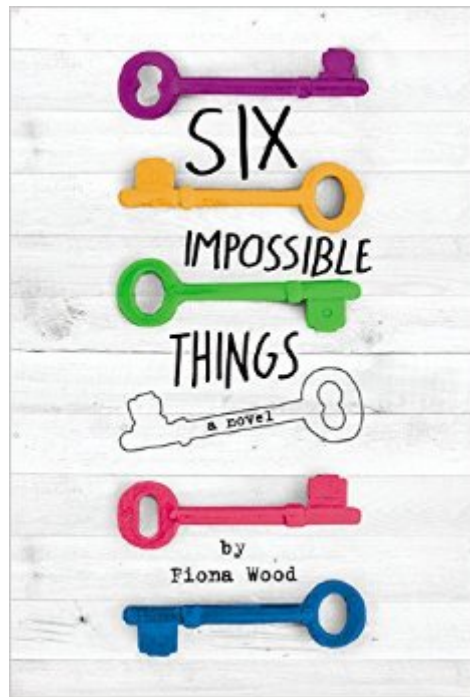


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Six Impossible Things



Synopsis

In this charming story of one guy's efforts to get it together when his life is falling apart, award-winning author Fiona Wood introduces an irresistible voice and a delightfully awkward character who is impossible to forget. 1. Kiss Estelle. 2. Get a job. 3. Cheer my mother up. 4. Try not to be a complete nerd/loser. 5. Talk to my father when he calls. 6. Figure out how to be good. Nerd-boy Dan Cereill is not quite coping with a whole heap of problems, including a reversal of family fortune, moving, new-school hell, a mother with a failing wedding cake business, a just-out gay dad, and a massive crush on Estelle, the girl next door. His life is a mess, but for now he's narrowed it down to just six impossible things....

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Personable, sweet-natured characters and, by today's standards, some innocent teenage antics make *Six Impossible Things* a refreshing reading experience. Fiona Wood understands the concerns that plague teens and treats the characters and situations with empathy, never denigrating the teens' concerns or minimizing the situations' impact on young lives. Dan Cereill's life is in chaos. He is a nerd. The family finances are in ruins. His parents have divorced and his father announced he was gay. His mother's deceased great-aunt left her a life estate in a deteriorating historic home that includes Howard, an elderly dog, and Oliver, a tenant living in the stables. His mother has attempted to start a wedding cake business, and Dan will have to attend a public school. To complete that

upheaval, Estelle the most beautiful girl in Dan's world "his
unattainable girl" - lives next door. A self-described
chronic list-maker Dan frequently creates lists, each consisting of six
items that reflect his concerns, activities, and life events. These lists are often humorous, but each
one provides more insight into his life and the manner in which he approaches and deals with
individuals and situations. Some items on the lists are flippant, some sarcastic, and some poignant.
As the story in "Six Impossible Things" progresses, Dan gradually develops a
friendship with Estelle that mushrooms into a series of escapades resulting in a final, satisfying
conclusion. "Six Impossible Things" is appropriate for the target audience, but can also
be enjoyed by adults. The book is a change from many targeted at tween and teen readers
in that it does not involve psychotic and violent individuals, mean cyber-bullies, drugs, or graphic
sexual situations. The novel addresses other real-life situations, but does so in a more conservative
manner than other novels. A school dance where the refreshment committee spikes drinks with
vodka does result in Estelle becoming drunk and in Dan having to help her get home safely. When
Dan is thinking about his mother preparing for a date with his boss and on his father
announcing he is gay, he does make the point "Can't she remember
how disturbing it is to think of your parents being sexual?" "Six Impossible
Things" is a lovely book that was a pleasure to read. It is both easy-to-read, easy-to-love.

Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog
Six Impossible Things by Fiona Wood
Book One of the Six Impossible Things series
Publisher: Poppy
Publication Date: August 11, 2015
Rating: 2 stars
Source: ARC sent by the publisher
Summary (from Goodreads):
Fourteen year old nerd-boy Dan Cereill is not quite coping with a reversal of family fortune, moving house, new school hell, a mother with a failing wedding cake business, a just-out gay dad, and an impossible crush on Estelle, the girl next door. His life is a mess, but for now he's narrowed it down to just six impossible things...
What I Liked:
This book is cute, very much lower YA literature. Oh, what it is to be fourteen again! That was six years ago, for me. How time flies. This book is all about fourteen-year-old Dan, and basically how life took a dump on him and his mother in a very short span of time. Dan's father springs it on Dan's mother that the company is bankrupt and their home and assets are to be liquidated. Oh, and he tells them that he's gay, and he and the mother are no longer together. Great-Aunt Adelaide died, conveniently leaving Dan's mother a house, but not a house to keep. It's a historic house, and it's a bit of a dump, honestly. So they move, and Dan has to start in a new school system. Dan and his mother are totally broke, and can't even afford utilities in the house.

