



Title: Optimists Die First

Author: Susin Nielsen

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Lamb Books

Publisher: Random House
Children's Books

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Format: Paperback

Age Range*: 12 Up

Grade Range: Gr 7 Up
(Recommended by *School
Library Journal*)

BOOK RESUME: OPTIMISTS DIE FIRST

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Petula's funny, and a crafting genius, but no social star at high school, and it doesn't help that she's isolated herself after her adored toddler sister died. Petula feels responsible for this death, though her parents say it was a tragic accident. No one's fault. Now, Petula sees danger everywhere: every activity and every bite of food could kill you. Then a new boy, Jacob, joins Petula's group in the school's lame art therapy program; he has a prosthetic arm and darkness behind his sunny surface. Petula and Jacob become friends, then, something more. But a secret behind why they're in the group could derail them.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "Nielsen writes with sensitivity, empathy, and humor."
—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ "Nielsen has created a compelling, precociously paranoid protagonist and a bevy of wisecracking, heartwarming characters. But perhaps the novel's greatest strength is its handling of the characters' very real burdens with sympathy, wit, and not an ounce of melodrama." —*School Library Journal*, starred review

★ "Grief and guilt permeate Nielsen's empathic and deeply moving story, balanced by sharply funny narration and dialogue." —*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"Heartbreaking and hopeful, this is a solid choice for readers looking for a book to make them cry and laugh at the same time." —*Booklist*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- SELECTION OLA Best Bets for Young Adult Fiction
- SELECTION Bank Street College Best Children's Book of the Year

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Reading Guide produced by Penguin Random House Canada](#)

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*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.