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Canary



Synopsis

In this debut novel, a high school girl faces the pain, shame, and uncertainty that come with sexual abuse. With the passing of her mother, Kate Franklin's life unravels at the seams as she loses the only emotional mooring in her family. Her dad shuts down completely, and her brother enlists in the army. Things start looking better when her dad is hired to coach at Beacon Prep, home of one of the best basketball teams in the state. In a blog of prose and poetry, Kate chronicles her new world; dating a basketball player, being caught up in a world of idolatry and entitlement, and discovering the perks the inner circle enjoys. Then Kate's fragile life shatters once again when one of her boyfriend's teammates assaults her at a party. Although she knows she should speak out, her dad's vehemently against it and so, like a canary sent into a mine to test toxicity levels and protect miners, Kate alone breathes the poisonous secrets to protect her dad and the team. The once welcoming community has betrayed Kate, her family is disintegrating, and she's on her own to grapple with whether to stay quiet or speak out and expose a town's hero and destroy her father's career.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 700L (What's this?)

Paperback: 400 pages

Publisher: Medallion Press (August 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1605425877

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Product Dimensions: 1.5 x 5 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 50 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #961,854 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #123 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Dysfunctional Relationships #187

in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Sexual Abuse #254

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 6 and up

Customer Reviews

"This is a captivating tale that addresses a lot of contemporary issues in a sensitive and

thought-provoking way." —Nicki J. Markus, author, *Day-Walker and Time Keepers* "A searing and tender portrait of the complexities of high school friendships, dating and privilege. *Canary* is a testament to the power of the hard-won truths." —Daisy Whitney, author, *The Mockingbirds and When You Were Here* "Rachele Alpine's *Canary* sings the truth about what happens when we put our high school heroes on a pedestal and give them the power to act like villains." —Erin Jade Lange, author, *Butter* "The subtle way Rachele Alpine addresses love, loss, popularity, and friendship makes this book a realistic and arresting read. For anyone who ever struggled with frenemies and fitting in, *Canary* is an important addition to contemporary YA discussions."

—Jennifer Brown, author, *Hate List* "Alpine's *Canary* is a deeply-felt, poignant account of someone trying to find strength in a world that has hurled its worst at her. Alpine has created a compelling narrator in Kate and the challenges she must face are both realistic and heartbreaking."

—Colleen Clayton, author, *What Happens Next* "I also admire how the subtexts of family, of privilege and how it is exploited, of bullying, and the sexual vulnerability of many girls are presented. . . . It is a powerful story that evokes intense emotions. . . . Grab a copy of *Canary*." —

—Jhobell Kristyl, *Book Maven* —"Sometimes I feel like I need a lot of words to describe a story and convince people to read it. This time I'm not going to. *Canary* is so much better than that. I need not convince you anymore."

—Open Book Society

Rachele Alpine is a lover of sushi, fake mustaches, and Michael Jackson. One of her first jobs was at a library, but it didn't last long, because all she did was hide in the third-floor stacks and read. Now she's a little more careful about when and where she indulges her reading habit. By day she's a high school English teacher, and by night she writes with the companionship of the world's cutest dog, Radley, a big cup of coffee, and a full bag of gummy peaches. Rachele lives with her husband in Cleveland, Ohio, but dreams of moving back to Boston, the city she fell in love with while attending graduate school there.

FULL DISCLOSURE - I know the author, having had the pleasure of working with her. Also, I did not receive an advance copy, sent the book WAY early... Not that I'm complaining. Alpine's characters are imperfect... and that's the point. Kate longs for someone to replace the love she has lost by the death of her mother and her emotionally absent father, to the point that she makes very poor decisions when choosing friends at her new school. Her environment challenges her, and at first she chooses to ignore her conscience. Watching Kate develop - as a character and as a young woman - reminds me of the difficulties many of my students experienced. Alpine does not judge

Kate; she creates a multidimensional character who learns how to make adult choices through (unfortunately) realistic consequences, and allows the reader to make their own decisions. I've shared the book with several others, including my parents, who were shocked by some of the content. This is not a book for the fainthearted or innocent. But it is real. I'm glad I stepped outside of my typical genres to read *Canary*, and look forward to Alpine's future releases.

Originally posted on my blog: [...] I absolutely fell in love with the characters in this book and the whole unique plot (typically most story's that deal with a high school are always the same story line being that its focus is the paranormal). However, I feel that at some level this book does share similarities with another novel called *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson because that novel is about a girl who is raped and then she is ostracized by her peers. I had 40% battery life left in my kindle fire and read this straight through the day (finished it in a few hours). I loved the whole story line and was really sad about Kate's mom having passed away and I knew that it would be a bad idea for Kate to become involved with the popular crowd (aka the basketball players). There is almost an unspoken rule that once you become involved with a popular person than if someone goes wrong that person walks away unharmed and the consequences fall on your head. By the way everyone that plays basketball at Beacon Prep is considered to be treated like Gods and can get away with anything (lie, cheat etc.). So with Kate's dad being the basketball coach she gets treated like royalty (aka everyone will try to get nice with her to fulfill their own purposes of hooking up with the other teammates). Kate's brother Brett wasn't like Kate and didn't try to blend in with all of the popular kids (as a result everyone makes fun of him). He abhorred his new school and constantly got into fights against their dad because he didn't like how their dad no longer really cared about them. I won't tell you what he chooses to do but I really wasn't surprised of the path he chose (hint hint military recruiters at school). Brett was the best brother that Kate could possibly have and he really cared about her when her father didn't really pay any attention to them. Even when some huge conflict came up, Brett was there for Kate and would have done anything for her. Brett matured so much because their own father wasn't really there for Kate and he tried to keep her safe and would say things that their own mother would have said (warning Kate to watch her drink (that becomes her downfall) etc.). This is just a snippet from my review on my blog

TODAY'S TRUTH: I feel like I've been waiting to read *CANARY* for years, when really it's been more like months! When I decided to ship out my pre-order more than a month prior to its official release day, I was more than excited! I might have even done a little dance! *CANARY* is one of

those books that holds a lot of truths. A lot of hard truths. As an adult, many of us like to romanticize our teenage years. I do it all of the time. Yet, while we might remember those years as magical now, I can't deny that my high school years were filled with struggles, heartache, and tears. Alpine has captured all of that here. CANARY is the story of high school sophomore, Kate. After the death of her mother, Kate struggles to fit in at her public high school where everyone thinks of her as "the girl whose mom died." So, Kate is thrilled when her father accepts a basketball coaching position at the prestigious private prep school, Beacon. At Beacon, basketball rules, and the players rule the school. At first, Kate tries to remain grounded, but soon she is swept up in glamour of being popular. But, her shiny and fragile new world is all too easily shattered. Alpine does a great job of creating real characters, because they're all flawed. No one is perfect here, not even the Kate. If Kate were perfect, she wouldn't get pulled into the ugly underbelly of Beacon. However, not only is she pulled under, she goes willingly, until she isn't wanted anymore and that's a reality she struggles to face. How do you recover when everyone in your life seems to let you down? Kate's story is told through a mix of first person narrative and blog posts in the form of prose and poetry. CANARY is a new telling of a familiar tale. One that is told with honesty, depth and originality. If you enjoy reading realistic portrayals of the hard life of teenagers and/or have enjoyed books by Laurie Halse Anderson, Lauren Oliver or Daisy Whitney, then I think you'll love CANARY. I highly recommend! It's a great read!

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