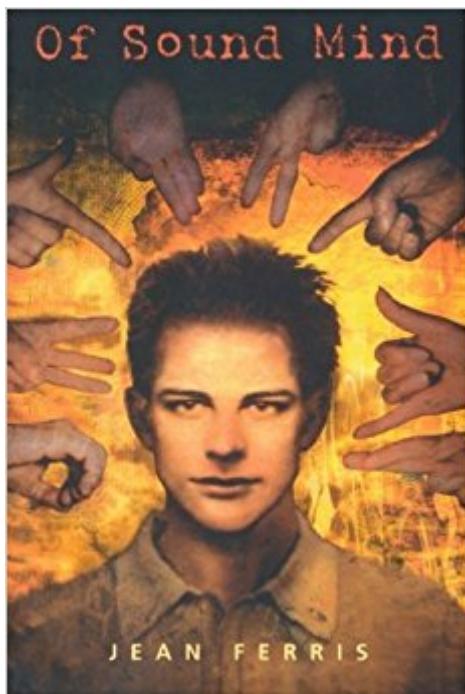


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# Of Sound Mind



## Synopsis

A poignant novel partially set in a world of silenceHigh school senior Theo is fluent in two languages: spoken English and sign. His parents and brother, Jeremy, are deaf, but Theo can hear, which has over the years cast him in the role of interpreter for his family. Unfortunately, it's not a welcome duty, especially in the case of his mother, Palma. She is a successful sculptor who, being deeply suspicious of "hearies," expects Theo to act as her business manager. And Jeremy relies on Theo for company and homework help. It's become especially frustrating lately because Theo has met a fascinating new girl at school, Ivy, with whom he wants to spend as much time as possible. Theo's father, Thomas, is the only one who has never burdened him, but that changes when Thomas has a stroke. Palma, frightened and self-absorbed, cannot bring herself to nurse her husband, leaving Theo with the full burden to bear. But with the help of Ivy and some of her friends, Theo is finally able to change his family's dynamics and find time to plan his future.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 730L (What's this?)

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR); Reprint edition (April 2, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374455848

ISBN-13: 978-0374455842

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 19 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #273,025 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #55 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Special Needs #213 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Parents #300 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Siblings

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Jean Ferris gives the tried-and-true coming-of-age story an unusual and refreshing twist with this young adult novel about a high school senior who is the only "hearie" in his deaf family. Frustrated daily by his family's demands and depressed by the silence that dominates his house, Theo seeks

solace with thoughtful, purple-haired Ivy. Ivy, also the hearing child of a deaf parent, understands better than anyone what Theo is going through. But after his dad suffers a stroke, Theo fears that his wants and needs, especially concerning Ivy and college, will be swallowed whole by the responsibility of caring for his egotistical artist mom and clingy younger brother. Does Theo have the strength to change his fate? By turns both comical and gut-wrenching, *Of Sound Mind* joins the ranks of other stellar quirky teen boy novels like *Rats Saw God* and *Tribute to Another Dead Rock Star*. (Ages 12 and older) --Jennifer Hubert --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In this emotionally taut novel Ferris (*Bad*; *Eight Seconds*) chronicles the conflicts of high school senior Theo, caught between the hearing and deaf worlds. Theo, who can hear and who knows sign language, often finds himself in a burdensome and exhausting position in a family in which everyone else is deaf. For example, at age 11 he negotiated the purchase of his parents' house when he "didn't know what a lot of terms he had to use even meant, much less how to sign them to his parents." Theo forms a romantic relationship with a new girl, Ivy, who also signs because she has a deaf father, and his own stoic, peacemaking father suffers a stroke. These two events motivate Theo to assert himself against his domineering mother, Parma. Ferris effectively establishes the manners and mores of the deaf community and American Sign Language, using examples such as Parma's rudeness when she clasps her youngest son's hands to shut him up, and describing the signers' habit of watching facial and body language intently and their suspicions about "hearies." An eclectic and appealing cast of characters, including the bickering retirees Harry and Hazel, propel the drama. Ages 12-up. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book was as described on the seller list. Happy with my purchase.

