences (her

daughter's time in the NICU and her mother's stroke)--her experiences shine through and make the story ring true. I especially appreciated that the characters were not goodie-two-shoes--they fought, they were under pressure (which can bring out the worst in us). The book was laugh out loud funny in places--in stressful times, we all need to laugh--and so these characters did. My only quibble is that the ending felt abrupt--I wanted a little more. But all in all, bravo, and I look forward to more MG novels from Doreen Cronin.

Yasmeena says

Ehhhh more like 3.75

Lindsay says

Nora has been counting down the days until she rides the infamous Cyclone roller coaster at Coney Island. She persuades her cousin Riley to accompany her on the ride and despite Riley's fear of heights, she agrees and the two set off on a ride that will forever change their lives. Once the less than two-minute ride is over, Riley collapses at Nora's side and is rushed to the hospital, undergoing test after test to find out what happened. It turns out that Riley suffered a stroke from an atrial fibrillation, and now remains unconscious and in critical condition.

The story centers on Nora coming to terms with what happened and expressing her feelings about the situation since Riley never wanted to ride the Cyclone in the first place. A few flashbacks are weaved in with the present, explaining other things that happened between Riley and Nora before the ill-fated ride. Because of the things that happened, Nora is trapped in a guilt and sorrow induced cloud because she knows it's her fault her cousin has suffered a stroke.

This was a remarkable story emphasizing the breaks and bonds between family. A few things didn't feel right woven into the story though. For starters, I felt as if Jack's character should have been removed since it wasn't a strong presence, nor did he add much to Nora's story. Everything was predictable from Jack's backstory to the identity behind the mysterious Georgina. Riley's brash actions regarding the Georgina confrontation were appalling in the way she treated Nora who loves her cousin like a sister. On top of that, I didn't approve of the curse words sprinkled through the novel and the many references of the f word. This is a juvenile book and despite elementary schoolers rattling off curse words these days, it would have been better not to have included them in the story.

I received an ARC of Cyclone from Edelweiss.

Maria says

I read the book Cyclone by Doreen Cronin. I give this book a 5 out of 5 stars for its great story telling about a very hard topic and its engaging characters.

Coney Island is Nora's dream place to go. In the summer her parents finally take her to the park with her cousin. Nora has to pull and beg her cousin to go on to the cyclone ride with her and she finally does, but soon after riley, her cousin, collapsed onto the sticky ground. Riley is rushed to the hospital and soon after they figure out that she had just had a heart attack and she would be paralyzed and cant get up without help.

As soon as Riley comes out of her coma Nora realizes that she is not her old outgoing, fun, excited self, but now a non-speaking, non-moving person that is her cousin. She worries that her cousin might tell about how she was the one that caused this all to happen by making her go on the ride, but soon realizes that Riley does not remember anything about the minutes before the cyclone where Nora threatened her by telling her mom about her secret she had. If you want to learn the secret Riley was so desperate to keep then read Cyclone by Doreen Cronin.

Some of the big main ideas within the book is Riley's condition and how she is progressing through her heart attack, Nora's life and how she is trying to keep the secret about forcing Riley on the cyclone from her mom, Nora meeting Jack and how he helps her deal with the whole hospital experience, and lastly Nora's mom, Riley's mom, and her aunt fighting over what happened in the past. Those are just some of the many main ideas within the book and they all focus on Riley and lead back to the cyclone ride with Nora. I also feel like the more we learned about the mom's past the more we find out about how Nora and Riley are exactly like their moms but a little bit different in their own way.

I thought that this book was a very good book because I never got bored with it and it was very entertaining the whole time. There was NEVER a time where the book was going really slow and it was just awful to read it. It was always exciting and very informative about what it is like to be in a hospital with one of your family members in critical condition and not being able to help them or know that is going to happen to them.

Some of the strengths within the book is that the book really made you feel like you were there experiencing and watching the whole thing happen, which made it a really 3D feeling that you got to experience. Also I felt like everything fit perfectly in the story and there was never a time where I was like "why did she put that in there, it does not even make sense." There was only one weakness though that I thought really stood out. At the end of the book it ended with Riley just walking into the house and seeing her dog and then it just cut off. So I thought that it made it feel very awkward and not right so I wish she could have ended that just a little bit better.

