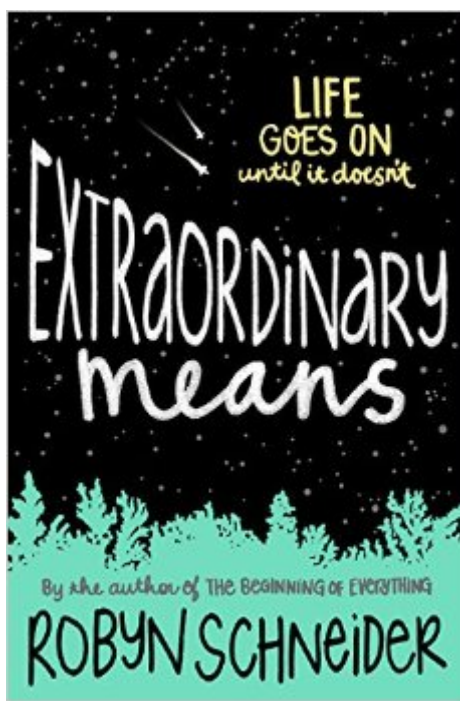


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# Extraordinary Means



## Synopsis

John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* meets Rainbow Rowell's *Eleanor & Park* in this darkly funny novel from the critically acclaimed author of *The Beginning of Everything*. Up until his diagnosis, Lane lived a fairly predictable life. But when he finds himself at a tuberculosis sanatorium called Latham House, he discovers an insular world with paradoxical rules, med sensors, and an eccentric yet utterly compelling confidante named Sadie—and life as Lane knows it will never be the same. Robyn Schneider's *Extraordinary Means* is a heart-wrenching yet ultimately hopeful story about the miracles of first love and second chances.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I found *Extraordinary Means* at the library. I had read one of Robyn Schneider's other Young Adult books (*The Beginning of Everything*), so I was pleased to find this newly released book. *Extraordinary Means* is the story of Lane and Sadie, two teenagers with an incurable strain of tuberculosis. They have been placed at Latham House, which used to be a boarding school, and now serves as a sanatorium. Lane and Sadie met before, several years earlier at a summer camp. The chapters alternate between Lane's perspective and Sadie's. As the book begins, Lane is just arriving at Latham House; Sadie has been there for months. Lane's biggest concern is keeping up with his AP coursework. Despite the diagnosis, he will not be deterred from his goal of getting into Stanford. The lackadaisical attitude of the teachers, and the busywork that the students are given comes as a shock to Lane. But everyone there is sick, and not

everyone has energy to keep up with the coursework. Sadie does not have a favorable opinion of Lane, based on an incident at camp all those years ago. But when he prevents Sadie and her friends from getting into trouble, she realizes that he might not be the boy she thought he was. As Lane becomes a full-fledged member of Sadie's group, he begins to value what they have to offer. As his friends from home seem to be changing, he finds a new appreciation for his new friends. Sadie offers a fresh perspective, and the two teens realize that they have feelings for each other. *Extraordinary Means* cannot avoid comparisons to that famous young adult novel about sick teens. But *Extraordinary Means* has nothing in common with *A Fault in Our Stars*, and it's not trying to recreate the angst and sorrow in a book about teenagers with incurable diseases. *Extraordinary Means* is its own book. One of the most compelling things about the book is the relative quickness that the patients find themselves afflicted with tuberculosis. The disease is still at pandemic levels in developing parts of the world, but it is not nearly as common in the United States as it once was. Schneider invents a world in which tuberculosis has returned at unprecedented levels. The concept of the sanatorium had been dormant for decades, but it has to be resurrected to separate those who are infected to prevent the spread of the extremely contagious disease. By placing the teens in an isolated environment, Schneider creates an interesting dynamic. Everyone at Latham is sick, and it is not surprising when someone succumbs to the disease. As a relatively new arrival, Lane shakes things up. He doesn't necessarily intend to, but he does. Nothing is the same after his arrival. I would absolutely recommend *Extraordinary Means*. This was a marvelous read. I experienced a full range of emotions as I read this book. Schneider is a talented writer, and she cites Mann and Ishiguro as inspirations for this story. I was surprised to learn in the author's note that her background is in bioethics, and her passion for the subject is certainly evident in the text. Schneider has created two unique voices in Lane and Sadie, and this is a book that will stay with me for quite awhile.

This is the second book I've read written by Robyn Schneider and I've have enjoyed both, something about her writing attracts me and that makes her stories leave a mark in me, especially *The Beginning of Everything*. The story is told from alternating point of views of Lane and Sadie, both are sick of total-drug-resistant TB, which is a contagious and incurable disease because it does not respond favorably to any medicine, so that's why the patients must be quarantined, and is for this reason that Lane is sent to Latham House which is a mixture of hospital and boarding school, where teenagers with the disease are sent, there they're monitored constantly medically through a bracelet that reports their vitals and they also have a half-day of classes and have relaxing physical

activities, nothing strenuous and is expected that by balanced diet and relaxed activity, their illness symptoms improved and they can lead a more or less normal life, away from civilization. Lane is a seventeen year old boy, in his senior year and whose goal is to enter Stanford University, so all his life so far - before his diagnosis - is school - he constantly studies - in addition to attending to clubs he belongs and model UN practice (as part of his curriculum) and volunteers at a health clinic, but all that changed when he was diagnosed with tuberculosis and sent to Latham House (since he cannot stay at home because he can infect his parents), once there he's slow to adapt because he does not realize that he's not there just for a few months and he's working for when he returns to his normal life, but he's really sick and can die at any time, but once he realizes his mortality, he begins to make changes in his habits and his way of seeing life, besides that at Latham House he meets Sadie. Sadie is a seventeen year old girl, who has spent a year and a half at Latham House, as her disease does not improve, nor worse, so she's "stable", but not cured. By the fact of having been living for so long in Latham, she isn't very good at following the rules, she likes to challenge them and prefers to be different from the other patients, so she takes a more "free" life at Latham House than she had before she became sick, there with her group of friends she has fun and is happy with her life so far, until Sadie meets Lane and modifies some of her rules. This is a bittersweet and poignant story about how you start to live and appreciate every day of your life, when your future is uncertain. It's also about second chances, friendship and first love.

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