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Because I Am Furniture



Synopsis

Anke's father is abusive to her brother and sister. But not to her. Because, to him, she is like furniture "not even worthy of the worst kind of attention. Then Anke makes the school volleyball team. She loves feeling her muscles after workouts, an ache that reminds her she is real. Even more, Anke loves the confidence that she gets from the sport. And as she learns to call for the ball on the court, she finds a voice she never knew she had. For the first time, Anke is making herself seen and heard, working toward the day she will be able to speak up loud enough to rescue everyone at home "including herself.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 990 (What's this?)

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Speak; Reprint edition (February 23, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142415103

ISBN-13: 978-0142415108

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.9 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (30 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #276,095 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Dysfunctional Relationships #120 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Abuse #123 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Physical & Emotional Abuse

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Books written in verse are interesting. You would automatically think they would be easier to write because there are less words etc but I think they are actually harder to write. Having to get across just as much information and emotion with fewer words, each word holds greater meaning. I think this book does a wonderful job of telling a very emotional and important story with so few words. I thought this would be really hard to read, and while it was it was also an empowering and hopeful book. To watch a young girl find her voice and not be afraid to use it, it was powerful. It was also interesting to see inside of this house, with all the terror and abuse that happens that no one ever

say anything or ask for help. That's just the way the family was and they would rather deal with it that privately than make a change to their family. I thought the author did a great job of revealing the mentality of this family and made it easy to understand and believe. I haven't read many books in verse and I still struggle with them a little bit. At least for me, sometimes things don't come off as clearly as they could, I get the basic idea but sometimes wonder if I'm always understanding everything correctly. Maybe that's just me! All in all a powerful and important book that really packs an emotional punch.

There are some novels that attempt to tell their story in verse and then there are novels such as this, that actually do it and do it well. *Because I am Furniture* is a story about a girl who literally hugs the walls to make it through each day, walking past what is in front of her face: an abusive father who takes out his frustrations on her two siblings but not her. Then Anke starts to play volleyball where she finds she is actually good at something. She also learns that she has an opinion and a voice, but she struggles with what this means not just to her but her family as well. Should she speak up? There are a few scenes in this novel that may make you cringe - it is not that they are graphic, they are the opposite; but this is where Thalia Chaltas has proven she knows how to write in verse, using few, simple, and particular words that make the imagery in your head anything but simple. While I am a huge fan of character development, in *Because I am Furniture* I learned that sometimes it's not about that. Beyond Anke, the characters are not developed really at all - in fact they are some of the flattest characters I have read. However, I like to think that this was done on purpose. The novel is not about the other characters, their struggles and pains (granted which are great), or even Anke's interactions with them. This novel is about Anke finding her voice and feeling those feelings that make us human, questioning the status quo of her life and taking chances (both internally and externally). I have always found verse novels to be quick reads and *Because I am Furniture* is just that. While being written in verse helps the time it will take you to read this book it is also the real 'story' within this novel that makes this a quick read. Thalia Chaltas has offered a wonderful story about abuse, honesty (more so with yourself), strength and so much more. You don't want to miss this novel.

I picked *Because I Am Furniture* off a cart of books being processed this afternoon and started paging through it. I was a little put off by the "in verse" style, but after reading the book jacket, decided to give it a try. Wow. Although this is a heavy subject, the book is easy to read. I am in awe of Chaltas's storytelling; every word counts and there is no filler. We are in Anke's head, and it's not

an easy place to be. She is vaguely aware of the abuse her father piles on her mother and two older siblings, but the family is in a conspiracy of silence. She understands that it's pathetic to feel left out of the abuse, but one can't help what he or she feels. Being spared means being ignored, being ignored means being worthless. Entering high school, she defies her father by joining the volleyball team. This decision has unforeseen consequences on the entire family. Once Anke discovers her sense of self-worth, she becomes a force to be reckoned with. Highly recommended!

Can you break the patterns of abuse in a household of five where there's only one person willing to admit the truth about what goes on behind closed doors? *Because I am Furniture* is heartbreakingly real. I was profoundly moved by these poems and curious to discover how well a novel-length story would be told through them in a way that would appeal and speak to young adults. It's been a while since I immersed myself in writing and reading poetry. It felt very good to get back into it and see how forceful and powerful poems can be in conveying raw human emotion, longings, fears, and honest thoughts we'd rarely, if ever, say aloud... I was worried when I checked this book out of the library that I might find it more of an experiment on the page of breaking a prose novel into lines and calling them poems, but I was pleasantly floored by this poignant poetry and how well-crafted each piece of the story is--lyrically and in a literary sense. *Because I Am Furniture* reminded me how beautifully naked emotion and serious conflicts can be arranged on the page as well as how essential it is to keep in mind that every word, every syllable counts. I needed such jarring evidence that we do a major disservice in whatever we write if we add fluff to cushion the blow or water down the stark reality and piercing pain that exists in real life. I found myself praying for victims of all types of abuse as I read this. That's the only way I could keep going when I know that there are people who are actually living in such terrifying situations as this one. The fear of speaking out against the perpetrators of such horrifying acts is quite tangible in this novel, as is the heartache of someone who carries the burden of seeing what's going on and knowing it needs to stop, but who isn't sure how to end the vicious cycle in effect.

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