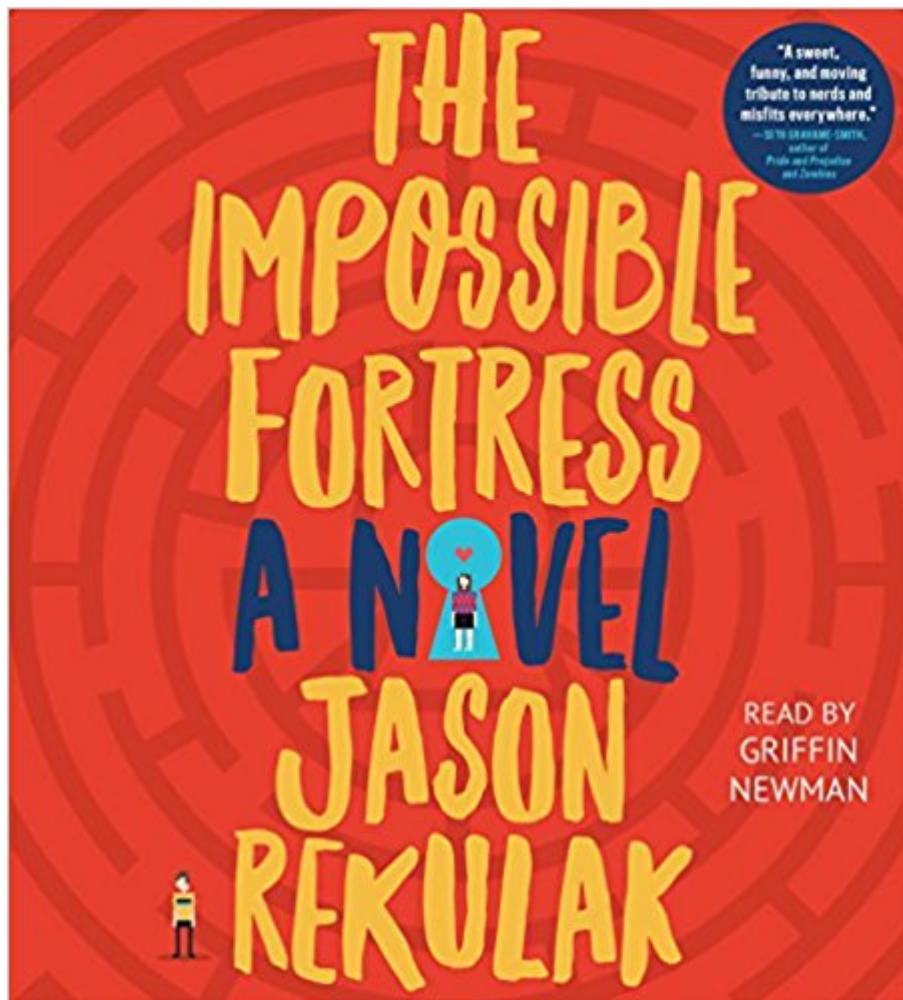




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# The Impossible Fortress



## Synopsis

\*MOST ANTICIPATED NOVELS OF 2017 SELECTION BY \* ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY \*

BUSTLE \* “A sweet, funny, and moving tribute to nerds and misfits everywhere.”  
Seth Grahame-Smith, New York Times bestselling author of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*  
Until May 1987, fourteen-year-old Billy Marvin of Wetbridge, New Jersey, is a nerd, but a decidedly happy nerd. Afternoons are spent with his buddies, watching copious amounts of television, gorging on Pop-Tarts, debating who would win in a brawl (Rocky Balboa or Freddy Krueger? Bruce Springsteen or Billy Joel? Magnum P.I. Or T.J. Hooker?), and programming video games on his Commodore 64 late into the night. Then Playboy magazine publishes photos of Wheel of Fortune hostess Vanna White, Billy meets expert programmer Mary Zelinsky, and everything changes. A love letter to the 1980s, to the dawn of the computer age, and to adolescence—a time when anything feels possible—The Impossible Fortress will make you laugh, make you cry, and make you remember in exquisite detail what it feels like to love something—or someone—for the very first time.

