



Into the Wild Nerd Yonder

By Julie Halpern

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Punks, Poseurs, and Pervs? Just Another Day at High School

Jessie is so excited to start her sophomore year of high school, with her carefully planned outfits and her ample stash of school supplies. But things take an unexpected turn when everyone in her life changes. Her two best friends have gone poseur-punk and are both flirting with her longtime crush. Her beloved older brother is about to go off to college?and he shaved his Mohawk and started dating the homecoming queen. Jessie is suddenly clique-less. When she starts chatting up a girl in homeroom, she's surprised by an invite to join the Dungeons and Dragons crowd! Will hanging out with them make her a nerd? And when she sees how cute one of their members is, does it really matter?

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up—For as long as she can remember, Jess has been friends with Bizza and Char. Lately, however, she has been finding that she doesn't have as much in common with them. She has become more interested in math and sewing, while the other two girls only seem interested in partying and hanging around Jess's older brother and his punk band. On their first day of sophomore year, Jess finds that her old friends have decided to go punk. In Bizza's case, this involves shaving her head and pursuing Jess's longtime crush, punk Van, and eventually performing oral sex on him at a party (contracting gonorrhea in the process). Jess decides to move on and becomes involved with a group of Dungeons and Dragons players that includes her new romantic interest, nerdy but adorable Henry. She agonizes over being called a nerd, but comes to realize that friends and how they treat each other are more important than labels. Halpern's descriptions of high-school cliques, particularly the punk posers and the D&D fanatics, are hilarious and believable, and characters who seem to fit particular stereotypes suddenly show unexpected traits. The story's theme could easily become clichéd, but this novel is particularly strong in showing how teen friendships evolve and sometimes die away, and how adolescents redefine themselves.—*Kathleen E. Gruver, Burlington County Library, Westampton, NJ*
END

From [Booklist](#)

Jess loves audiobooks, sewing skirts, and the first day of school. She even gets along with her family, including Barrett, her rock-god older brother. She is, in short, a nerd, and feels immediate dread when she starts to grow apart from her two best friends, Bizza and Char, who underwent a punk makeover to fit in with Barrett's band. After Bizza goes after Jess' longtime crush and winds up with an STD, Jess ends the friendship. Karma, like Bizza, can be a bitch. With no clique to hang out with, Jess is lulled into the clutches of the Dungeons & Dragons crowd—and finds herself falling for one of them! Halpern (*Get Well Soon*, 2007) realistically writes about teens coming to terms with their coming-of-age. Jess is anxious about embracing her inner nerdlinger, but emerges from the transformation secure in her self worth and seeking out the people who will support her. Reinvention is rarely so delightfully nerdy. Grades 9-12. --Courtney Jones

Review

"The relationships and dialogue ring true; readers navigating the stratified social structures of high school will relish an ending that celebrates true friendship." *?Publishers Weekly, Starred Review*

"Readers will both identify with and like Jessie and will cheer her conversion from meek to outspoken." *?Kirkus Reviews*

"Reinvention is rarely so delightfully nerdy." *?Booklist*

"This novel is particularly strong in showing how teen friendships evolve and sometimes die away, and how adolescents redefine themselves." *?School Library Journal*

"Witty" *?Horn Book Review*

". . . funny, easygoing prose . . . an appealingly comic cousin of Carolyn Mackler's *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things*." *?Kirkus on Get Well Soon*

"I completely fell in love with Anna Bloom's voice--it's wry, romantic, and so, so true." *?Gabrielle Zevin, author of Elsewhere on Get Well Soon*

“Engaging . . . real . . . refreshing, and natural, and the descriptions of the situations are hilarious!”
?TeenReads.com on Get Well Soon

“This book is hilarious, refreshing, honest and AWESOME!” *?Elise, age 14 on Get Well Soon*

“Witty, sarcastic, and drop-dead hilarious . . . this book made me laugh the most out of any book I have EVER read.” *?Jason, age 14 on Get Well Soon*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Graciela Tubbs:

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