

Heroine

Mindy McGinnis

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Mickey Catalan and her friend were driving one day when the two got into an awful car accident, leaving both of them in need of serious medical attention. Mickey's surgery leaves her in excruciating pain, so her doctors prescribe her OxyContin for a while. She starts out taking it as prescribed. She takes one more frequently. She takes a couple more per hour. Then the pill bottle is empty. The hospital won't prescribe more, so Mickey has to turn somewhere else to get her relief. Mickey thinks she's in control, just trying to stop her pain, but is she calling the shots? Or are the pills?

I was always aware that there was an opioid epidemic going on for the past four years, but all this time it's served as a sort of background noise for all the other problems with the world. But the problem is much worse than it seems. Mickey's journey going from a varsity softball player to a drug addict was so awful but so captivating. The saddest part about the plot is that it's such a familiar story from the news. Thousands of kids and athletes were spiraling out of control the same way Mickey was, going from star athletes with bright futures, to struggling addicts trying to regain control.

The book was a sort of harsh reality check. It is an incredibly dark story which is not for the faint-hearted, and the unfortunate reality is that the story is extremely realistic. Dark as it may be, however, I did love reading it. It is one of the most fascinating stories I've read and it did an amazing job bringing light to the current climate. Though the crisis has been put on the back burner due to the spread of COVID-19, this book brought the problem back to the foreground for me, inspiring me to stay informed about problems that no longer get as much media attention.

I wouldn't recommend this book to anyone who cannot handle darker stories. However, for those that can, people of all ages may enjoy this book. In terms of language, this book would be great for 13-16-year-olds or those in eighth to tenth grade. I wouldn't give it as a gift unless the recipient has a strange fascination for such issues.

Recommendations

Not a Drop to Drink – Mindy McGinnis

High Achiever – Tiffany Jenkins

Turtles All the Way Down – John Green