## Book Information

Audio CD

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Shipping Weight: 1.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 143 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,604,956 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #64 in Books > Books on CD > Computers & Internet #5244 in Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > General #13086 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Coming of Age

## Customer Reviews

An Best Book of February 2017: The Impossible Fortress is one of those books—one of those rare and special few where, once you have finished it, you want all your friends to read it immediately. This is especially true if you grew up in the 1980s, because The Impossible Fortress is a coming-of-age story tucked inside a love letter to that strange and wonderful decade. The novel is set in 1987 when computer games had only recently entered our homes, Jolt cola (the predecessor

of modern energy drinks) was still a thing, and Playboy magazine had countless 14-year-old boys across the country trying to get their hands on a copy of the Vanna White (of Wheel of Fortune fame) issue. Billy Martin and his two best friends are three such boys, and their pursuit of the epic magazine leads them to the local office supply store, computer whiz Mary Zelinsky, and a hero's quest to save a princess. Author Jason Rekulak's ability to conjure powerful adolescent feelings of friendship, first love, and that difficult place where the two collide, is impressive. Laughter comes from page after page, and some clever surprises too—all of it with a 1980s mixed tape running in the background. --Seira Wilson, The Book Review --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

\* MOST ANTICIPATED NOVELS OF 2017 SELECTION BY \* ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY \* BUSTLE \* INSTYLE.COM \* PRAISE FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE FORTRESS "Revel in 1987 nostalgia in this debut about a teen boy, a coveted copy of Playboy, and a computer-nerd girl." •Entertainment Weekly "Need a sanctuary book right about now? Maybe a retro escapist read about simpler times that lets you laugh out loud, not overthink, indulge in nostalgia? Well, here you go. The Impossible Fortress is a quirky, endearing, full embrace of the late '80s. Set in those promise-filled, early years of the Computer Age, its clever plot is driven by surging teen hormones and fumbling first love, by bad adolescent choices and a struggle for redemption." •USA Today "Full of clueless boys, consequence-free adventures and generous helpings of adolescent humor, all served up with a kind smile...you relish the book's countless callbacks to the 1980s." •Washington Post "Infused with 1980s music, pop culture, and plenty of the BASIC computer programming language, Rekulak's debut offers a charmingly vintage take on geek love, circa 1987 in New Jersey." | Rekulak's novel will have readers of a certain age waxing nostalgic about Space Invaders and humming Hall and Oates, but it's still a fun ride that will appeal to all. • Publishers Weekly "Rekulak layers in nostalgic eighties references, like a mixtape created by Mary's recently deceased mother, an oblique nod to Beetlejuice, and the wacky group of misfit friends with a 'really good' plan. Despite all that, in the end the plot manages to magically subvert the time period while also paying homage to it. An unexpected retro delight." •Booklist (starred review) "Set against the backdrop of 1980s New Jersey, Jason Rekulak's charming coming-of-age debut about a 14-year-old computer nerd who schemes to steal an issue of Playboy from a local store and meets a girl who can code in the process will invoke pangs of nostalgia." •InStyle "A sweet and

surprising story about young love." [A.V. Club](#) "There are few things in this life more satisfying than a book that truly grasps what it's like to be a nerd—and what makes it so much damn fun. The Impossible Fortress is about video games, first crushes, idols and adolescence—and it's a thoroughly escapist joy in its most pure form."

[Newsweek](#) "Fans of Ernest Cline's Ready Player One or anyone who grew up as a nerd in the 1980s will be sure to find something to love in Philadelphia-based author Rekulak's debut novel, about a 14-year-old Commodore 64 aficionado whose life changes when he encounters a Playboy photo spread and meets a computer programmer." [Men's Journal](#) "This debut novel by the publisher of Quirk Books feels like a sort of spiritual prequel to Ernest Cline's Ready Player One, with a young protagonist adrift in a sea of pop culture and new technology, trying to figure out his future." [Library Journal](#) "The Impossible Fortress strikes the perfect balance of strangeness and relatability; it's nostalgic in all the right ways. It reminds us that sometimes relationships are like video games, where small actions have big consequences and we have to fail a few times before we succeed." [Bookpage](#) "This book is Stranger Things meets Halt and Catch Fire, to be enjoyed by those (like me) who have a soft spot for 8-bit games and the teenage antics of a more innocent time." [Bookriot.com](#) "A love letter to the 1980s, adolescence, technology, nerd-dom, and Vanna White, The Impossible Fortress will make you laugh and remind you of how much is possible when you're fourteen." [David Ebershoff](#), bestselling author of The Danish Girl "The Impossible Fortress reads like a newly-unearthed Amblin movie—a sweet, funny and moving tribute to nerds and misfits everywhere, set in a magical time when cassettes were king, phones had cords and Playboy was the pinnacle of smut. Fans of Ernie Cline and Chuck Klosterman—this is your next favorite book." [Seth Grahame-Smith](#), New York Times bestselling author of Pride and Prejudice and Zombies "The Impossible Fortress is hilarious, compulsively readable and surprisingly poignant, a teenage caper novel set in a time where U2 could still be considered a one-hit wonder and pornography was as close and as unobtainable to a 14-year-old boy as a Playboy magazine kept behind the counter at an office supply store. I absolutely loved it." [Carolyn Parkhurst](#), New York Times bestselling author of The Dogs of Babel and Harmony "Part love story, part coming-of-age tale, and part heist picture, The Impossible Fortress is an endlessly clever novel about friendship, heartache and computers—all rendered with the bright colors and buoyant spirit of Q\*bert for the Commodore 64." [Ben H. Winters](#), author of the Edgar-award winning Last Policeman trilogy, and Underground Airlines "A tenderly crafted and charmingly spot-on debut novel....surprising and

