



The Ninth Life of Louis Drax

By Liz Jensen



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Louis Drax is a boy like no other. He is brilliant and strange, and every year something violent seems to happen to him. On his ninth birthday, Louis goes on a picnic with his parents and falls off a cliff. The details are shrouded in mystery. Louis's mother is shell-shocked; his father has vanished. And after some confusion Louis himself, miraculously alive but deep in a coma, arrives at Dr. Pascal Dannachet's celebrated coma clinic...Full of astonishing twists and turns, this is a masterful tale of the secrets the human mind can hide.



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The Ninth Life of Louis Drax By Liz Jensen Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Louis Drax isn't like other children. The morbidly imaginative and sharply intuitive boy from a provincial city in France has survived eight suspicious accidents, one for each year of his life. On his ninth birthday, Louis suffers a mysterious fall from a cliff and ends up in Dr. Pascal Dannachet's experimental coma clinic, where the truth of his most recent mishap will be revealed. So begins British novelist Jensen's fourth book (*War Crimes for the Home*, etc.), a fiercely intelligent psychological thriller told from the alternating perspectives of the comatose Louis and the professionally conflicted Dr. Dannachet. As the French police search for Pierre Drax, the prime suspect in his son's fall, Louis negotiates the unconscious world with Gustave, his grotesque, bandaged imaginary companion, and Dr. Dannachet reluctantly falls in love with Louis's mother, Natalie. Behind the many twists and turns that ensue is a multilayered, genuinely convincing emotional drama that adds substance to the suspense. Families are torn apart, scientists are confounded by the miraculous, and the human heart unleashes its many secrets. Jensen's gift for black humor and off-kilter narratives shines throughout this page-turner, and her understanding of fractured psyches and their ability to heal is remarkable. The idiosyncrasies of her peculiar characters only make them more engaging, and at the end of Jensen's gripping tale, the reader is left eager for more. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Booklist](#)

Here is the breakout novel--a literary thriller that's almost impossible to put down--for British writer Jensen (*Egg Dancing*, 1996). It has already been optioned by Miramax, with Anthony Minghella (*Cold Mountain*) set to direct. It is narrated both by nine-year-old Louis Drax, who is in a coma in a clinic in Provence, and by his doctor, Pascal Dannachet. According to Louis' mother, Natalie, Louis was thrown off a cliff by his angry father, who has subsequently disappeared. As Dannachet, who has grown increasingly estranged from his wife, probes the Draxes' family history, he is soon smitten by emotionally needy and vulnerable Natalie, although certain elements of her story don't seem to add up. Louis' distinctive narrative voice is instantly gripping; referring to himself as the Disturbed Child, he relays in a grimly funny, precocious voice the many accidents he has suffered in his short, unhappy life. Because Louis' narration is so singular, Dannachet's suffers by comparison. This is sure to remind readers of Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* [BKL Ap 1 03]. Joanne Wilkinson
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Review

'A remarkable suspense novel: tart, mysterious and wrenching' Anthony Minghella, Academy Award-winning director 'This is a wonderfully unsettling psychological thriller ... An oddly beautiful journey into the darkest corners of the human soul' Mail on Sunday 'Shocking, moving and beautifully written, *The Ninth Life Of Louis Drax* is an extraordinary novel about family mystery and medical marvels' Image 'A gripping psychological thriller with a gothic flavour ... unputdownable ... *The Ninth Life of Louis Drax* contains many heart-stopping moments where the tension is cranked up almost to breaking point' Daily Telegraph --book cover

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Agnes Henson:

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