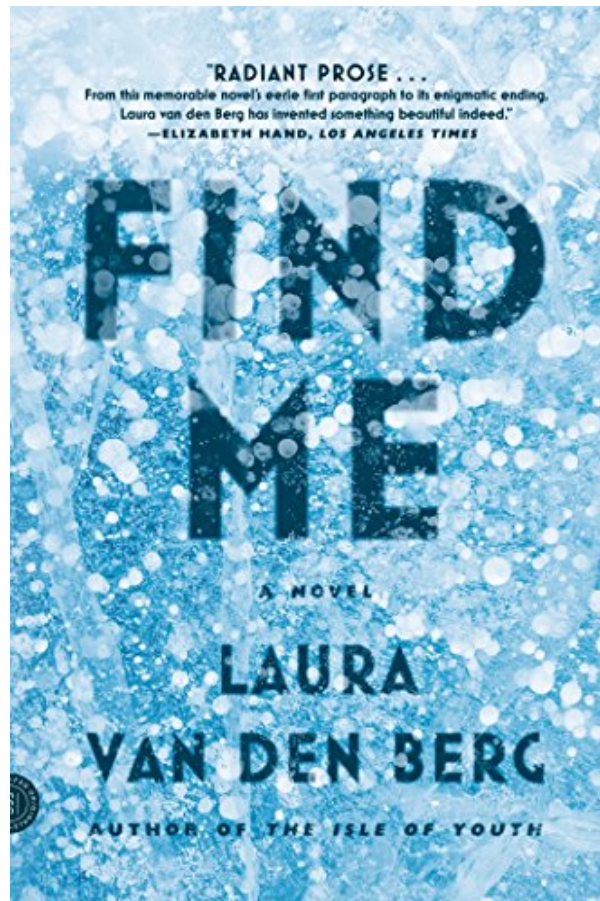
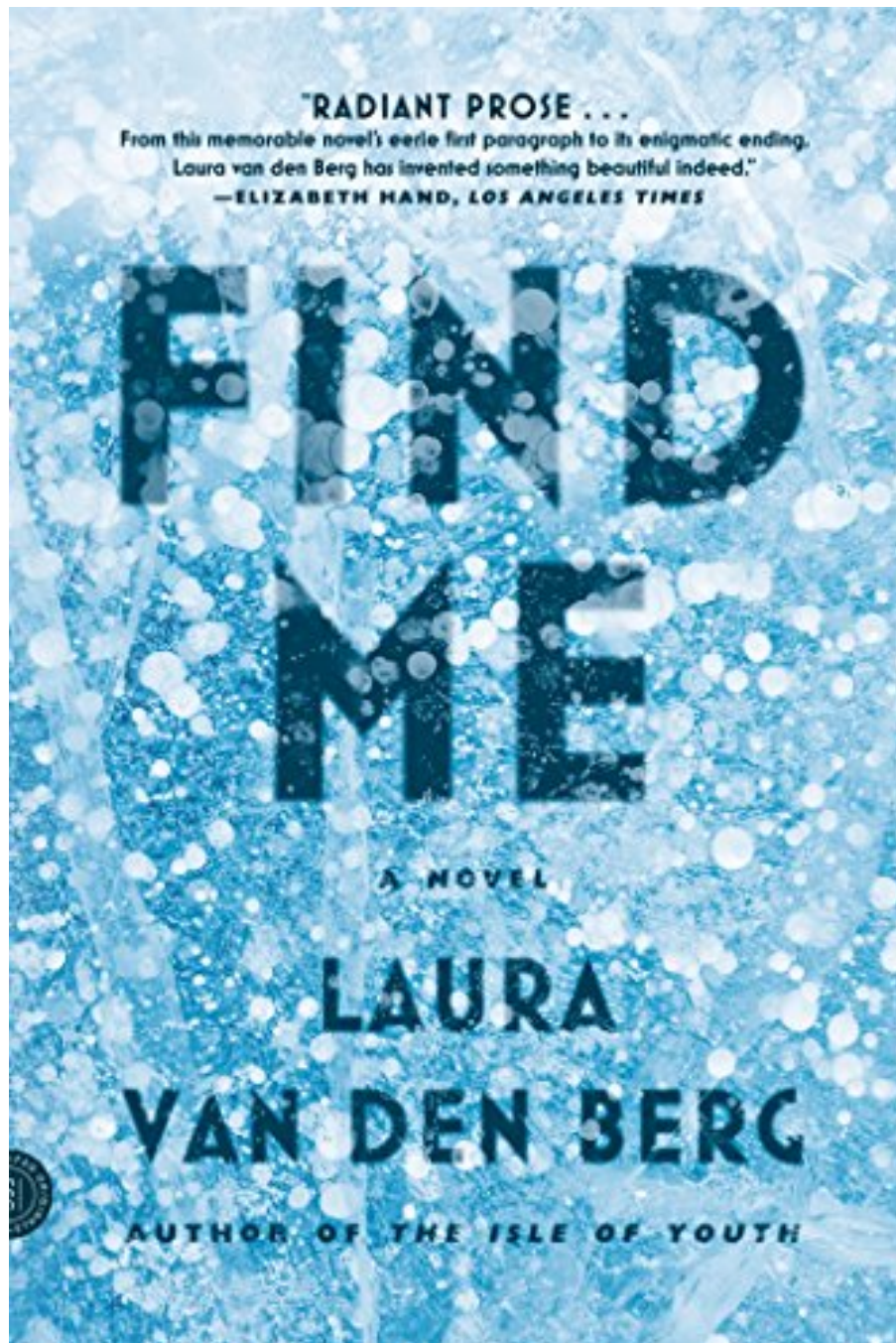