nostalgic in the best possible way." •Denise Kiernan, New York Times bestselling author of The Girls of Atomic City "Touching and gut-wrenching; an uplifting tribute to anyone who was ever a high school outcast. Trust me, you're welcome." •Andrew Smith, award-winning author of Grasshopper Jungle and Winger "Anyone who was a nerdy 14-year-old in the mid 80s (like me) will love this hilarious and nostalgic book." •John Boyne, author of The Heart of the Invisible Furies --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Great read for anyone who grew up in the 80s and/or was into computers from a young age. The plot reminds you of an 80s sitcom even, with all the loose ends tied up nicely and conveniently for this feel-good read. You can even play the game they are making in the book on the author's website!

As a child of the 80's, I loved that this book was set back in that time. It was very nostalgic for me which was great. It was a quick read and I didn't want to put it down. I loved the characters and the whole premise of the book. What a great first novel by this author! I'd definitely recommend!!!

This was a great quick read - a little bit of an odd concept but the book did not bore me and was both fun and light-hearted. Perhaps I enjoyed this because I am a computer science major and it highlighted the #GirlPower we need in coding. It isn't a thriller in any way or isn't one of those books you feel like you can't put down, but it is just a fun, easy read.

I just read a book about science and was looking for something different when I found amongst the best sellers this unique jewel. I also was very curious about computers in 1987. My father used to work for IBM at that time and he bought a PC. It was a shiny, strange and spectacular thing to have at home. The green letters glowing on the black background were just mesmerizing. I fully understand how a Kid of that age, back in those years could be so attracted to computers and geeky stuff. That of course situates me in the geek community. I'm proud of it. This book makes me relive all those memories so long lost, it brings back names, funny situations, the best of life back then. It's such a good sensation to read about all the 80s stuff! Even though I don't live in the US I really identify myself with Will and his friends. I never ever felt like fitting back in school. Everyone was into sports but I was never really good at those. I was good at other stuff like computers and specially video games. I hope those who read The Impossible Fortress enjoy it as much as I did. I am sad it ended so fast!

“The Impossible Fortress” by Jason Rekulak starts out simply in Wetbridge, NJ circa 1987 with 14-year-old Billy Marvin and his sidekicks, Alf (depicted exactly like the alien who had his own TV show) and Chase (an Adonis with a noticeable flaw that prevents him from getting girls). Picture the TV show “The Wonder Years” but set in the late 80s. Billy’s life with his buddies was idyllic, as his single mom worked the nightshift at the local grocery store, and thus he was left to his own devices. “But then Playboy published photographs of ‘Wheel of Fortune’ hostess Vanna White, I fell head over heels, and everything started to change.” Pretty much an understatement for computer geek Billy, as the trio concocted various plots to snag a copy of the magazine. As expected and anticipated hijinks ensue, and Rekulak takes you on a journey with the boys that is about friendship, learning responsibility, dedication to achieving a lofty and satisfying goal, and so much more. This is a classic coming-of-age tale with a twist. If you want a quick read, are a child of the 80s and want to take a trip down memory lane with musical mentions, product placement, and recall the very infancy of computers (dot matrix anyone?), this novel is for you. If Goodreads would allow, this selection would receive 3.75 stars so I rounded up.

Jason Rekulak has constructed a wonderful maze of stories, all intertwined with layers of heartfelt nostalgia, and honest feelings. At first, the story comes across as a coming of age tale that is peppered with pop-culture references and jokes. However, as the novel evolves, it becomes wrapped up in subtle loops that keep the readers on their toes. For anyone who enjoys wordplay, puzzles, or has typed a line of code ... or for anyone who needs a touching mix of absurdity and sometimes tears, this book is a definite must read. The layering of subtext and stories within the overlying plotline also makes it a wonderful re-read, as more of Mr. Rekulak’s elegant writing brings awesome detail to the novel, and the concept as a whole.

I liked this fun 80’s coming-of-age story. It focuses on a high school freshman who loves computer games and computer programming. He and his nerdy friends are obsessed with Vanna White, and are desperate to see the Playboy pictures of her. Bad decisions and a first crush are part of this story. This gets a little over the top near the end, but I still enjoyed this light read.

Great story ! Initially it seemed a bit to YA for me, but the characters had depth and the story took several unexpected twists. And the ending was just right. So glad I gave this a chance, a wonderful

surprise.

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