



# Try Not to Breathe

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Learning to live is more than just choosing not to die, as sixteen-year-old Ryan discovers in the year following his suicide attempt. Despite his mother's anxious hovering and the rumors at school, he's trying to forget the darkness from which he has escaped. But it doesn't help that he's still hiding guilty secrets, or that he longs for a girl who may not return his feelings. Then he befriends Nicki, who is using psychics to seek contact with her dead father. This unlikely friendship thaws Ryan to the point where he can face the worst in himself. He and Nicki confide in one another the things they never thought they'd tell anyone—but their confessions are trickier than they seem, and the fallout tests the bounds of friendship and forgiveness.

## Try Not to Breathe Details

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Author : Jennifer R. Hubbard

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## From Reader Review Try Not to Breathe for online ebook

### Lvna says

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Quick read with a quite dark theme. I've liked it although the romance hasn't convinced me that much. Also, the context has overwhelmed me a lot as Nicki and Ryan's mom put pressure on him constantly to control his life and talk about things that made him uncomfortable.

Regarding his family, I think it would have been great to get more into the relationship between his parents as well as the relationsh

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### Carmen Shaw says

I like the cover but i wish it wasn't so... kissy kissy. Gosh! Sometimes, I don't want my parents to know what i'm reading and this just screams it lol

I had been wanting to read this book for YEARS now, and when I saw it at my local library I instantly checked it out. I read this book within one day; and unfortunately, I was a bit disappointed. I really thought this would be that kind of story that is so passionate, complex, and completely enthralls its readers. But I did not get this feeling what-so-ever.

It wasn't a bad book at all, it was just okay in my opinion. Ryan was a 17-year-old boy who is mostly a loner in school because of the stigma that follows him after most people discovered his attempt to commit suicide. Nicki is a vibrant 15-year-old girl who goes by the beat of her own drum with no regard for judgment from others.

The one interesting thing that I picked up from reading this book is the topic of suicide. Ryan wasn't the typical suicidal book boy that I intentionally expected. Yes, he was thoroughly messed up. Yes, he had psychological issues. But more than anything, he just wanted to connect with people - like we all internally want to do. And when he was constantly rejected of that desire is what caused his downward slope.

That would probably be the only concept that I really enjoyed exploring in this book. Everything else was just...eh.

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### Michael says

I'll make this short and sweet: I was glad I was breathing reading this cause I almost died of boredom.

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### Ivonne says

solo puedo decir que... me daban ganas de golpear a alguien, en temas de este tipo para que uno sienta las emociones de cada uno de los personajes debio profundizar mas, hacia una tormenta en un vaso de agua pero

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demosle algo de credito por lo que pasaba...

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**♥Rachel♥ says**

I'm hardly an expert on suicide but I've always thought it was preceded by a momentous event, which after thinking more about it doesn't make any sense at all. If it was, less people would be successful in their attempts because others around them would be watching or worrying that this might happen. More often than not it seems that if a person commits suicide, others around are puzzled and wonder how it all came to this. They tell themselves, if they just would've seen the signs they could've done something. This is the case with Ryan.

Ryan has everything going for him. His parents have money, he lives in an amazing new house, and he's a high school junior with his whole life ahead of him. Yet, Ryan tried to commit suicide earlier in the year and is trying to get back into a "normal" life after coming out of a mental hospital. He's heard the rumors about him in school but no one will actually come out and say anything to his face. That is until he meets Nicki, a fellow high-school student. Nicki, it seems, does not possess an edit button, and has little in the way of inhibitions. (I loved this girl!) She just comes out and asks any question about anything, and Ryan, in spite of himself, can't help but answer. Nicki has a tragic past that makes Ryan feel obligated to help her so he ends up telling her things he hasn't even told his doctors. Before Ryan knows it, he's getting close to Nicki in ways he never expected!

