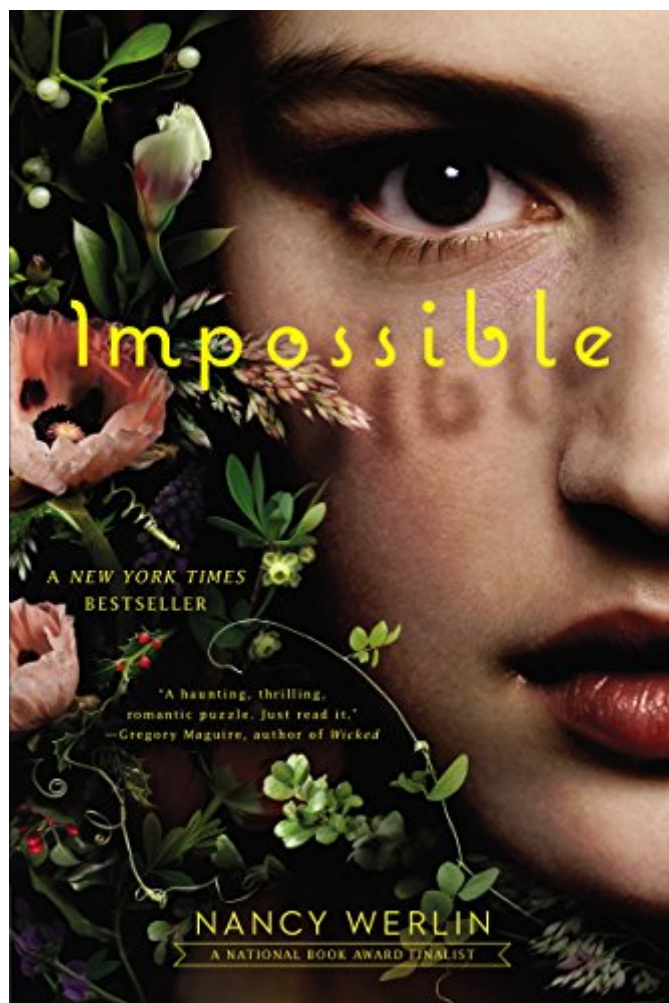


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Impossible



Synopsis

A beautifully wrought modern fairy tale from master storyteller and award-winning author Nancy Werlin. Inspired by the classic folk ballad "Scarborough Fair," this is a wonderfully riveting novel of suspense, romance, and fantasy. Lucy is seventeen when she discovers that she is the latest recipient of a generations-old family curse that requires her to complete three seemingly impossible tasks or risk falling into madness and passing the curse on to the next generation. Unlike her ancestors, though, Lucy has family, friends, and other modern resources to help her out. But will it be enough to conquer this age-old evil?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With such a haunting cover and a vague description on the book jacket, the reader who picks up this book has to take a leap of faith. The blurb mentions a song, a curse, something about mental illness, and not much more. You are left wondering if the book is worth unraveling such nonsense... and trust me it is! Impossible by Nancy Werlin is a haunting story full of love, pain, and supernatural mystery that will keep you turning the pages all night long. Lucy Scarborough has been tormented by

her mother's insanity for years. Lucy's foster parents, Soledad and Leo, take wonderful care of Lucy. In a way, they do for Lucy what they couldn't do for Lucy's mother, Miranda, when she came to them 17 and pregnant with no place to go. They took care of Miranda, but as soon as she gave birth to Lucy, she was lost in a world of her own madness. Lucy is so humiliated and saddened by her birth mother that she doesn't tell anyone her story, except Zach. Zach has stayed with her foster parents for years and is finally back on Christmas break from college. While Lucy has always trusted Zach with everything, she is starting to see him as more than just a family member. When prom comes around, Zach helps convince the overprotective Soledad to let her go. Although he is jealous of the nerdy boy she is going with, he thinks it is important Lucy gets some normal fun in her life. Unfortunately, prom night is anything but normal or fun. After the dance, Lucy follows her date back into the ballroom where he forgot something. In the ballroom, he admits he didn't forget anything, but just wanted some time with her. Then he proceeds to rape her. Lucy tries to stop him, but something happens to his face as he hurts her- it seems to shift as though someone else is inside his body. When Zach finds her, the wheels start turning to help her. She goes to the hospital, the mysterious new employee at Soledad's practice gets Lucy the morning after pill, and they find a therapist for her to talk to. About two months later, it becomes very clear to Lucy that she is pregnant, despite the prevention she took. When she finally confides in Zach and her parents, they are very supportive of her decision to keep the baby. Then Lucy learns something of her past. She finds her mother's diary from when Miranda was pregnant. While the diary is telling, there are pages ripped out. When Lucy remembers the false bottom of a shelf she found as a kid, she finds the missing diary pages. In them, Miranda tells of a curse placed on the Scarborough girls generations ago by an evil faerie king. When Fenella Scarborough refused to be her queen, he cursed her generations to come with an early pregnancy that creates another girl in the line and drives the mother mad once she is born. Miranda's diary pages also explain the song "Scarborough Fair" tells of the curse and the three impossible tasks Lucy can perform before she gives birth that will end the curse. Lucy must make a shirt with no seams and constructed with no needles. She must find an acre of land between "the salt water and the sea strand" and she must plow that land with a goat's horn and sow it with one grain of corn. While the tasks seem impossible, Zach and Lucy's parents won't give up on her. From genealogical research to prove the curse is real, to searching real estate for the acre of land between the salt water and the sea strand, to work with fabrics and materials to create the seamless shirt, the whole family is determined to save Lucy and her baby girl. But can they beat the clock and beat the faerie king in one fell swoop? Oh, Nancy Werlin, you wove such an intriguing tale! This story is mysterious and clever, with a plot that continuously reveals little tidbits

