



Over the Edge

Brandilyn Collins

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Torn from the front lines of medical debate and the author's own experience with Lyme Disease, Over the Edge is riveting fiction, full of twists and turns—and powerful truths about today's medical field.

Janessa McNeil's husband, Dr. Brock McNeil, a researcher and professor at Stanford University's Department of Medicine, specializes in tick-borne diseases—especially Lyme. For years he has insisted that Chronic Lyme Disease doesn't exist. Even as patients across the country are getting sicker, the committee Brock chairs is about to announce its latest findings—which will further seal the door shut for Lyme treatment.

One embittered man sets out to prove Dr. McNeil wrong by giving him a close-up view of the very disease he denies. The man infects Janessa with Lyme, then states his demand: convince her husband to publicly reverse his stand on Lyme—or their young daughter will be next.

But Janessa's marriage is already rocky. She's so sick she can hardly move or think. And her husband denies she has Lyme at all.

Welcome to the Lyme wars, Janessa.

Over the Edge Details

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From Reader Review Over the Edge for online ebook

Casey says

“Seatbelt Suspense- Don’t Forget to Breathe”—the tagline ain’t a joke folks! I think I lost air several times while reading this book.

I have never come into contact with Lyme disease, but I had heard of it prior to reading the novel. From the very beginning, this book gave me the strongest premonition I had contracted the disease. The author lived through this disease, she knows she is talking about—and it shows on the page. Not only was the writing vivid, it was paired with a mystery that left me short of breath on several occasions.

I always know what I’m reading a good book: not only can’t I put it down, it keeps me up late without a wink of sleep in sight. There isn’t an overflowing amount of bead bodies or red herrings, but the sense that something BIG is coming is a strong premonition through the entire story. When I got there...there was NO WAY I could have put that book down in any circumstance.

The writing grabs the attention, the story, the heart and mind. I loved how deep into the heroine the author dug, it made her pop from the page.

Cover to cover—great book, highly recommended to suspense fans and it won’t be my last Brandilyn book. (smile)

This review is my honest opinion. Thanks to the publishers through CFBA for my copy to review.

Libby says

Great book. Collins experienced Lyme Disease, so she writes about it from a very realistic POV. Long before the end of the book, I was researching the Lyme Wars, and was able to verify that they do indeed exist, and that many patients are caught in the crux of this. Collins is able to create a great deal of empathy for the protagonist, Jannie McNeil, wife of Dr. Brock McNeil. At the same time that the reader is learning about the very real problems of Lyme Disease sufferers, suspense and plot twists embroil the reader in true escapist fashion. However, the reader never loses sight of the fact that this is a real disease with real suffering. Collins expertly paints a realistic picture of the disability, physical and emotional of the person with Lyme Disease. While I was reading, I got the distinct impression the author knew what she was talking about, so I wasn't surprised to learn of Collin's history of Lyme Disease. Highly recommended for those who enjoy a good read, and for those who think that medical fiction is just not their thing, this book will make them think again!

Stefanie says

Brandilyn Collins is a new author I have discovered recently and she has definitely creped into my favorite's list. This is the second book I've read of hers and Over the Edge was a fantastic read!

I loved the suspense and thrilling storyline. This book was so hard to put down some nights and I lost some sleep, but it was worth it!

Jannie, or Janessa, the main character in this book, is a sufferer of Lyme disease. I never knew much about the disease until I read this book and let me tell you... I learned a lot! Brandilyn Collins herself has suffered from Lyme's. This book opened my eyes to this disease and how devastating this disease is and how painful it is for those who have it. I highly recommend this book and I look forward to getting my hands on another novel of hers!

Kara says

Well, I stayed up way too late reading last night. The culprit: Over the Edge by Brandilyn Collins. This soon-to-be-released novel focuses on the plight of Chronic Lyme Disease sufferers.

Over the Edge tells the harrowing tale of Janessa McNeil. Janessa's husband is a highly respected doctor and researcher at Stanford. His specialty is tick-borne diseases, particularly Lyme. For years, he's insisted that Chronic Lyme Disease doesn't exist. His research and testimony have helped to create a climate in which chronic sufferers of the disease have a difficult time getting their treatment covered by insurance or even finding a doctor willing to treat them. Dr. McNeil is set to release his latest findings, which will further hurt their cause.

One deeply troubled man decides to take matters into his own hands. He wants Dr. McNeil to experience the very disease he denies, up close and personal, by infecting someone he loves: his wife. After successfully infecting Janessa, he contacts her and demands that she convince her husband to publicly reverse his position. If she's unsuccessful, her nine year old daughter will be next. Janessa is frantic to protect her daughter, but she's so sick she can barely function. Even worse, her husband doesn't even believe she has Lyme...in fact, he accuses her of faking the whole thing in order to get his attention! The clock is ticking and Janessa doesn't know where to turn.