I really enjoyed this story. Even though it's about a very serious and a potentially very depressing subject, the story felt very positive throughout. It really makes you think about how you treat people on a daily basis and how your actions could possibly affect them. It also makes you think about how profoundly people are affected by suicide, even when it's an unsuccessful attempt. I look forward to reading more from Jennifer Hubbard.

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**Melannie :) says**

NOOOOOOOOOOOO! 2012?!?!?!?!?

I NEED THIS NOW.

Sounds dark and sexy and the cover is one of my favorites ever!  
how did they manage to pull it off?! it's just so perfect!

...

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...

...

is it 2012, already? D:

## Jackie says

With her two main characters -- Ryan, a teen who tried to commit suicide, and Nikki, a teen whose father killed himself -- Hubbard gives voice to the two main audiences for this book: people who have suffered from depression, and those who haven't, but want/need to understand. Ryan's narrative struck me as dead-on about what depression feels like: how pathetic you feel for feeling so bad when nothing really that bad has ever happened to you; how your emotions seemed walled off; how when you do feel emotions, they seem to come late, making it seem like you dwell on things others have already forgotten. For a person suffering from depression, reading that he/she isn't the only one who feels like this can be an amazing relief.

And Nikki's confusion, her quest to understand, also seems painfully true, even while the book acknowledges that to know or understand may be impossible for the one not depressed. Ryan's parents, especially his mom, mirror Nikki's wish to understand, but also show how the opposite wish -- that everything would just be ok -- often is far more powerful, and stands in the way of true understanding.

Ryan's final insight -- "But then, like Val said, things got better. And worse again. And better. I was beginning to see this wave of ups and downs stretching out in front of me forever, beginning to think maybe that was just life" (230) -- so very true...

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## Kat (Lost in Neverland) says

### 4.5 Stars

Recently released from a mental institution for trying to kill himself, 16 year old Ryan is still stuck trying to figure out his life. He has an overprotective mother who worries about him constantly, his best friend lives far away and he's still working out his feelings for her, and past mistakes still haunt his mind. Then Nicki barges into his life, asking questions that he thought no one had the guts to ask. Nicki makes Ryan discover things about himself he never even knew, while revealing dark secrets of her own.

She saw him when everyone else saw through him.

I was dropped off at my library with an hour to kill when I found this book. My brother went to volunteer and I went to the Teen section. Even though I had brought my own book, I browsed the 'New Teen Fiction' shelves anyway. And by some weird twist of fate (or boredom), I picked up *Try Not To Breathe*. Without even looking at the description, I read the first page. And the next. And the next. It...was SO FUCKING GOOD.

Addictive, meaningful, beautiful, and so not what I would normally pick up. Just the cover itself is enough to throw me off. If I was the cover designer, I would have put a guy standing under a waterfall, water splashing over him so you couldn't see his face or features, and maybe a girl standing off to the side. It would have fit the story much better than two people friggin' making out.

Though now that I've read it, I sort of appreciate the dark, black and white colors, and rough font of the title.

The characters felt real and not forced. There was only one time where it was really unbelievable, where Nicki was telling Ryan how she had had sex with an 18 year old when she was 14. I just...couldn't

comprehend how stupid Nicki was to do that, and where the hell was her mother at that point? Nicki's mother was shockingly absent throughout the book, but it didn't really matter. You'd think her mother would be more protective after what had happened with her dad.

The ending left me feeling cheated. It was so abrupt that it felt like a knife had chopped off the rest of the ending and I can't find it.

After an ending like *Seraphina* had, any ending would be dull in comparison, but I was extremely disappointed with it all the same.

Jennifer could have done more with the ending, but I still think this book was AMAZING.

So amazing, in fact, that I had to write the word in all caps.

Yet another book I wish to add to my personal library.

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## Devyani says

Why didn't i like it ?

