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Wintergirls



Synopsis

~ The New York Times bestselling story of a friendship frozen between life and death Lia and Cassie are best friends, wintergirls frozen in fragile bodies, competitors in a deadly contest to see who can be the thinnest. But then Cassie suffers the ultimate loss~ her life~ and Lia is left behind, haunted by her friend's memory and racked with guilt for not being able to help save her. In her most powerfully moving novel since *Speak*, award-winning author Laurie Halse Anderson explores Lia's struggle, her painful path to recovery, and her desperate attempts to hold on to the most important thing of all: hope.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 498 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #33,575 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in ~ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Self Mutilation #44 in ~ Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Death & Dying #66 in ~ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Being a Teen

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 8 Up~ The intensity of emotion and vivid language here are more reminiscent of Anderson's *Speak* (Farrar, 1999) than any of her other works. Lia and Cassie had been best friends since elementary school, and each developed her own style of eating disorder that leads to disaster. Now 18, they are no longer friends. Despite their estrangement, Cassie calls Lia 33 times on the night of her death, and Lia never answers. As events play out, Lia's guilt, her need to be thin, and her fight for acceptance unravel in an almost poetic stream of consciousness in this startlingly crisp and pitch-perfect first-person narrative. The text is rich with words still legible but

crossed out, the judicious use of italics, and tiny font-size refrains reflecting her distorted internal logic. All of the usual answers of specialized treatment centers, therapy, and monitoring of weight and food fail to prevail while Lia's cleverness holds sway. What happens to her in the end is much less the point than traveling with her on her agonizing journey of inexplicable pain and her attempt to make some sense of her life.

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Starred Review Problem-novel fodder becomes a devastating portrait of the extremes of self-deception in this brutal and poetic deconstruction of how one girl stealthily vanishes into the depths of anorexia. Lia has been down this road before: her competitive relationship with her best friend, Cassie, once landed them both in the hospital, but now not even Cassie's death can eradicate Lia's disgust of the "fat cows" who scrutinize her body all day long. Her father (no, "Professor Overbrook") and her mother (no, "Dr. Marrigan") are frighteningly easy to dupe "tinkering and sabotage inflate her scale readings as her weight secretly plunges: 101.30, 97.00, 89.00. Anderson illuminates a dark but utterly realistic world where every piece of food is just a caloric number, inner voices scream "NO!" with each swallow, and self-worth is too easily gauged: "I am the space between my thighs, daylight shining through." Struck-through sentences, incessant repetition, and even blank pages make Lia's inner turmoil tactile, and gruesome details of her decomposition will test sensitive readers. But this is necessary reading for anyone caught in a feedback loop of weight loss as well as any parent unfamiliar with the scripts teens recite so easily to escape from such deadly situations. Grades 9-12. --Daniel Kraus --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Goodreads Description- "Dead girl walking," the boys say in the halls. "Tell us your secret," the girls whisper, one toilet to another. I am that girl. I am the space between my thighs, daylight shining through. I am the bones they want, wired on a porcelain frame. Lia and Cassie are best friends, wintergirls frozen in matchstick bodies, competitors in a deadly contest to see who can be the skinniest. But what comes after size zero and size double-zero? When Cassie succumbs to the demons within, Lia feels she is being haunted by her friend's restless spirit. In her most emotionally wrenching, lyrically written book since the multiple-award-winning *Speak*, Laurie Halse Anderson explores Lia's

descent into the powerful vortex of anorexia, and her painful path toward recovery. There have been plenty of books that I have read that I have thought that were really good and have rated them 5 stars. But then occasionally, not that often, a book comes along and absolutely takes your breath away. It makes you sit up and take notice. It also makes you realize that maybe all of the other books that you rated 5 stars were nothing close to the real thing. Laurie Halse Anderson's *Wintergirls* is exactly that kind of book. This was recommended to me several months ago as part of a book club but for some reason I just didn't get around to reading it. Well I finally started it 2 days ago and when I did I didn't stop reading it until I was done. The characters were so real, so ugly at times, and so raw. The protagonist Lia, is anorexic and has just lost her best friend who died alone in a motel room. Lia is haunted by the fact that she has 33 missed calls from her friend Cassie and feels a great deal of guilt over her death. For Cassie was just as sick as Lia...she died of bulimia. Cassie starts haunting Lia and wants Lia to join her on the other side. To avoid the ghost Lia stops sleeping and starts exercising excessively. She only eats 500 calories a day. her goal weight starts at 95 pounds but each time she meets a goal she makes a new goal of 5 pounds less. Lia grows lanugo, baby fine hair, to hold in her body heat for she is always freezing. Lia cannot read anymore because she cannot think right to make out the words. Lia has become a Wintergirl, a person lost between both worlds, and Cassie is waiting for her on the other side. There were some ugly facts presented about anorexia. It wasn't pretty. I'm glad Anderson didn't make it pretty. Maybe some teenager will read this book and take a different path. About the supporting characters...there were times I wanted to reach through the book's pages and grab the adults in Lia's life and scream "Look at her! Can you not see that she is sick! She needs your attention! Give it to her and get her to a hospital!" But as they say "Denial isn't just a river in Egypt". It was obvious Lia couldn't control her parents divorce, her father's remarriage, her mother's controlling indifference. So she sought control elsewhere. Well she got it. And she so wanted the attention of someone and no adult in her life saw it. The only one who saw it was her 9 year old stepsister who told her friends that Lia had cancer to cover up the truth. It was a sad situation. The climax was so wonderfully written that I could easily imagine it on the big screen. It was beautiful and powerful. This is one of those rare books that really caught my soul. I wish there could be a rating for these special books to differentiate them from all the rest. This is definitely a 5 star book but also so much more. You absolutely must read this book!

It's taken me a long time to read a book by Laurie Halse Anderson....but she's definitely going on the must-read list. In *Wintergirls*, Anderson does what gives me toe-curls when I'm reading fiction-- an arresting, fascinating unreliable narrator who gives you entryway into what it's like to experience

the world outside of the "norm." Lia's best friend, Cassie, died alone in a hotel and now Lia's parents are tip-toeing around her, checking up on how much she eats, and forcing her to go to therapy sessions early. Lia plays the dutiful daughter, but Cassie's ghost is haunting her, taunting her about how much she eats. Soon Lia is nuking food in the microwave so the kitchen will smell, but burying the food so her parents won't know she isn't eating. She's painfully aware of the calories in even a tablespoon of cream cheese, and only feels in control when her weight gets closer and closer to her ideal of 95.0 pounds or she's letting loose all the bad feelings and hateful words through slicing her own flesh with razor blades. *Wintergirls* is written in Lia's inner monologue, crossed out words and all she won't even let herself think (she crosses out "mom" and substitutes "Dr. Marrigan" instead). It's a disjointed, haunting view of seeing the world through a self-hate lens, and Lia's voice will stay with you long after you put the book down. I was fascinated by the ring of truth behind Lia's strategies to fool her parents and also the voices of the other girls online. Probably not a book you'd want younger YA readers to attempt without some talk about anorexia, and self-destruction beforehand. Probably not a path you'd want to walk down if you're feeling emotionally vulnerable, either, as Lia's pain and that of her family is real and un-tempered.

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