The story repulsed and fascinated me at the same time. I was torn: I had such an intense dislike for Dr. McNeil and his unbelievable treatment of his wife that I didn't want to keep reading, but I also felt a connection with Janessa and her daughter that made me want to for their sake. This emotional tug-of-war, along with the tension of the plot, made for a very tense, suspenseful read. I do have to say I was slightly disappointed that I guessed the identity of the culprit correctly almost from the very start. I felt that it was a little too obvious.

Still, Ms. Collins is a skillful writer, keeping the tension and suspense high. Writing from her own personal experience with the disease, her description of Janessa's emotions and physical agony are very realistic and believable. Her bond with her daughter and her emotional pain at her husband's actions are heart stirring. Her daughter Lauren is portrayed well as a typical nine year old girl. Both Dr. McNeil and the unnamed culprit are also well-developed. They both repulsed me! The other characters, including the detective and Janessa's best friend, seemed slightly flat to me.

The faith element of the story seemed very peripheral. Janessa turns to God for help by reading the Psalms, and it's mentioned that she has recently become a Christian, a decision which her husband strongly disapproves of.

Although I had an idea what Lyme Disease is, I learned a great deal from Janessa's ordeal. I had no idea

about the so-called "Lyme wars", in which patients are forced to fight for a correct diagnosis and treatment. Ms. Collins is successful at weaving a lot of true information about the current issues into the story without coming across as "preachy".

This is another one of those times when reviewing books has given me an opportunity to read something I would have never picked up on my own. I generally prefer something a little bit more pleasant and less tense when I read a novel. Yet I'm glad I had the opportunity to read *Over the Edge*. I think this book could serve to help raise awareness of the plight of many in the Lyme community. It's also a well-written story that lovers of suspense novels and medical thrillers will no doubt enjoy.

Over the Edge releases on May 1, just in time for Lyme Awareness Month. Thank you to B&H Publishing for the advance copy of the book.

I received a review copy of this book from the publisher. All opinions expressed are my own.

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Tgordon says

Eye-opening to the plight of those infected by Lyme disease. I guess I knew it was bad but never the extent! I also figured out the bad guy early...I'm good like that! But that did not stop me from watching the train wreck! Great book with great characters. I will say it reminds me that we can all be blinded by our own selfishness for happiness.

Sheila says

A psychological thriller. The young wife of a well known research scientist specializing in Lyme Disease awakens one night when her husband is away. She sees a man wearing night goggles in her room but only vaguely remembers the event in the morning. The man starts phoning her informing her he has infected her with Lyme disease. When she begins having symptoms her husband refuses to believe her. He has been having an affair with a co-worker and believes she is responding to his affair by faking her symptoms. His research focuses on the simple treatment of short term antibiotics and believes chronic Lyme disease does not exist. While his wife continues to deteriorate, she continues to receive phone calls from the mystery man now threatening her daughter. He admits to having a grudge against her husband because of a personal connection. She is frustrated with the negative results that suggest she does not have the disease. According to her husband's research, the CDC has only approved a basic test for Lyme disease, which she discovers has a high incidence of false negatives. There is a Christian thread in the book as the woman frequently refers to the Bible for inspiration and faith as her condition continues to deteriorate.

Ed says

This is a great fictional book on Lyme disease that has a lot of truth concerning the disease today. A book describing a person affected by Lyme and the suffering, and lack of awareness of the seriousness of the disease.

Melanie says

This book started out with a horrible scenario - imagine while you were sleeping someone comes into your house, walks past your daughter's bedroom and enters your bedroom. He then places Lyme infected ticks in your hair - without you even knowing he had been there - that's what happened to Janessa McNeil.

'Over The Edge' opened my eyes to Lyme disease. I knew little to nothing about Lyme disease and what people who have it go through before reading this book. I have read most of Brandilyn Collins books and 'Over The Edge' is now one of my favorite books that she has written.

I felt for Janessa and all she was going through, imagining if I was her how I would feel. The story was great, full of mystery and had a major twist ending! I hope there will be a sequel in the future, just so I can know what happens next.

I think if you read this book you won't be disappointed because I wasn't! 'Over The Edge' is sure to put you on the edge of your seat in suspense of what's going to happen next!!

Patricia Bradley says

Brandilyn Collins had me on the edge of my seat the whole I time was reading Over the Edge. Can you imagine someone purposefully infecting another person with such a horrible disease, one that wasn't even recognized as a disease? To be so sick and someone tells you that it's all in your mind? And then be taunted by the person who did it? Just as in the story, early on in the treatment of Lyme's disease, insurance companies routinely denied coverage of longterm antibiotics to treat it, so the battle was two-fold.

It was hard to guess who the culprit was and her portrayal of someone with Lyme's is based on her own battle with the disease and is so realistic. If you haven't read this book, you are missing a treat!

Holly says

When I heard Brandilyn Collins was writing a book about Lyme disease I was thinking, "How is that going to work? It can't be good. What is she thinking!?!?!" Well, guess what? I was so wrong. Yet again, Brandilyn Collins gives us one wild ride. From the beginning she captures your attention and doesn't let go until the very end.

