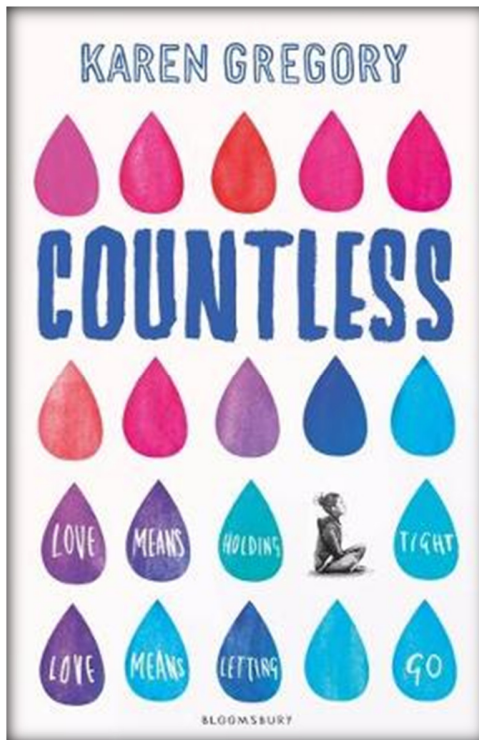


Helping you choose the best books for children

Lovereading4kids Reader reviews of **Countless** by Karen Gregory

Below are the complete reviews, written by the Lovereading4kids members.



Rebekah Marsh, age 14

Whilst reading this book, I experienced every emotion. Anger, despair, happiness. This book was a true emotional roller coaster, one of those books where you finish it, look up and just say "wow". 'Countless' is a truly amazing novella that allowed me to follow Hedda along her battle with anorexia, love for Rose and eventually her mourning for any kind of love. I felt as if I was Hedda when she felt Nia taking over, I felt as if I was Hedda when Rose gets fostered. I felt as if I was Hedda for the entirety of the novella.

Morgan Steigmann, age 17

*Hedda's story adds many extra dimensions to the typical 'boy-meets-girl' narrative, her version of which forms a refreshingly minor subplot. **Gregory's writing is wonderfully addictive!** With authors of Young Adult fiction often only choosing one topical issue on which to base their plot, Karen Gregory depicts a far more realistic view of Young Adult issues through combining both the struggles surrounding teenage pregnancy and eating disorders. Whilst mentally draining individually, Gregory portrays an extremely believable account of the emotional turmoil endured when both merge simultaneously, and the effect this has not only for the individual, but for all involved. Although perhaps at times slightly practicable, **'Countless' is not only engaging, but will resonate with both teenage and adult readers alike due to the many struggles of life it touches upon.** Hedda's story adds many extra*

dimensions to the typical 'boy-meets-girl' narrative, her version of which forms a refreshingly minor subplot. Gregory's writing is wonderfully addictive- I wouldn't advise starting 'Countless' unless you've time to finish it in the same sitting!

Providing a harrowing insight into the torment of an eating disorder, without coming across as patronising, Gregory appears to truly understand the mentality of those suffering with eating disorders and mental health problems, creating a unique narrative. With such issues, and those of teenage pregnancy, often trivialised or over-simplified in both the media and novels, 'Countless' stands testament to the attempts to decrease associated stigma- we can only hope other authors may follow suit!

Grace Spear, age 14

This book really hits you in your heart and I loved how the characters seemed so real.

'Countless' tells the story of 17 year old Hedda who's been battling and eating disorder since she was 12. After going to a counselling session with her care worker Felicity, Hedda takes a pregnancy test. She's pregnant!!! She can't cope with the idea of bursting the baby, so she takes a time out from her eating disorder, with the promise that everything will return back to how it was after the birth. But things are harder than she first thinks, with after the pregnancy her health and family life both deteriorating will she be able to over come Nia her eating disorder?

I really enjoyed this book, I've never read anything like it. To start with I wasn't sure if I was going to like it but it was brilliant. The story tackled both a teen pregnancy and an eating disorder and it was written as though the characters were stood in front of you. My favourite part was when her neighbor Robin made her food to get her to eat. I loved this book and would defiantly recommend it.