It had such a dark , smexy and Thrilling appeal to it ! but it all went down and kept on going down :(

### Initial synopsis

*Learning to live is more than just choosing not to die, as sixteen-year-old Ryan discovers in the year following his suicide attempt. Despite his mother's anxious hovering and the rumors at school, he's trying to forget the darkness from which he has escaped. But it doesn't help that he's still hiding guilty secrets, or that he longs for a girl who may not return his feelings. Then he befriends Nicki, who is using psychics to seek contact with her dead father. This unlikely friendship thaws Ryan to the point where he can face the worst in himself. He and Nicki confide in one another the things they never thought they'd tell anyone—but their confessions are trickier than they seem, and the fallout tests the bounds of friendship and forgiveness.*

I was jumping with a gleeful wide smile when i came across the e-book ! i was expecting Gasps , Swooning , understanding , Dark strange things and a uber-hot experience .

But seriously .

i was so disappointed .

Couldn't connect with the main character itself !

Ryan starts off by introducing us to his problems and how he attempted suicide and also slowly explains it's reasons .

Am i a Heartless person when i say that i didn't really find the reasons valid for dying ?

(view spoiler)

You know there's a point where the protagonist starts with his backstory and opens his role and you start to connect with him and that's when you like him . I seriously did not succeed in feeling all that with Ryan .

And then comes our heroine , Nicki .

Same goes for you tooo :/

we could clearly see how desperate she was to know about her father and then also some gloomy things she revealed were heart-numbing , in the end , for me it all came down to ...*BUT STILL !*

Loneliness , isolation , humiliation , loss of a dear one , burden of truth , peer-pressure , pressure from family...is POOPY .

but if you aren't really moved by the character and it seems like a short story to you and in the end the book fails to impress you .

## **Amy says**

I really enjoyed this story. Even though it's about a very serious and depressing subject, the story had a very strong positive feeling to it.

"Learning to live is more than just choosing not to die" Ryan discovers this in the year following his suicide attempt. Despite his mother's anxious hovering and the rumors at school, he's trying his best to move on into his life again. His struggle with everything is very well depicted and relatable for anyone who's ever been there. Sixteen is a rough age and acceptance is a necessity. Not having it can destroy a teenager even if no one else can see it. The little things are what sometimes pushes us to the edge even if we really don't want to be there.

Nikki was a beautiful breath of fresh air in this story and the chemistry between her and Ryan was undeniable. I really enjoyed their connection and watching their relationship grow in spite of how cliché it might have been. She needed him and he needed her and I loved every second of it.

His guilt about what happened with Amy Trillis was the real reason I kept the pages turning all the way through, and although what ended up happening was NOTHING like I was imagining it to be, I felt like I understood it anyway and really got why he fell into such a deep depression.

And Val... what can I say about Val. what a wonderfully nurturing character who would do anything for her friends. I really felt her love for Ryan through her actions and it was a beautiful thing to experience. Depiction of such a loving platonic relationship in YA literature is pretty rare and when attempted not usually well done, but Jennifer R. Hubbard has succeeded 100%!

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## **Princess Bookie says**

My Thoughts: When I started this novel, I wasn't sure what I was in for? I don't normally like reading books based on a male's perspective, as I've said time and time before. I have a problem connecting for some reason.

Try Not To Breathe was a sensible beautiful novel. I really felt like I understood exactly what Ryan was going through. He made it all so clear. He made me feel what he felt.

He tried to kill himself by locking himself in a garage and turning the car on. He had to go to a mental hospital to get better. While, he was there he met Val and Jake who also have their own problems.

He finally gets out and goes back home to his parents. One day he's down at the waterfall swimming and he runs into a guy's sister he knows. He can't even remember her name. He does eventually find it out and her name is Nicki. Nicki has a lot of questions, she wants to know why her father killed himself. She wants to know what he felt and what made him do it, what led up to that point, and she believes that Ryan can help her.

Nicki and Ryan become friends, and they share experiences with each other, including visiting psychs. I really liked Nicki as a character. She is younger than Ryan but she wasn't really immature. She understood

him, she never made fun of him, or thought of him as crazy just because of what he has been through or what he's done.

