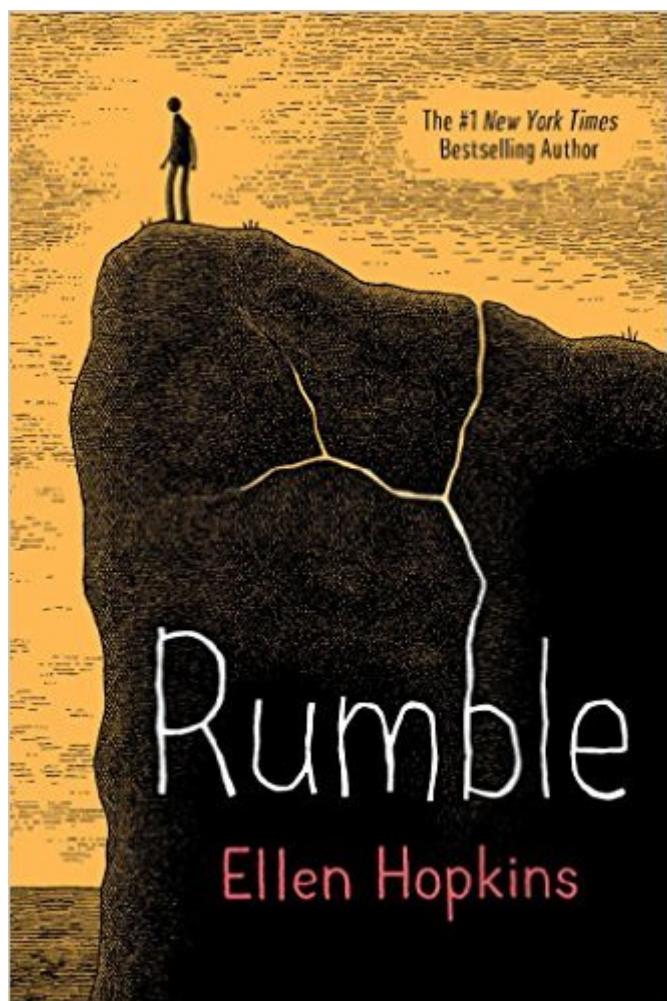


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# Rumble



## Synopsis

Does it get better? The New York Times bestselling author of *Crank* and *Tricks* explores the highly charged landscapes of bullying and forgiveness in this “strong and worthy” • (Kirkus Reviews) novel. Matthew Turner knows it doesn’t get better. His younger brother Luke was bullied mercilessly after one of Matt’s friends outed Luke to the whole school, and when Luke called Matt “on the brink of suicide” Matt was too wrapped up in his new girlfriend to answer the phone. Now Luke is gone, and Matt’s family is falling apart. No matter what his girlfriend Hayden says about forgiveness, there’s no way Matt’s letting those he blames off the hook—including himself. As Matt spirals further into bitterness, he risks losing Hayden, the love of his life. But when her father begins to pressure the school board into banning books because of their homosexual content, he begins to wonder if he and Hayden ever had anything in common. With brilliant sensitivity and emotional resonance, bestselling author Ellen Hopkins’ *Rumble* explores bullying and suicide in a powerful story that examines the value of forgiveness and reconciliation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Wow,” is all I can say to this book. I am a huge fan of Ellen Hopkins. She is truly an inspiration. All the material she publishes is absolutely amazing and this one met my expectations to the highest level. This book takes you on a roller-coaster ride dealing with issues such as: suicide, PTSD, depression, beliefs, and trust in another person. It hits heavily on all of these topics in a mere 540 pages, yet still astonishes. The main character, Matthew, is completely relatable. While you may not

have his beliefs on religion, he still has many flaws that anyone can attach to and find a similarity. In conclusion, this is definitely an amazing book written by an amazing author. This book sure delivers its, "I did not see that coming"s and "Woah" moments. This is a gem. I am sad that her next YA, verse novel will not be released for two more years, because this, like all of her fiction books, leaves me thirsty for more!

