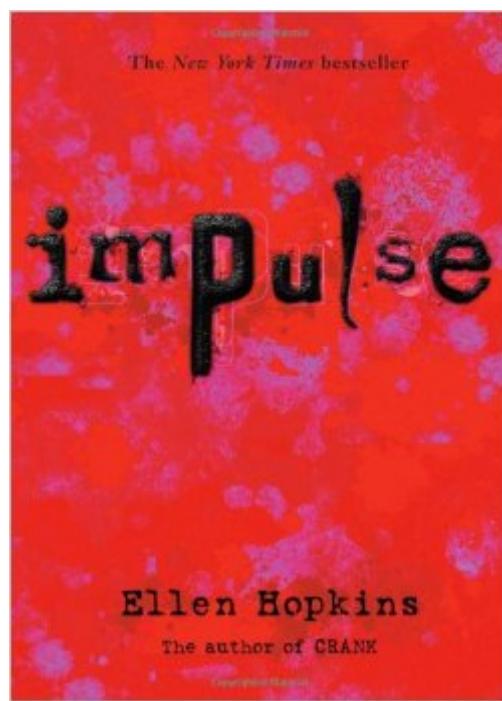


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# Impulse



## **Synopsis**

Sometimes you don't wake up. But if you happen to, you know things will never be the same. Three lives, three different paths to the same destination: Aspen Springs, a psychiatric hospital for those who have attempted the ultimate act -- suicide. Vanessa is beautiful and smart, but her secrets keep her answering the call of the blade. Tony, after suffering a painful childhood, can only find peace through pills. And Conner, outwardly, has the perfect life. But dig a little deeper and find a boy who is in constant battle with his parents, his life, himself. In one instant each of these young people decided enough was enough. They grabbed the blade, the bottle, the gun -- and tried to end it all. Now they have a second chance, and just maybe, with each other's help, they can find their way to a better life -- but only if they're strong and can fight the demons that brought them here in the first place.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Three troubled teens cross paths at Aspen Springs, a psychiatric hospital, after attempting suicide. Connor, Tony, and Vanessa all have demons that try to pull them under and get them to succumb to the temptation to try it again; this time making sure they succeed. Connor's overbearing family, only concerned about his GPA, or his making the varsity football team, or getting into an Ivy League college, offer no solace during his time of need. Feeling suicide is the only answer after a deeply emotional love affair ends, he takes a gun and points it to his chest before pulling the trigger. Tony, after many years in a juvenile home for a crime that still haunts him, decides to ease his feelings of

despair and loneliness by swallowing a handful of pills, only to vomit them up and be found by the police lying on the sidewalk unconscious. Vanessa is a cutter. In order to ease her mind in any time of stress she slices her skin with anything sharp enough to do the job. One day, when she was drowning in her blue ocean of sadness, she cuts too deep. She feels herself slipping into the abyss until her younger brother, Bryan, walks in and finds her. When he calls for their ex-nurse Grandma, she is able to hold off death. After arriving at Aspen Springs, Connor, Tony, and Vanessa are introduced to a life under constant surveillance, strict routines, and hours and hours of counseling. Immediately the three form a bond, feeling drawn to one another as if they might be able to save each other from death. Together they navigate the regulations of the hospital and make progress toward healing as they tell each other their deepest, darkest secrets; things they won't even tell their counselors.

The new novel "Impulse" is a story written by author Ellen Hopkins (Burned, Crank). It is told in 3 different view points of three teens who were placed in a psychiatric ward called Aspen Springs. All 3 suffer their own individual hardships and adversity. Vanessa cuts herself to relieve guilt and to match the pain she feels on the inside. Tony suffered sexual abuse from his mother's boyfriend and grew up without a father. Conner has exacting parents who think about nothing but perfection, and has a secret love affair. The three quickly bond, both boys being intrigued by Vanessa. Together they spill their secrets and learn to love, something none of them knew much about. The story is written in a free-verse style, with all 3 points of view from Vanessa, Conner, and Tony. The free-verse style makes the pages short and to the point, but allows for wonderful imagery. Since it's not a complete page of someone telling a story, it could keep the non-reader reading. The 3 POV's allows the weaving of their lives. You see things through all three's eyes, which gives the reader much more insight than through just one's. Another cool thing about the novel is how nothing is entirely revealed right at first, and even when it is it doesn't just come out and say it. The three teens' secrets come out gradually and well-spaced throughout the novel. It leaves you guessing, which is good for the reader who likes to make inferences. The realism of the story is definitely pleasing. How their lives were affected by their childhood's and the adults who played a part in them was all too real. The story showed that teenagers' lives aren't so great, despite the facade they put up. For example, Conner seems like he has it all; rich parents, good grades, and athletic ability.

I loved the other books I've read by Ellen Hopkins and I'd heard a few people say this is their favorite of her novels, so I had pretty high expectations. And while Impulse isn't a bad book, I was

just sort of disappointed. Of course the writing is incredible, rich and beautiful. The metaphors are amazing and so many of the statements thought-provoking. Other than that, though, I didn't really enjoy anything about this book. The beginning was confusing for me - it was hard to distinguish Tony's, Conner's and Vanessa's voices. I found myself flipping backwards to see who was narrating several times. It got a little easier after a while, but the voices and characters still seemed too similar. They all attempted suicide and they're all loners, but the rest of their personalities should have been different. The way it is, I never really connected with any of the characters. Another thing that annoyed me was how little the reader knows about the characters' problems until the end. Of course I understand that Ellen Hopkins couldn't have told us within the first few pages why they attempted suicide because there would have been no suspense, but finding out about some things so late in the book made it impossible for the reader to see how the characters dealt with their problems and how they grew as people. I didn't see all that much of a development. That made it really hard for me to understand the characters or connect to them. The romance was strange as well. The love triangle and how all of the characters change who they like so quickly but still talk about their deep connection and love just isn't believable. \*\*\*This next paragraph contains spoilers about the ending!

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