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From School Library Journal

The world is starting to fall apart just as Joy begins putting herself back together. Abandoned by her mother at birth and raised in several foster care and group home situations, Joy has struggled to find direction. When a deadly sickness spreads across the country, first stripping people of their memories and then propelling them from dementia to death, Joy finds out she is immune to this disease and is admitted to a hospital that is looking for a cure. She uses this time to reflect on her life thus far and make a plan to track down her birth mother. The first-person narration allows readers to follow the story through Joy's changing perspective, which creates a mood that subtly moves from ambivalence to determination. Teens will be compelled to discover more about the mystery of the illness, and themes of survival and self-discovery will resonate with them. This debut novel's interesting exploration of how people behave during times of crisis mixed with the dynamics of hospital living is a combination of Susanna Kaysen's *Girl, Interrupted* (Turtle Bay Bks., 1993) and Josh Malerman's *Bird Box* (Ecco, 2014). VERDICT Give this to introspective teens who enjoy postapocalyptic stories and lyrical language.—Carrie Shaurette, Dwight-Englewood School, Englewood, NJ

Review

"The book's ambiguous conclusion may lead to rereading as the possibility of multiple interpretations is opened." ---Library Journal Starred Review

About the Author

Laura van den Berg's first collection of stories, *What the World Will Look Like When All the Water Leaves Us*, was a Barnes & Noble "Discover Great New Writers" selection. Her second collection of stories, *The Isle of Youth*, won the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and The Bard Fiction Prize, and was named a "Best Book of 2013" by over a dozen venues, including NPR, The Boston Globe, and O, The Oprah Magazine. Both collections were shortlisted for the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award. The recipient of a 2014 O. Henry Award, Laura currently lives in the Boston area and is a Writer-in-Residence at Bard College. *Find Me* is her first novel.

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FIND ME: A NOVEL BY LAURA VAN DEN BERG PDF

Long-listed for the 2016 International Dylan Thomas Prize

After two acclaimed story collections, Laura van den Berg brings us *Find Me*, her highly anticipated debut novel--a gripping, imaginative, darkly funny tale of a young woman struggling to find her place in the world.

Joy has no one. She spends her days working the graveyard shift at a grocery store outside Boston and nursing an addiction to cough syrup, an attempt to suppress her troubled past. But when a sickness that begins with memory loss and ends with death sweeps the country, Joy, for the first time in her life, seems to have an advantage: she is immune. When Joy's immunity gains her admittance to a hospital in rural Kansas, she sees a chance to escape her bleak existence. There she submits to peculiar treatments and follows seemingly arbitrary rules, forming cautious bonds with other patients--including her roommate, whom she turns to in the night for comfort, and twin boys who are digging a secret tunnel.