REVIEWED BY DAVID M. KINCHEIf there's a social problem or addiction that isn't dealt with in "Rumble" ( Margaret K. McElderry Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster's Children's Publishing Division, 560 pages, \$19.99), Ellen Hopkins' young adult novel set in the greater Eugene, Oregon area, I was hard pressed to find it.Hopkins -- the New York Times' bestselling author of "Crank" and "Smoke" and several other Y.A. titles -- focuses on the Turner family, specifically Matthew "Matt" Turner, an 18-year-old high school senior in Cottage Grove, OR, who's still grieving over the suicide of his younger brother Luke.Luke, a standout freshman basketball player and sweet kid who idolized Matt, hanged himself after being outed as gay on social media and was subsequently bullied by his high school classmates (don't get me started on the horrors caused by the improper use of Facebook, Twitter and all the other electronic forms of poisoning the air! And don't get me started on the inherent meanness of many teens!)Matt's dad, Wyatt Turner, was a standout basketball player for the University of Oregon (the "Ducks") and now teaches science and coaches the basketball teams. Matt believes his dad's homophobic comments contributed to Luke's suicide, but he blames his former best friend Vince for posting the photoshopped pictures that outed Luke.Matt's atheism has become public with an essay he wrote for an English class that has gone viral. Even his therapist has a copy of an essay Matt believed to be private. In the document he writes that Luke's death proves that there is no God: Ã¢ÂœThere is no God, no benevolent ruler of the earth, no omnipotent grand poobah of countless universes. Because if there was...my little brother would still be fishing or playing basketball instead of fertilizing cemetery vegetation.Ã¢Â•Despite his lack of belief in a higher power, Matt is in love with a believing Christian classmate, Hayden. He's also attracted to Hayden's former best friend Alexa. Matt discovers that his disintegrating family is even more dysfunctional than he thought, with his dad having an affair with the woman he was in love with before he met and impregnated Matt's and Luke's mom. His mom, a real estate agent, is clearly an alcoholic, as is his dad. Matt's uncle, Middle East war veteran Jessie Turner, who operates a gun range, has a veteran customer who suffers from PTSD. This customer, Gus, plays a pivotal role in the novel.Everybody tells Matt to let go, to put the death of his beloved little brother behind him, to pick up the threads of his life. But it's easier said than done for the troubled teen.While "Rumble" is

squarely aimed at Y.A. readers, I believe adults -- particularly parents of teens -- can benefit from reading it. Hopkins has the understanding of a therapist and the skill of a bestselling writer to put issues before readers. She's a baby boomer, but she thoroughly understands the younger demographic groups. Plus, the book is a page turner! Don't let the big page count scare you: Hopkins keeps the narrative moving quickly.

Rumble by Ellen Hopkins relates the story of an eighteen-year-old boy named Matt reeling in the wake of his younger brother's suicide. Blatantly atheist, Matt blames the religious folk in his school for bullying his newly outed gay brother into killing himself. Much of the book takes place in Matt's mind, revealing his inner rants towards those he hates. And, quite frankly, it seems like he hates nearly everyone. The spark of light in his life is his girlfriend Hayden, although it is fairly easy for the reader to dislike her from the very beginning. As she grows in her faith, she puts distance between herself and Matt, becoming the epitome of the person that he so dislikes. Matt tells us that the two of them have been together for quite a while, that she greatly aided him in his recovery and emotional healing, that things used to be quite different between them. Good times are hinted at, but never actually shown. I personally felt nothing but disdain and resentment for Hayden. There was absolutely no ambivalence at all. Then there is Alexa, Hayden's ex best friend and an object of lust for Matt. Once again, it's quite clear to the reader that this is who Matt should really be pursuing. Although not a perfect person, she is quite perfect for him. A little too perfect, if you ask me. Her character is written to easily make us like and accept her, to make it especially easy for us to justify Matt cheating on Hayden. His parents are so bad it's almost unbelievable. His mother is detached and selfish; his father is punishing and volatile. Neither outwardly exhibits any remorse for their son's suicide or for their living son's struggle. The father is more concerned about reconnecting with his college girlfriend and his mother is more immersed in opening a boutique with her sister. All in all, Matt does not have good friends, nor does he have good family. It's incredibly understandable how he has grown to be so cynical, hateful, and just angry. Although I hated reading it, even his ongoing relationship with Hayden is understandable. Of course he doesn't want to let go of the one good thing in his life, or at least in his eyes is the one good thing. As all of Ellen Hopkins's other books, this is very well-written. However, I struggle to like it as I did all of the other ones. It's not that I find it boring or dragging or any other thing like that. It's more that the book's description led me to believe it was going to be about his struggle to overcome his family and peers, his struggle to discover his own faith, and his struggle to surmount the tragedy that has befallen him. Those struggles do happen, but the overcoming and the discovering and the surmounting do not. At least not until the

very end. His moral questions and change of heart do not show up until the climax, which is roughly 30 pages from the end in a 560 page book. Intended to be a grey world, it is instead very black and white. There are Matt's versions of good and evil, and never once does he waver from these beliefs until a new tragedy forces him to. When he finally does have his questions, it is the result of a horrible accident. There is no question in my mind that his faltering would not have come about had it not been for an accident. Furthermore, people tend to be grateful for life after such an event and they do change, but sometimes just for a short while. By the time his questions and inner changes come about, they are so close to the end that they are unbelievable. They are especially not welcome changes as he has spent over 500 pages making us hate and resent the other people in his life and making us believe in the absoluteness of his views. The transition is much too sudden, rendering it fantastical. This element of falsehood is especially disappointing, as all of Ellen Hopkins's other books have left me breathless with the stark reality they portray.

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I found myself having to "make" myself read this book. It didn't grab me in the beginning like her novels normally do, but I kept going thinking somewhere in the middle it would get my attention. But sadly, it never did. However, there were some amazing feelings in this book and real emotion, and I really enjoyed how the main character was so strong minded. He was impressive.

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