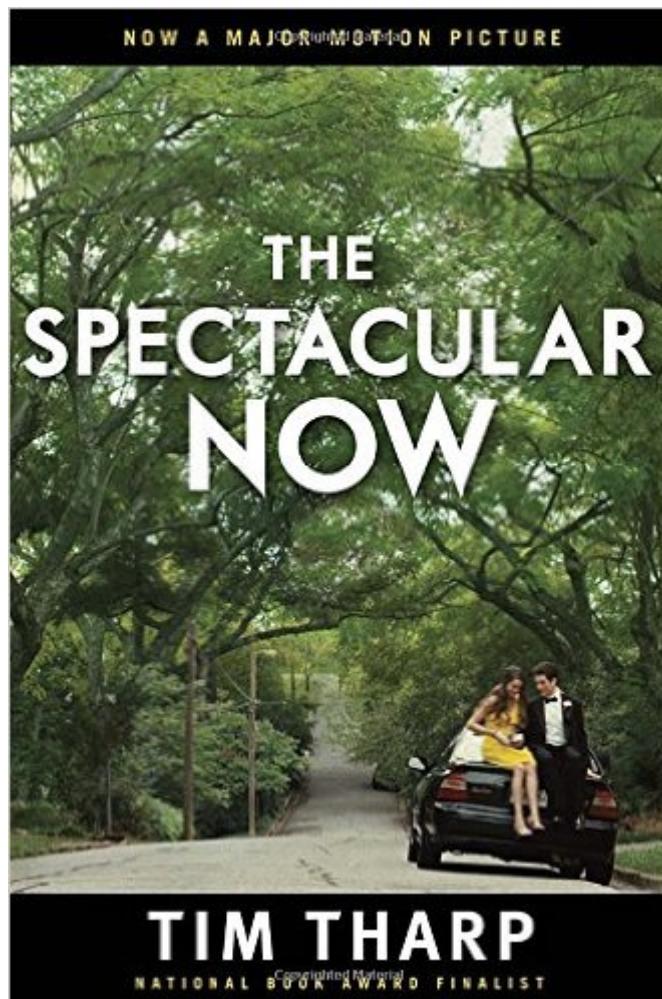


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The Spectacular Now



Synopsis

This National Book Award Finalist is now a major motion picture -- one of the most buzzed-about films at Sundance 2013, starring Shailene Woodley (star of The Fault in our Stars and Divergent) and Miles Teller (star of Whiplash). SUTTER KEELY. HE'S the guy you want at your party. He'll get everyone dancing. He'll get everyone in your parents' pool. Okay, so he's not exactly a shining academic star. He has no plans for college and will probably end up folding men's shirts for a living. But there are plenty of ladies in town, and with the help of Dean Martin and Seagram's V.O., life's pretty fabuloso, actually. Until the morning he wakes up on a random front lawn, and he meets Aimee. Aimee is clueless. Aimee is a social disaster. Aimee needs help, and it's up to the Sutterman to show Aimee a splendiferous time and then let her go forth and prosper. But Aimee is not like other girls, and before long he's in way over his head. For the first time in his life, he has the power to make a difference in someone else's life -- or ruin it forever. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Unlike most high school seniors, Sutter Keely -- the narrator of this smart, superbly written novel -- is not concerned with the future. Hes the life of the party, and hes interested in the Spectacular Now. In stream of consciousness-style prose, Sutter describes his lurching from one good time to the next: he carries whiskey in a flask, and once its

mixed into his 7Up, anything is possible. He will jump into the pool fully clothed, climb up a tree and onto his ex-girlfriends roof or cruise around all hours of the night. Without ever deviating from the voice of the egocentric Sutter, Tharp (*Knights of the Hill Country*) fully develops all of the ancillary characters, such as socially awkward Aimee, the new girlfriend who tries to plan a future with this quintessential live-for-the-moment guy. Readers will be simultaneously charmed and infuriated by Sutter as his voice holds them in thrall to his all-powerful Now. Ages 14-18. (Nov.)

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Grade 9 Up •Sutter Keely, a high school senior, is determined to live in the moment. He eschews planning for the future, intent on letting the good times roll. Sutter's been downing six packs since seventh grade and is rarely without his flask of Seagram's. Despite the heavy drinking and some raunchy sex talk, he is initially a likable character with a fresh and funny voice, but his affability wanes quickly and that voice just doesn't ring true. He meets Aimee when he passes out on her front yard. Sutter isn't really interested at first and only dates her because he considers her a project, someone he can help become less of a social outcast. Along the way, he begins to come off as condescending and egotistical and his sarcasm isn't as comic. It's a well-written book told in first person, but the narration seems much too sophisticated to be believable. He uses phrases like, "I am sore at heart" and utters phrases like, "the room brimmed with padded chairs." Some of the plot is also disconcerting. As the result of Sutter's drunk driving, Aimee is struck by a car on a highway and suffers only a broken arm. The story ends with Sutter drinking in a bar, assured he's a hero after dumping Aimee, and rejoicing about feeling nothing. •Patricia N. McClune, Conestoga Valley High School Library, Lancaster, PA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

