

Accelerated: A Novel

Bronwen Hruska



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In a striking debut novel, a single father and his son discover what lies beneath the gilded façade of a tony Upper East Side private school: an endemic of over-medicated children.

Every afternoon Sean Benning picks up his son, Toby, on the marble steps that lead into the prestigious Bradley School. Everything at Bradley is accelerated—3rd graders read at the 6th grade level, they have labs and facilities to rival most universities, and the chess champions are the bullies. A single dad and struggling artist, Sean sticks out like a sore thumb amongst the power-soccer-mom cliques and ladies-who-lunch that congregate on the steps every afternoon. But at least Toby is thriving and getting the best education money can buy. Or is he?

When Sean starts getting pressure from the school to put Toby on medication for ADD, something smells fishy, and it isn't the caviar that was served at last week's PTA meeting. Toby's "issues" in school seem, to Sean, to be nothing more than normal behavior for an eight-year-old boy. But maybe Sean just isn't seeing things clearly, which has been harder and harder to do since Toby's new teacher, Jess, started at Bradley. And the school has Toby's best interests at heart, right? But what happens when the pressure to not just keep up, but to exceed, takes hold? When things take a tragic turn, Sean realizes that the price of this accelerated life is higher than he could have ever imagined.



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