As winter descends, the hospital's fragile order breaks down and Joy breaks free, embarking on a journey from Kansas to Florida, where she believes she can find her birth mother, the woman who abandoned her as a child. On the road in a devastated America, she encounters mysterious companions, cities turned strange, and one very eerie house. As Joy closes in on Florida, she must confront her own damaged memory and the secrets she has been keeping from herself.

- Sales Rank: #300965 in Books
- Published on: 2016-02-02
- Released on: 2016-02-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.52" h x .79" w x 5.02" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 288 pages

From School Library Journal

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Most helpful customer reviews

26 of 31 people found the following review helpful.

What did I just read?

By Debbie McBee

I'm not even mad that I wasted \$13 and a part of two days. Nothing ... absolutely nothing makes any sense. It's as if the author got incredibly stoned and began scribbling on the walls. The apocalypse? Stupid. Don't let that hook you. The author attempts to reel in a story about this mystery disease killing Americans, but never lands it. Is it truly an apocalypse if the disease only affects Americans? There is no resolution. None. Actually there is nothing to resolve. Just a bunch of ramblings about what the subject remembers. 'I remember the sky was purple and I was craving ice cream. A puppy whined in the distance and a blue whale was on tv.' Okay, that's not an actual quote from the book, but it could've been. Utterly stupid through and through.

The book could also use an editor. There is an entire paragraph describing a man with 'their'. Their hair, their posture. Other nitpicky items throughout that I wouldn't normally mention: however the story is so bad (so, so bad), the errors blazed from the pages.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Hit and miss

By Bill Tobin

I bought this book after reading a review on the Culture section of BBC News. *Find Me* was listed as one of the best books for 2015 and I was intrigued. Intrigue turned to despair. I struggled to retain any real interest for the main character in the second part of the book and failed to buy into the storyline of her journey after the hospital. Some of the writing is beautiful, but excellent prose is not enough for me if the plot and characters fail to connect.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

If memory defines who we are, then what does it mean if it's gone?

By Amazon Customer

If you are looking for your typical, sci-fi, plot-driven dystopian novel, you have come to the wrong place. The mind-destroying disease that begins the apocalyptic degradation of society only acts as a backdrop in "Find Me," and rightly so. This book isn't about the politics, religion, or even culture behind humanity when it reaches its breaking point--instead, it pinpoints its focus to a singular character, fighting not for survival (as many of the characters in this ravaged world, in fact, have turned their backs on) but instead for a meaning in a world that is not, for her, entirely different from what she had experienced before the sickness. That meaning comes in the form of self-exploration, and a desperate attempt at unearthing her own identity with

more hope for success than those she watches succumb to a deadly, memory-erasing fate.

I want to address the criticism I've seen in reviews about the book, which actually pushed me to buy it in the first place. I love Laura Van Den Berg's writing style, and know it's not for everyone. But many of reviewers that complain about the book's lack of plot, movement, and answers I feel might have been skimming and not really reading. I never got the sense that "nothing" happened--things were constantly happening, in the form of unusual, moody scenes that either fleshed out the main character Joy's past or pushed the plot forward perfectly. Certainly there are questions posed that don't always have direct answers, but like any good story, you have to look for them--they aren't just handed to you on a silver platter. Additionally, many of the things left up to interpretation, either because of Joy's ignorance to the situation or unreliable narration, I found more interesting to ponder to myself long after the book ended.

Finally, there is the switch in scenery as Joy moves from the Hospital she is kept in to the roadways on a trip to find her mother. Which section the reader likes better is entirely up to the reader themselves; I liked both parts of the story equally. I will say that the mysterious and seemingly too-good-to-be-true appearance of one of the most important characters mid-way through should not be looked at as a *deus ex machina* on the part of the author. Remember that this a story in which memory and perception, according to Joy herself, are not necessary accurate, and we as readers should treat all of the experiences she has, in and out of the Hospital, as merely that--experiences, and not always the hard truth.

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