Try Not To Breathe was a really good book. It is short, a little under 300 pages but it's a remarkable novel. I felt like I really knew Ryan. I felt like I could be friends with him and try to help him get better and want to live.

Overall: I really enjoyed this one. Characters were great. Even the Male POV was great. I also liked Nicki's personality, she just fit with Ryan. She never cared what anyone else thought about her, and she believed in herself. She wanted answers, and she wanted them bad enough to go to someone she didn't really know. And Ryan, was a pretty brave realistic character. All in all, Try Not To Breathe was a breath taking and lovable novel. It had depth and it made you want Ryan to live forever and ever. I wanted him to get better and I liked seeing him on his journey to improving his mind and health.

Cover: Love it! I've actually seen both covers, and I like them both. Both are emotional in their own way.

What I'd Give It: 4/5 Cupcakes

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Review Based On Hardcover Edition

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## **Tiffany says**

And, you know, suicide. How do you explain it when it is so unexplainable? It's a tricky business, but Jennifer Hubbard is pretty good at it.

***There was never a magic moment when I knew why dying had called to me, just like there was never a magic moment when I decided I wanted to live instead.***

This is one of those novels that touches on the stuff that goes unsaid during rickety occurrences. People hear about suicide, and they think that it happens because those people had a bad environment. Jennifer Hubbard really stresses that suicide is all about inner workings, and holds a certain clarity when she's explaining it in this book. In other words, her writing makes me feel like she's telling me, "Here's how it is."

***I wanted to push myself again. To find the edges of things.***

Ryan is fresh out of a mental hospital and still trying to figure out his life after a suicide attempt. His mother worries over his every move, as if it would signal where he stands on the crazy/sane meter. The only one who seems to really *see* him is Nicki. But even as Ryan tells Nicki everything, they're both holding back. All of this makes *Try Not to Breathe* a really strong contemporary voice. The book isn't overly emotional; it didn't make me cry. But it holds a candid insight to a more taboo subject, kind of like a more downplayed version of Barry Lyga. This book feels so *real* that I don't really remember why I ever hesitated in picking it up.

***These were the kinds of secrets I had. Not the big secrets where anyone would feel sorry for you, would understand your pain - like losing a parent or getting a serious illness. Mine were the shameful, horrible kind. The grubby little twisted secrets, the ones where people would shrink away from me if they knew***

*how pathetic I was.*

*Try Not to Breathe* looks like one of those rickety proceed-with-caution books. The plot seems almost *too* simple, and a lot of the grown-ups are a bit, well, flat. The funny thing is that these blatant shortcomings actually contribute to accentuating the real theme-slash-message of the whole shebang - "Things happen, but it gets better."

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## **Joy (joyous reads) says**

*Dying is easy. Living is hard. - If I Stay by Gayle Forman.*

Three years ago my Dad tried to hang himself.

My Mom got there on time.

I still haven't been able to look him in the face when I see him.

Too scared to see the mark around his neck.

I can't figure out why he tried to do it.

I know they were in a bad place. I know they were having a hard time.

But who really knew what's going on in his head at the time?

What makes a person brave enough to try and kill themselves?

...And yet too cowardice to face life?

No one really talked about this in my family. The subject matter is taboo. We still don't have the answers. We're all too scared to ask him why. I'd like to say that we've all recovered from it. I can't remember when I stopped trying to look for evidence of depression when I look at him. I never ask him directly if he was okay. My familial relationships hasn't really been ideal - not since my siblings and I were kids. I wish we were all close.

Reading this book brought it all back. I was Nicki, asking why, why would he do such a thing? In a way, this book helped. Sometimes, it just gets too much. We sometimes think that crying buckets of tears would help cleanse our depression away but it's not true at all.

I wish I could say that I helped my Dad. I wish I could say that we've become closer after this. But we're far from it.

