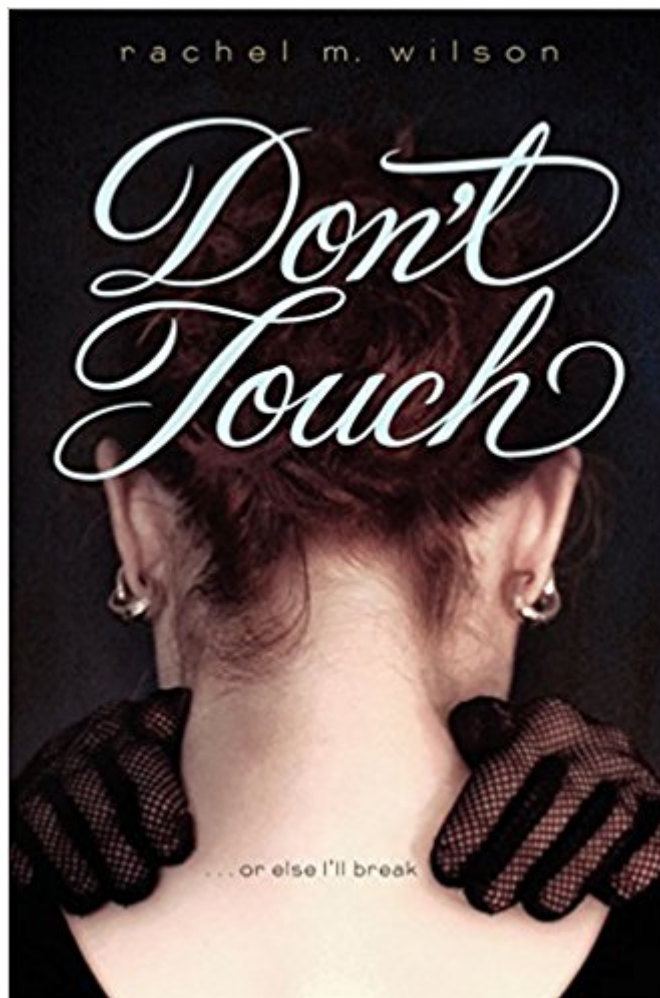


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# Don't Touch



## Synopsis

Step on a crack, break your mother's back, Touch another person's skin, and Dad's gone for good . . . Caddie has a history of magical thinkingâ of playing games in her head to cope with her surroundingsâ but it's never been this bad before. When her parents split up, Don't touch becomes Caddie's mantra. Maybe if she keeps from touching another person's skin, Dad will come home. She knows it doesn't make sense, but her games have never been logical. Soon, despite Alabama's humidity, she's covering every inch of her skin and wearing evening gloves to school. And that's where things get tricky. Even though Caddie's the new girl, it's hard to pass off her compulsions as artistic quirks. Friends notice things. Her drama class is all about interacting with her scene partners, especially Peter, who's auditioning for the role of Hamlet. Caddie desperately wants to play Ophelia, but if she does, she'll have to touch Peter . . . and kiss him. Part of Caddie would love nothing more than to kiss Peterâ but the other part isn't sure she's brave enough to let herself fall. From rising star Rachel M. Wilson comes a powerful, moving debut novel of the friendship and love that are there for us, if only we'll let them in.

## Book Information

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> Mental Health > Anxiety Disorders

## Customer Reviews

âœDonâ™t Touch is fiercely compelling, darkly funny, and hums like a high tension wire with energy.â • (Tim Wynne-Jones, author of *Blink & Caution*)âœA tender love story about the beauty and the risk of showing someone who you really are.â • (Nina LaCour, acclaimed author of *Hold Still*)

and *The Disenchantments*)âOffers a good look at Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and other anxiety disorders.â • (School Library Journal) An insightful look at anxiety disorders and letting go of fear. (Kirkus Reviews)âWell-written...a good story, the book educates about anxiety disorders and encourages sufferers that all is not lost, a point made in the authorâs moving afterword...Libraries where Laurie Halse Anderson and Sara Zarr are popular will want this title.â • (Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA))â[An] absorbing debut.â • (Publishers Weekly)âA vulnerable, moving, and often witty story about the terrible price of self-protection. Plenty of readers, OCD or no, will feel a kinship with Caddie.â • (Bulletin of the Center for Childrenâs Books)âA poignant introduction to OCD and anxiety disorders.â • (The Horn Book)

Rachel M. Wilson received her MFA in writing for children and young adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. *Don't Touch* is her first novel. Originally from Alabama, she now lives in Chicago, Illinois.

