



Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key (Joey Pigza Books)

By Jack Gantos

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Joey Pigza can't sit still. He can't pay attention, he can't follow the rules, and he can't help it -- especially when his meds aren't working. Joey's had problems ever since he was born, problems just like his dad and grandma have. And whether he's wreaking havoc on a class trip or swallowing his house key, Joey's problems are getting worse. In fact, his behavior is so off the wall that his teachers are threatening to send him to the special-ed center downtown.

Joey knows he's really a *good* kid, but no matter how hard he tries to do the right thing, something always seems to go wrong. Will he ever get anything right?

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Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key (Joey Pigza Books) By Jack Gantos Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Joey Pigza has problems. Big problems. He was emotionally abused by his grandmother. He has never met his dad. He can't get along in his elementary school classroom because of his mood swings and his "dud meds." We gradually see that Joey must have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), which is not being effectively controlled with his current medication. Joey's life is a terrifying roller-coaster ride, and Jack Gantos, author of the Rotten Ralph books, drags the reader along to see what life is like with ADD. The story is written from the boy's point of view in a sharp, worried style that veers out of control when Joey does. Joey's control of his own behavior slips away as we read, horrified to see this boy trying to get a grip on his life and failing. He disrupts the class field trip; he puts his finger in a pencil sharpener and injures himself; he swallows his house key. Then he runs through the classroom holding open sharp scissors. When he trips and falls, seriously injuring a classmate, he is transferred to a special-education program in another school. Here, thankfully, he encounters a caring teacher who recommends further medical evaluation, and Joey is eventually able to return to his former school. There is hope for Joey on the last page--he sits in the Big Quiet Chair to read. Gantos has achieved an unusual feat with this book. We want to turn away from Joey's shifting prison of emotions. But for those who stick with him, he shows us what his life is like. We walk a mile in his shoes, our feet hurting all the way. For young readers touched by ADD--and for their teachers and parents--Joey gives us the key to his world. (Ages 10 and older) --*Marcie Bovetz*

From Publishers Weekly

In a starred review, PW called this National Book Award finalist "an accurate, compassionate and humorous appraisal of a boy with attention-deficit disorder." Ages 10-up. (Feb.)

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From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8-Joey Pigza suffers from severe attention deficit disorder and struggles to remain calm when his world chaotically slips through his fingertips. When his medicine wears off, he cannot concentrate or sit still and is constantly in trouble at school. After leaving him for several years in the care of his abusive grandmother, his mother returns to reclaim him and her parental responsibilities. But Joey remains a challenge: he continually disrupts his class, swallows his house key, and runs away during a field trip. Eventually, he injures a classmate and is sent to a special education center for six weeks; here his medication is regulated and he learns how to manage his behavior. Joey leaves the center feeling strong and in control and he triumphantly returns to his old school. Gantos creates a strong cast of multidimensional characters. Joey is inherently a good kid and just as his teachers want him to succeed, readers will empathize and feel his emotional and physical bruises. References to alcoholism and abuse add realism to the novel without impeding the flow of the plot. In his first-person narrative, Joey relates incidents that are heart wrenching and humorous. From the powerful opening lines and fast-moving plot to the thoughtful inner dialogue and satisfying conclusion, readers will cheer for Joey, and for the champion in each of us.

Shawn Brommer, Southern Tier Library System, Painted Post, NY

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rene King:

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Stephen Thrush:

The reason? Because this Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key (Joey Pigza Books) is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap it but latter it will zap you with the secret this inside. Reading this book adjacent to it was fantastic author who all write the book in such remarkable way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining method but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book get such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking way. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

Phyllis Smith:

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Lamar Santiago:

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