Everything is a disaster for this boy, and he has to learn how to be much older than fourteen. Dan gets a job, changes his lifestyle, his look, and falls in love... This is a coming-of-age novel, and it seems like it's meant for younger audiences in YA. Dan is fourteen, and he certainly thinks like a fourteen-year-old. Still, I think I liked him. He's totally awkward and weird, nerdy and painfully shy. I don't think I was anything like this at fourteen, but I definitely think Dan is an authentic adolescent character. And certainly fun to follow! The story itself is ridiculous and a bit exaggerated? But also fun to read. So much craziness and shenanigans go on in this book. While the tone is lighthearted, there is also melancholy and sad. Life is hard in the Cereill home. There is a lot of struggling and hate towards the father and frustration with each other. But I like these negative emotions, and how well Wood writes this situation. There is romance - Dan is basically obsessed with Estelle, the girl from next door. Estelle thinks Dan is a bit weird (which is true), and so it isn't mutual at all, at first. Dan makes a fool of himself in school and outside of school no matter what he does, but he never really stops trying to indirectly win Estelle. The romance isn't one of my favorite, but it was sweet, in an adolescent way. Overall, I think I liked the story, but it definitely wasn't one for me. This is definitely a case of it's-not-you-it's-me. Contemporary doesn't always work for me.

What I Did Not Like: I'm not a huge fan of lower YA, I'll just say that right now. It's not my thing! I can't dislike this book because it's lower YA, that's not fair, but I'm saying that if lower YA is something that you enjoy, then you'll already have a better chance at liking this novel, than I did. I really didn't like how Dan was so obsessed with Estelle. It was creepy, and weird, and didn't come off as romantic or nice at all. I would have been very angry and very hurt if someone did some of the things Dan did to Estelle, to me. In general though, Dan is literally obsessed with Estelle, and no part of that is okay, in my opinion. I didn't like how overblown and exaggerated things seemed. Maybe the author wrote this book years and years ago, because no one in high school acts like they way they do in this book? No one immediately starts calling someone a d**khead, in public, in front of everyone, especially not a new kid. No one takes a Sharpie and writes all over the new kid's face. This is like Mean Girls but for boys, and it is so exaggerated and infuriating. Also infuriating - how much illegal and/or trouble-making activity goes on, and how Dan keeps letting it happen or not tell adults. You're fourteen, not twenty! Dan is a pushover and lets people walk over him all the time. Which kind of ties into the romance - read this next part at your own risk - I kind of wish Dan would say no to Estelle more. She totally uses him at several points in the book! Totally not okay! And he keeps saying yes, because omg-she-is-paying-attention-to-me. Gee, I wonder why... And then when everyone was blaming Dan for something completely out of his control... honestly, everything in this book was way too exaggerated for my tastes. Contemporary novels often aren't my thing, but this

one was a different kind of contemporary that I didn't really enjoy. To be honest, the story was a bit on the boring side... I like when everything is pulled together at the end, but most of the story is focused on Estelle and Dan's obsession with her, which I wasn't really digging. So I found the story a wee bit boring, unfortunately. Would I Recommend It: I personally didn't love this one, but it's probably a "me" thing, like I said above. Or maybe it just wasn't that great. It looks like it's a popular book, so I'd say it was just me. Contemporaries are hardly agreeable with me! Still, I'm glad I gave this one a shot. I won't be reading the companion sequel, *Wildlife* - especially from the sneak peek I saw in the back on this book! What is happening?! Rating: 2.5 stars -> rounded down to 2 stars. I wish I had liked this one! I tried though. The voice is very unique, the protagonist very original and likable, but the story wasn't that interesting to me, and there were a bunch of little things that bothered me!

I thoroughly enjoyed the story told by Dan. At 14, his life totally changes with divorce, a gay dad, and bankruptcy. He & his mom have a house to live in willed by an aunt, but they don't own it. It's a story of a seem fouled up family finding themselves and surviving. Dan falls in love with the girl next door, & the story has a happy ending. The voice of Dan is fantastic, and the story is crafted really well. I enjoy YA fiction, and read this first to see if it was appropriate for my 12 yr old daughter. I really enjoyed it and looked forward to reading it every day, but ultimately deemed it inappropriate for her, which is a shame because I know she would enjoy it. There aren't many inappropriate bits, but they are sprinkled throughout and don't really add much to the story. Lots of use of the d-word (d**k, d**khead), 1 use of f**k, several instances of sex talk. If this was cleaned up just a little, my daughter would LOVE this book.

"Six Impossible Things". This book is about the main character, Dan, who is in 9th grade. His parents recently divorced, and he and his mom move into an aunt's house in which they inherited. He and his mom struggle financially. Dan also struggles socially. He is new in school, and doesn't feel cool. He wants to kiss Estelle, the girl next door. Will this nerdy kid ever make friends and become cool in school? Will he ever kiss Estelle? Will their dog get the operation it needs? You will have to read the book to find out.

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