Grade: CCaddie is reunited with her former best friend when she begins junior year at a high school for performance arts. She pulled away from Mandy when her parents started having problems and she developed OCD. Caddie believes if she doesn't touch anyone, her estranged father will come home and the family will get back together. Falling for a cute guy, Hamlet to her Ophelia in the school play, just might interfere with her compulsions. Debut writer Rachel M Wilson drew upon her own experiences with OCD in *DON'T TOUCH* to get inside Caddie's head and thought process to give an authentic depiction of the anxiety associated with OCD. Though Caddie had been treated for her mental illness, she hadn't seen her therapist for about a year, which struck me odd as her behaviors spiraled out of control. Her mother noticed, but never suggested going back to therapy until Caddie refused to get out of bed for 4 days. Many of the supporting characters had unique personalities that seemed to fall into the Good or Bad category. Mandy went to further lengths than most best friends and Peter was perfectly patient and understanding. The mom good, the dad bad etc. Wilson's writing was at times beautiful, at times choppy. The best scenes were those inside Caddie's head. The pacing was adequate, although at times repetitive as she encountered the same scenarios repeatedly. Although this is the nature of the mental illness, it doesn't make for exciting of touching reading the same scene the third time. I appreciated that the ending didn't have an unrealistic cure and life didn't become perfect for Caddie. My biggest criticism of *DON'T TOUCH* is that the story, while enjoyable wasn't memorable. I won't think about it after I finish the review, I won't want to reread. Caddie was easy to empathize with, but hard to embrace because her issues

lacking confidence in relationships often made her narcissistic, whiny and immature. THEMES: mental illness, OCD, anxiety, divorce, family, friendship, romance, siblings, school

It's been about a year since I read this book the first time, and I still remember it. The very beginning was a touch generic, and when I first began to read, I remember feeling my attention drifting. It only took a few chapters, though, for me to be completely sucked in and fall in love with both the writing and the story itself. It's a brilliant first novel with truly poignant issues, and the decline and subsequent recovery by the main character builds enough at a steady pace that it's incredibly believable, and hard to remember it's just fiction by the end.

Caddie is going through a lot of changes in her life--a new school and new friends--but the biggest change is the absence of her father, who has left the family. Caddie is afraid that if anyone touches her, her family will never be whole. To avoid touch, she wears long sleeves and gloves, but winning the role of Ophelia in her school's performance of HAMLET threatens to upend her carefully constructed existence. Wilson portrays a character with severe anxiety and OCD, but Caddie is far more than a collection of symptoms. She draws us in with her love of theater and her determination to succeed at a special arts academy that her father did not want her to attend. Sympathetic and well developed secondary characters show that friends can be real--not the notorious "frenemies". We should all have, and be, friends like these. The ending is satisfying--neither predictable nor cliched. All in all, an important story that's also a great read.

Don't Touch "There's a name for these imaginings: magical thinking. It almost sounds nice, but it isn't. The weirdest part is that I know my stupid games shouldn't have an effect on real life. but when I try to stop, the doubt creeps in "what if it does matter?" It's not easy being Caddie. Not only are her parents getting a divorce but she has this strange idea that if she doesn't touch, that some how it will make everything better. That her father will come back home and the family will be whole again. Everything will be as it once was. Sadly, her idea doesn't work "it makes her miserable. Not only does it keep her interacting normally with people but it separates her from doing something that she loves. Which is the role Ophelia in the school play. The rest of the review is on my blog [creatyvebooks \(com\)](http://creatyvebooks.com)

What I liked about this book: I could almost FEEL the same as Caddie. It was as if I were her for just

a moment. What I disliked: It wasn't much of a page turner. I felt as if her goal of never touching was destroyed after she met Oscar.

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