Daughter needed the book for her class. It was perfect! Shipment was very fast and it arrived in good shape.

I received great service from this provider and the book was in good shape. It looked new and arrived on time. Thank You, Mary

My son loves this book.

Of Sound Mind, by Jean Ferris Have you ever wondered how difficult life would be if you were deaf? Well Theo, Thomas and Pamela's son, has a hard time just dealing with his own problems. Not to mention that he runs his parents lives and his brother Jeremy's too. Theo's family is all deaf except for him. Theo is that only one that can hear. He has more responsibilities than I thought a 15 year old could have. Theo manages his family's affairs and his own personal life which his mother doesn't think that he needs. She thinks that he is only there to be her personal interpreter and whatever else that she can think of. Let's just say that Pamela is very conceited. She only thinks of her self and what she needs. Thomas, on the other hand, doesn't like to ask Theo for help. He tries to avoid asking Theo for help because he knows that Theo already has his hands full with other things. Like Thomas, Jeremy doesn't like to ask for Theo's help either, but he has a hard time in school. So he has to ask some of the time because he doesn't understand a lot of things about what they are doing in school. My favorite thing Jeremy ever said was " Hearie." I thought that it was really funny because he was referring to people that can hear. While Theo is helping his family and all of this is going on, he meets a new girl named Ivy. She has a deaf father so they have a lot in common. Their personalities hit it off right away. Theo and Ivy become the best of friends and even date. But something bad happens to Theo's father and Theo just shuts everyone out including Ivy. I guess you'll have to read that book to find out what happens to Theo's father and Ivy. Jean Ferris does a great job with suspense in her realistic fiction book Of Sound Mind because I couldn't put the book down every time I went to read it. I really liked this book because I could relate to what was happening to Theo. I have a very busy life and so does Theo. By reading this book, I realized that I don't have it so bad. For a rating I would give it 5 out of 5 because I really liked it, and I thought that it was a page turner.

Of Sound Mind doesn't fit into any neat little box in my head. Though there is a sort of romance in it, it isn't anything like a typical teen romance book. The real story is about family relationships. It's a young adult novel, best for around age 12 plus. It's contemporary fiction, and a good read for both genders. The central character is a high school senior named Theo. Theo is a gifted math student, but otherwise we know very little about his life at school. The majority of the novel is set at Theo's home, where he is the only hearing person. His high-strung, artist mother is deaf, as is his more level-headed Dad and his gentle younger brother, Jeremy. Theo is the family interpreter, a role that he resents yet is also proud of fulfilling. He's been the main source of communication with the hearing world since he was very young, and he has perfected the art of selective translation. When

his mother signs rudely and accuses her dealer of not preparing adequately for her upcoming art show, Theo paraphrases her concerns very creatively. Thus he is not just passing on her words and changing them from ASL (American Sign Language) to spoken English, he is also thinking on his feet and ad libbing. It's no wonder that Theo finds interpreting for his mother to be exhausting! Theo meets a girl who recognizes his ASL "muttering" and his initial reaction is to stay away from her. He's uncomfortable being known as the kid with deaf parents, and he feels like he fits neither here nor there, not quite belonging to either the deaf culture or that of the hearing world. He doesn't want to be seen at school talking in ASL. Nevertheless, he begins to watch for this new girl, and soon enough, they are good friends. Ivy helps Theo to see everything in a new light. The author obviously knows her subject matter. She paints a realistic portrait, with plenty of subtle details that show her understanding of ASL and deaf culture. The deep suspicion that Theo's mother holds toward people with hearing, the terrible affront of her turning her back on someone during conversation, and Theo's wish that he could eavesdrop on his father and brother, who are in a different room; these all enrich the novel and give it life. There were a few things I didn't like about this book. I would have enjoyed reading more about Theo's friends at school, and about his passion for math. A little too much attention seems focused on Ivy and her special interest. I got rather bored with the endless list of culinary delights. Overall though, this is a gem of a story, well told and original.

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