My parents are Catholics...they found an even better Religion after that.

This book hits too close to home. Most of the time I had to do gut checks.

Should I stop?

Should I continue?

This review is way too personal.

This book is way too personal.

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### **Arlene says**

I struggled with **Try Not to Breathe** for over a week. I had about 70 pages left, and I was seriously considering abandoning it, but my resolve is stronger than my instinct and that's where I went wrong. This book depressed me, took me no where I wanted to go, and left me wondering where the hale I went. It's no secret I like to push the boundaries of my reading choices every now and again, and a book about suicide definitely falls into that category.

I'm not calling foul to the fact that I never really understood why Ryan felt the way he felt, that's the whole point about suicide. People have their reasons and it's their reasons alone, not for you to understand or accept, but simply acknowledge. However, I do feel this type of story has been told much better by other authors such as Jay Asher in *Thirteen Reasons Why*. For some reason, he gripped me with his writing and floored me with his style. Jennifer R. Hubbard's story simply tugged on my wrist and whimpered to me not to abandon the book. I wasn't hooked. I wasn't motivated to continue. I simply kept counting the ePages to the end. Not good...

Overall, I feel this book had potential, but never really delivered. It took me over a week to finish this story and in the end, I'll probably forget it by next month. *Thirteen Reasons Why*, however, will stay on my mind a lot lot longer. I promise you that.

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### **Jessi says**

It was dangerous to stand under the waterfall, but some kids did it anyway, and I was one of them. The water pounded my mind blank, stung my skin. It hit my naked back, chest, and shoulders so hard I couldn't think. That water could knock me over, pound me into hypothermia, force the breath out of me, pin me to the rock, and I knew it.

-p1, ARC

This paragraph had me literally from page one. The opening paragraph (above) pulled me right in to the story and held tight throughout. I felt a strong connection with the characters and their stories that kept me engaged the entire time I was reading. The characters in Ms. Hubbard's sophomore novel were easy to relate to and their well-established personalities completely drew me into the story. I found it easy to imagine them as a part of my life. The story itself, for me, was truly secondary to getting to know the characters and watching them develop.

Because sometimes "living your life" was the whole problem.

-p79, ARC

Ryan, I think, is a character that would be hard not to like and sympathize with. He is truly struggling to re-establish his own life after attempting to commit suicide and ending up hospitalized for depression. He seems to walk a fine line between incredibly fragile and remarkably strong. I got the sense that he wants to regain some semblance of normalcy in his life but he has a very "outsider" mentality that keeps him from really re-connecting. From the beginning, Ryan also really intrigued me. There was an air of mystery surrounding his character, and I really liked the way that Ms. Hubbard slowly revealed his past throughout the novel.

Nicki was Ryan's perfect counterpart. She has a tough "f\* the world" kind of exterior that hides the much more fragile girl inside. She comes across as super confident when we first meet her but she's slowly revealed to have some major insecurities and faults. I genuinely liked getting to know her throughout and she seemed like the person Ryan needed in that moment. Their romance isn't forced or overly fast-paced but it progresses at a quick enough pace as to demonstrate the longing that I think they both felt to be with/accepted/loved by someone else.

Try Not to Breathe brings a refreshing male voice to a predominantly female driven YA contemporary market. The subject of suicide and depression is one that spans both sexes and it was refreshing as a reader to hear from a male point of view. However, I think that the topic and the writing style lends itself to being read and enjoyed by girls and boys. The narration isn't overly masculine and it has a very gender neutral feeling to it. The one thing I will say is that the cover doesn't necessarily lend itself to a male audience. It's hard to imagine a boy checking it out from the library (and my husband agrees).

If you enjoy books such as *If I Stay* and *Thirteen Reasons Why*, I think that this will be a must read for you for 2012. It's a beautifully written look at the after-effects of attempted suicide--the struggle to return to a "normal" life, to find acceptance, and to move on.

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