Some of the things I don't agree with is the ending again and the fact that it just left us with her dad being the code name Georgina and then freaking out about giving his daughter, Riley, a stroke. It did not even say anything else and it felt like he just disappeared and I would have liked to hear more about why he left and what was happening with him now but those questions I had never got answered so I was just left wondering. Then if the end could be fixed it would be even more great.

This book left me with the impression that we should respect others' decisions and if they don't want to do something then we should not force them into it because it might just end up hurting them in the end. I would recommend this book to a fifth grader and seventh grader because that is the age where you can really understand what is happening and enjoy it.

Peg says

Very well written and worthy of the stars it received. I, personally, enjoyed the story. The subject matter was tough; not something your average middle grade student would read unless they were quite mature. That's where my issue lies - the subject matter. Reading about someone having a stroke is difficult. Yet Riley being only 13 makes it even more difficult.

We seem to be dealing with more and more subject matter that is intense and life altering. Are younger children capable of really understanding all of the implications? They are just starting to sink their teeth into some great stories for the sake of enjoying reading. To hit them with this intensity I feel is beyond them (or

most of them). Perhaps this book is better geared to an older audience where they are more able to cope with the subject. There will even be some at this level that will find it difficult to absorb.

It's a book that is emotionally powerful. Presented as openly and honestly as possible this story made me feel good, made me laugh and at times made me want to cry. To be honest, I did not know if Riley would 'make it'. Her path was difficult. The author never said this was easy nor did she sugarcoat the ordeal that Riley, Nora, her parents and family went through.

If this book falls into your hands I urge you to read it. You may not feel as I do about the story. But, understand this, it is real life!

Ms. Yingling says

Digital copy borrowed from The Ohio E Book Project

Nora really wants to ride on the Cyclone at the amusement park she and her family have traveled to visit, and blackmails her cousin Riley into going on it with her. Riley is scared of it, but Nora has found out that the "Georgina" on Riley's phone contacts is really an older man, and threatens to tell her aunt. When the girls get off the ride, Riley collapses and has to be rushed to the hospital. It turns out that Riley has had a stroke, most likely precipitated by an undiagnosed heart problem. Nora's parents and Riley's mom stay at the hospital, but eventually Nora and her parents go back to the hotel to be with Riley's dog. Another aunt comes in from California, but seems to make matters worse by adding sister drama to the situation. Nora makes friends with a boy whose brother is in the hospital battling cancer, and gets very tired of being in the hospital instead of being able to go out running. She slowly figures out who "Georgina" really is, and is able to work through her guilt at making Riley go on the roller coaster. Riley's progress is very slow, since her speech and movement are effected, but eventually the families are able to return home to adjust to "the new normal".

Strengths: This was definitely original-- I can't think of another book where a child has a stroke and ends up in intensive care. (Although *Falling Over Sideways* involves a stroke, and *Alexander's Booked* involves a lengthy hospital stay.) There are lots of details about families staying around hospitals and what recuperating from a stroke looks like. The writing is intriguing, and the tension between the cousins is very realistic. Kept me turning the pages.

Weaknesses: The drama between the aunts didn't really add much to the story for me.

What I really think: I am not quite sure what to think. On the one hand, I read through this quickly, but on the other, it might be a hard sell to students, especially with the nondescript cover. Debating.

Milana Waller says

This books was sweet and unique. It was never boring with all of its twists and turns and surprises. The only critique I have is the use of footnotes. I found those footnotes EXTREMELY annoying. But this book was very different and I would definitely recommend it.

Melinda says

I would have LOVED this book when I was in elementary school. The medical drama of Riley's stroke combined with the emotional drama of Nora's guilt combined with the mysterious drama of Riley's secret text messages... I could see handing this to a middle grade reader who enjoyed contemporary or "problem" novels. I could also see it being a comfort to a kid with a family member or friend in the hospital, as it does a

good job of covering some hospital "what to expect" protocols...

Carol says

3.5

It was better than I thought it would be for a Middle Grade Fiction Book. The format was a bit annoying but other than that it was a nice book.