Janessa McNeil is probably a typical doctor's wife, she takes care of the home, puts much of her energy into raising their daughter and dealing with the demons from her past. Jannie is not only haunted by her past but she is damaged by it. And Brock McNeil is probably a typical doctor, arrogant and never wrong. He's overly confident and quite honestly I had strong feelings of DISLIKE toward this man most of the book.

If you're a Brandilyn Collins' fan this is another winner! If you have never read Brandilyn Collins this is a great one to start with as it is a stand alone book. You will find her writing easy to follow and engaging.

I would like to thank B&H Books for the opportunity to review this book, through www.netgalley.com

Eric Rutulante says

As a patient stuck in the Lyme wars I'm so glad a book was written about it from a fictional stand point. Each of us have at one time or another "wished" Lyme on the very people and Drs who refute our sickness. Ms. Collins asked to use my Lyme story on her website "Lyme Over The Edge" and it was an honor to be able to help raise awareness. The sad part is while this book is fiction, everything about it is real. The description of symptoms and the fight for validation finally put into words what I couldn't describe to my own family. A must read for all family and friends of Lyme victims, and those who need to learn about prevention and awareness.

Meredith First says

I review books based solely on my personal entertainment. Nothing more. Like most people, I read to escape, to share in another's story. In the case of Over the Edge, I read it because I have Lyme Disease and I'm now in the middle of the Lyme Wars. It's a crazy world for Lyme sufferers and Ms. Collins captured that perfectly. While I was uncomfortable reading the scenes where the protagonist suffered from her symptoms, I knew it was necessary. This book is enjoyable for both Lyme sufferers and those who know nothing about Lyme Disease. My hat is off to Ms. Colliins. On behalf of every Lyme sufferer, thank you so much for writing this book, sharing your personal Lyme story and reaching out to help others like me. Bravo!

Joleen says

Not my typical sort of book, nor subject I generally enjoy, but it was still a good book.

This was a suspenseful book about a man who suffered with his wife's Lyme disease until her death, due to the inadequate CDC tests for Lyme disease. They don't include testing for many bands that would conclude a positive result. Thereby, their limited testing can read negative for Lyme, and proper medication isn't offered or accepted by insurances.

Since this man made it his mission to bring to light the problems with misdiagnosed symptoms, his plan was to infect the wife of one of the most prominent proponents of the CDC testing, and who was instrumental in the more thorough Lyme testing being thrown out.

This was the basis for the book. Jannie was infected by three Lyme carrying ticks which he put on her when he broke into her home months ago. Suddenly her symptoms came on like gang busters and it progressed rapidly, to the point of pain and weakness in every joint, stumbling, confusion, fatigue and halting speech. Now she's getting calls from a stranger explaining what he did, what's going on with her and what she must do to change her husband's stance on Lyme testing. Her husband is concerned until she wants further testing after her negative results. Then he decides she's making it all up, and that her intent is to destroy him.

Goodness, there is so much more to this book than this brief synopsis, but more would give it all away.

Well done, even for a book that is medically technical, and one clearly with an agenda of educating the public on Lyme disease. The story is fantastic.

TheReadingKnitter/ Kasey says

Collins is just an amazing author! She kept me guessing almost until the very end!

Pwrgrl says

There were a few things this suspense had going for it. This was the first time I'd heard much about Lyme Disease and anything at all about the Lyme Wars and I was not surprised to learn that the author has suffered from the disease. She captures the debilitating effects of Lyme Disease and the difficulties patients face extremely well. It's also very apparent that her faith is important to her and though I may not choose to follow the same way, I thought she incorporated it well into the story.

What didn't work for me was the overall suspense which Collins is supposed to be known for. I guessed the culprit almost as soon as he/she was introduced and while I could suspend belief enough to follow the reasoning for their actions, I had a harder time believing that person would remain an otherwise highly functioning member of society. Having known a few people with bi-polar disorder who've refused to take medication as prescribed, I've witnessed the disruption this creates in their and their families lives.

I also had a hard time being sympathetic toward Jenessa who was too much a victim of her past for my taste. Instead of saving herself, she married a man who she believed saved her from a violent childhood and continued to believe in him even after (view spoiler) I'm a firm believer in people saving themselves with the help of whatever Higher Power they choose to believe in. (I do believe God gifts us with people to help but it's mostly up to us to do the heavy lifting.) Also, she's obsessed with keeping her daughter safe while actually putting her in danger by not being honest about what's happening and why her daughter needed to be careful. She ends up terrifying her daughter and never explaining the truth despite the promise to never repeat that pattern from her past. Jenessa simply wasn't my kind of character.

I listened to the audio version of this book and the performer did an excellent job of portraying Jenessa's halting speech and progressive symptoms. This was my first book by Collins and while I didn't love it, I may still try another of hers in the future.