Eva Zur, age 14

A book that grabs you from the first page. Loved it!

'Countless' by Karen Gregory really grabbed me right from the beginning. I instantly wanted to know how Hedda, the main character, would cope with a baby at 17, especially with her eating disorder.

*I loved the style of writing and the fact that the characters were relatable and easy to picture. **Once I had started the book, I couldn't put it down and nearly finished it in one sitting!** I found so many morals behind the text – so much to think about. It taught me about leaving the past behind and that some choices can't be avoided. Even though I hope I won't ever find myself in the same situation as the main character, the fact that in the end she had to open herself up to receiving help from us was a good message to all of us.*

Overall, I really enjoyed this book and the ideas it prompts. I was gripped from page 1 and didn't want the story to end – and don't tell anybody, but it made me cry!

Maisie Sadler, age 15

An important story about mental illness and teen pregnancy. Such an honest moving story. Read it !

*I absolutely loved this book. It was so heart warming. It was an easy and fast pace read. I just couldn't put it down !!!! It explored many troubling issues that a teen can face, it was honestly one of the best representation of metal illness I've read in a long time. Read it ! **It gives you an amazing different perspective on life !***

Jasmine Tyler, age 16

One of those books that leave an impact on you from the moment you open it to the time that you close it. *There's some books that leave an impact on you as a reader. This is one of them. From the moment I opened this book I was drawn into a world of sadness, loss, and the life of a young girl struggling to live in the grips of an eating disorder. The emotional level of this story was high throughout due to the amount of passion Karen Gregory put into each individual character. This is one of them books you need to read. To make you appreciate life and gain an understanding into the struggles that some people are living with and what it takes for them to be able to overcome the control these problems have over them. **A beautiful story of love, loss and life.***

Amelia White, age 17

We all count dates to a certain extent, like the number of days till Christmas or a

birthday, but its very rare you'll count the number of meals you eat. Anorexia. It affects more people than you think, some people class it as a eating disorder, others class it as a mental disorder. Which ever you believe it to be, its a hard thing to overcome once your in too deep like Hedda, she's had anorexia since she was 12. Recovering is already difficult and adding a pregnancy to the mix isn't making the situation much better.

I really enjoyed reading this novel, some bits inbetween weren't as exciting as others, however overall I really enjoyed this book and got to understand the thoughts and feelings of someone who has a eating disorder. **I would really recommend it to teenage girls who think that stopping eating and getting thin is the right thing to do as it made me realise that thin isn't always the best or healthiest option.**

Humaira Kauser, age 19

I liked this book a lot. I liked that it felt like it had a rhythm if that makes sense.

Hedda as a character, developed so much and became complex, you feel as though you know her on a personal level. Karen Gregory needs to write more because if her words are anything like this book, my life would be made.

Aimee Sweet, age 15

'Countless' is a moving and emotional novel that follows the story of Hedda, a girl very much controlled by her mind. She struggles with her eating disorder on a day to day basis, and until she takes a pregnancy test, her life has quietened down. She knows deep down that she cannot give up this baby, but she is also terrified of the weeks that will follow.

'Countless' is raw, and treats mental health the way any teenager would who has been fighting one as long as she can remember. It felt uncomfortable at times reading parts of the novel, but I understand that it is an important issue to tackle today in society. Gregory uses this novel as an allegory to show that many other girls are facing similar problems which they find themselves struggling alone. Countless reminds the reader that we are not alone and things will get better.

I loved the characters and Hedda in particular – I feel like her character was already developed from the start which added to the plot and gave the reader a reason to carry on. Why has her life ended up like this? Will she be able to cope

with the bump and her eating disorder at the same time? At first, I had my doubts about Robin, the boy next door. He sounded very cliché to me but as the novel progressed the reader learns more about his character that sets him apart from other characters.

All in all, I didn't enjoy 'Countless' as much as I thought I would, but it is an acquired genre and I felt myself likening to Hedda as I read more. A sensitive topic that Gregory captures successfully through Hedda's fight story.