until you finally have the whole, crazy story. The vague description of the book made me wary- I am not fond of books that stay shrouded in mystery for all but the last 50 pages. It drives me nuts! While this book has a vague beginning, the pace of revelation throughout the book is wonderful. New twists are revealed and unfolded at a pace that keeps the reader from losing interest but still keeps them wanting more. The material seems heavy and mature, but it is handled with the utmost of grace and dignity. While the rape is certainly traumatizing for Lucy, it isn't the central story. I also liked how her parents dealt with the rape and the pregnancy- very upfront, honest, and supportive. I suspect some people would hesitate in giving this book to students because of the content, but they would be overlooking the incredible messages embedded within the mature scenarios. Yes, Lucy is pregnant, but she trusts her parents enough to openly talk to them about it, not hide it from them. Yes, Lucy is raped, but her family is proactive, seeks a therapist, and support Lucy every step of the way. And while Lucy acknowledges the unfortunate timing of her pregnancy, she loves her unborn daughter and will fight against the impossible in order to protect her. I know there are many adults out there who would shy away from exposing mature situations to young readers. While I understand that urge, I think the right book with mature situations handled well is just as powerful in a positive way. This book is well written and any maturity is handled beautifully. So make it all possible and give this amazing book a chance!

This book has given me more than a story. After reading the book, I spent the next three days researching Scarborough Fair. And over a year after reading this book from the library, I knew I had to own it. I'm not a person that reads a book more than once, but it's such a treasure that I had to just own it, so that I wouldn't forget this book. Being a book collector, it made me cringe to see the black marker line on the underneath part of the book, but you couldn't find a flawless book unless you went to a book store and examined it. The back of the book shows a sticker mark that wasn't cleaned off well, and even some scuff marks. But I bought the hard cover for a reason! I didn't want to order a papercover book and receive it bent in the mail. So I think the hard cover was worth the extra few dollars.

Bland, trite, and badly written. Even the villain was boring. The nonchalant treatment of rape turned my stomach. There was nothing to recommend this book.

"Are you going to Scarborough Fair? Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme..." Since reading this book I have not been able to get that song out of my head. It has been, you'll forgive the pun, impossible.

It's all good, of course, because I've always loved the Simon & Garfunkel version, as well as Dylan's quasi-adaptation of the ballad "Girl from the North Country." And it's good because Nancy Werlin does such interesting things developing a novel based on the lyrics. In a few words it is a contemporary suspenseful folk fantasy with some hereditary insanity, a sweet romance, and one extremely dubious (and dangerous) elven knight. Lucy Scarborough has spent her life with her adoptive parents because her mother, Miranda, is insane. Lucy manages to lead an eminently normal life interspersed with occasional random visits from Miranda, who is never really lucid beyond mumbling strange lyrics to "Scarborough Fair." But when prom night turns disastrous for Lucy it sets into motion an unbelievable chain of events and they all lead back to Miranda and an awful curse the Scarborough women have suffered under for centuries. Soon Lucy is rushing to beat the devil and save herself from insanity and her unborn daughter from sharing her unbearable fate. She is accompanied on this endeavor by her childhood friend Zack and her adoptive parents Leo and Soledad. Impossible reminded me of an end of high school version of Pamela Dean's *Á Tam Lin*. It had that same eerie, lyrical feel to it and I had similar responses to both books. I enjoyed them but felt that the characters remained somehow aloof from the reader to a certain degree, with the result that the stories as a whole felt cold. Part of this removed feeling comes, I think, from the nature of the tales themselves. They center on truly cruel supernatural beings playing wanton games with desperate, usually outnumbered humans. I've loved similar storylines, but if I can't get into the desperate humans and really root for them, it's hard to stay involved. Despite this, I did like the easy friendship Lucy and Zack shared and how their growing feelings for each other both surprised them and made them stronger. And I especially appreciated the emphasis Werlin put on humble human triumph over haughty supernatural manipulation and how true love does not cloud judgement but enables one to see clearly.

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