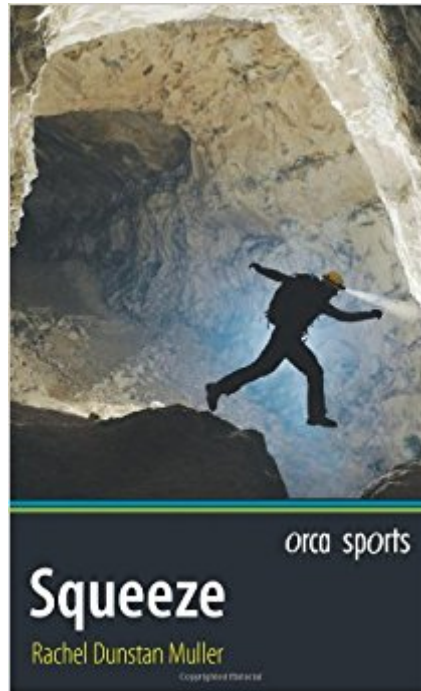




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Squeeze (Orca Sports)



Synopsis

Byron is psyched when his older brother Jesse invites him on a weekend caving trip— even if it means spending time with Cole, Jesse's obnoxious college roommate. With Jesse's girlfriend Michelle rounding out the group, Byron is sure the excursion will be a success. Things get tense when they near the cave, only to find that the way in is blocked. Byron stumbles on the entrance to a new cave, but the thrill of his discovery is overshadowed by Cole's increasingly strange behavior. Exploring a wild cave is always dangerous, but it becomes deadly as tempers fray and the water level inside the cave starts to rise. When an underground confrontation leaves his brother seriously injured, Byron has to make some life-or-death decisions— and every second counts.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 6-10— A fast-paced, compulsively readable book. Fifteen-year-old Byron; his dad; and his older brother, Jesse, are all into caving. When the boys' father is called away on urgent business, their mother reluctantly allows them to go on a long-planned expedition without him. They are accompanied by Michelle, Jesse's girlfriend, and Jesse's sketchy college roommate, Cole. The action centers on a packet of documents that Cole carries with him into the cave. It contains personal information about students at the University of Victoria that could be used to steal their identities. Michelle, who works in the registrar's office there, gets hold of them and confronts Cole, who takes off, abandoning the others and cutting off their escape rope. The plot creaks a

little. The reasons given for Cole bringing the documents into the cave with him are not entirely convincing. But Byron's actions in leading the trio to safety after his brother is injured are genuinely exciting. Information about caving is woven seamlessly into the narrative, and descriptions of the beauty of underground rock formations are often quite lyrical. With fairly simple vocabulary, short cliff-hanger chapters, and nonstop action, this is a great choice for reluctant readers. Richard Luzer, Fair Haven Union High School, VT. © Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Muller puts the emphasis on action and suspense in this short tale of three Vancouver teens exploring a newfound cave rightly dubbed "Murphy's Law." The narrative, rich in caver technique and terminology, takes 15-year-old Byron, along with his big brother Jesse and Jesse's college-mates Cole and Michelle, underground on a probe replete with specific but not tedious descriptions of equipment and procedures, obstacles overcome, and awesome subterranean wonders discovered. As if that's not plot enough, the expedition falls apart when Michelle finds evidence in Cole's pack that he is working with data thieves, and Cole takes off, cutting a rope and leaving Jesse with a broken ankle. Braving multiple mishaps, Byron screws his courage to the sticking place and sets out alone to get help. First, of course, he has to find a new exit, as the old one turns out to be underwater. Older, less-able readers will enjoy this page-turner as much as the middle-graders who are its natural audience. Grades 5-8. --John Peters

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