...FOR GIVING AWAY THE ENDING OF THE NOVEL. Here's a rule for all book reviewers: DO NOT GIVE AWAY THE ENDING TO THE NOVEL. That's something readers may want to discover for themselves! I thoroughly enjoyed this book and, like others, found myself simultaneously entranced and infuriated by Sutter Keely. Sutter is, for all of his faults, a likable person, but the world is moving past him while he's standing still: his best friend Ricky is moving past all of their partying and wild times and into a serious romantic relationship; the other students at school are looking past the "now" and into the future of college and work; even Sutter's own family is moving on in their own ways, while Sutter deludes himself that the Spectacular Now is enough for him. "Voice" in YA novels

is everything, and this novel certainly has that: Sutter Keely is a very familiar character (we all remember "that guy" from high school) and yet is uniquely his own person. Highly recommended for both teens and adults: this novel is by turns warm, witty, wise, and heartbreakingly sad. Oh, and one more time: REMOVE THE SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL REVIEW OR ELSE WARN THAT IT SPOILS THE ENDING.

This book had my feelings all over the place. Sometimes I loved Sutter and sometimes I hated him. I have to say I really liked the ending. I think that even though the drinking was a little ridiculous at some points and somewhat unrealistic it was a good book. All the alcohol was there to make a point. I have to say that I liked Aimee a little at first but for most of the time we knew Aimee I hated her. I feel like she wasn't good for Sutter. Sutter was at some points good for her and she needed him to open her up but she became too reliant on him. Sutter made me want to scream sometimes. His reliance on alcohol was a bit ridiculous sometimes. I know his friends tried somewhat to snap him out of it but I wish they tried harder. I felt like Rickey turned into a bit of a jerk. He basically all of a sudden stopped trying with Sutter and ditched him. He didn't even try to help him much. I originally thought I was going to hate Cassidy but I think she ended up being my favorite character. I didn't really get very attached to any of the characters. What I did like about the book was Sutter's compassion for other people. I also liked his optimistic outlook on everything. Although he ignored the fact the the future was coming he had a really optimistic outlook on what was going on in the spectacular now.

I can't remember the last time I read a whole book in a day. It's not that I was so engrossed that I couldn't put it down. I just didn't have a lot to do today. I kinda wish I'd picked a different book. It wasn't that this was bad. It just wasn't spectacular (see what I did there? Ha ha). Sutter was a believable character. He's like the Every Man...except he had a bit of a drinking problem. Why did no one recognize this? Was his mother blind? And his friends seemed to care, just not about that? And Aimee...poor, stupid Aimee. I'll admit that I was pretty naive in HS, but I think she had me beat. I don't even know what else to say. I just felt sorry for her. I never could tell if Sutter really liked her or if she was always some kind of experiment to him. I don't know. Maybe this is just one of those books that I just don't get. Was anybody else annoyed with the dialogue tags?

The Spectacular Now just jumped to the top of my favorite books list. Tharp portrays a deep, thought provoking and ambiguous portrayal of adolescence. Narrator Sutter Keely is a teenage

alcoholic with a very unique view of the world. Readers must interpret how much of what Sutter says is true. When he hitches his wagon to quiet brainiac, Aimee, readers watch as this unlikely pair changes each other and have to wonder if the now really is so spectacular. Tharps novel deals with substance abuse, familial problems, relationships, sex, friendship, school, ambitions and so much more. I think any adolescent who read this text could find some way to connect with it. It resists the many cliches of young adult literature leaving the reader with an experience that feels true to life. Readers must make many decisions and interpretations during this novel, which is an important skill to develop and leads to rich and thoughtful discussions. The book is a fast read, packed with action and dialogue. It is propelled by Sutter and the reader will flop between hating and loving him, while always rooting for him, which adds another layer of interest to the work. All of the characters are interesting and complex. They remind me of so many kids I went to high school with without submitting to being typical stock characters. Tharp's story is both hilarious and crushingly sad. The Spectacular Now leaves you reeling with so many thoughts and feelings you're going to need to talk it out. This text could be controversial because it could be argued that it glorifies teen drinking, but I would have to disagree with this reading. I think if read in the right way this book could even serve to set a teen on the right path. I would reserve this text for older adolescents, not specifically because of the drinking or the sex, but more because I think this is a very complex work that requires maturity to really grasp and appreciate. I love this text. A must read for everyone.

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