

AFTER



Young Adult

By Amy Efaw

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Book Summary:

A fifteen-year-old girl goes through a trial and is incarcerated for abandoning her newborn baby in a nearby dumpster.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains mild profanity; violence; self-harm; and inexplicit sexual activities.

2/5

Teen Guidance
BookLooks Review Rating

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26	Dr. Kleins's rubbered fingers gently probe toward Devon's private place, spread its skin apart. Devon bites her lip. "Oh," Dr. Klein says suddenly. "The umbilical cord. It's still here, Cheryl." She takes a deep breath. "She's shoved it up inside herself." "So, the placenta hasn't been delivered," Cheryl states matter-of-factly.
32	"You'll be Somebody for both of us," her mom would say. Not anymore, Mom. Everything's changed. Now, for me "the sky" isn't anything but flat and gray and too far away to ever reach.
56	"I know, for instance, that you recently had a baby, and that the baby was found in a garbage can behind your apartment."
58	And wishes, truly wishes, that she could say the same herself. Because hurting herself would be so much easier.
99	This story has a twist. Her paintbrush is a razor, and her canvas is her wrist.
138	"That you continued to hide this pregnancy for the next eight months-" "No!" "- and then, when the day finally came that you gave birth, you attempted to hide that evidence, too. You put the baby in a trash bag and tossed it in a garbage can and left it to die!"
144	"So, how many times did you- the two of you- have sex, Devon?" "Just that once," Devon says softly.
145	"So, you only had sex one time?" Dom asks. ..."And did you- the two of you- use any kind of protection? A condom? Or-" Devon turns to look at Dom, sharply. "No!"
146	His muscles strong and safe, his hands gentle. His lips touching her face, her lips touching his. She lies back, pulls him over her. Their eyes, so much there. Their hearts beating, their breaths matching, only fabric between them. Her hands. Stroking his hair, his cheek, his back. Her eyes close then, her mind turns off. She lets herself fall away. Lets her body take over.
168	...she could stab someone. Karma had hinted at it the other day, hadn't she? You can kill someone with a pencil, she'd told Devon. There's lots of ways to do it. She could stab me, Devon realizes suddenly. Devon thinks of Karma's scars, her impulsiveness. She could stab herself.
178	"If you can bleed- see it, feel it- then you know you're alive."
183	"...She used my spork, the part she broke off of it, to cut herself!..."
231	"Well, my first thought was that it was a cat stuck in there or something. So, I placed the bag back down on top of the other bags that were still in the trash can and ripped it open. Inside I found a white towel all covered with blood. And inside that was a newborn baby."
232	"It was sort of bluish white. I specifically remember its lips; they were almost entirely blue, like it had sucked on a blue lollipop or Popsicle or something. It was trembling pretty violently. And screaming for its life."
248	Her hands tremble. She tosses the clippers aside. They skitter across the linoleum, collide into the bathroom cabinet, spin once, and finally stop. Devon is breathing,

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	<p>hard and fast. The cord is cut. Sitting on the bathroom floor, a growing puddle of bloody fluids beneath her. She sees the cord dangling from her insides, the blood pulsing out of it—whoosh, whoosh, whoosh—matching her own heartbeat. She pushes the length of cord back up into herself.</p> <p>IT is there, too. Also between her legs, but on the floor. Pushing with ITS feet, jerking ITS knees into ITS chest, up and down like convulsions. Twisting ITS face, the squinched mouth rubbing at the floor like IT'S searching for something. And screaming.</p> <p>Screaming, screaming. Like a siren, urgent.</p> <p>The horrible cramping starts again, stabbing pain rolling across her gut. She bites down on her lip, hard. Clutches her stomach.</p> <p>"STOP!" Devon drops her forehead to her bent knees, sobs. "STOP IT! STOP IT! JUST STOP IT! PLEASE!"</p> <p>Finally the pain fades. Devon lifts her face from her knees, panting. Swipes away the sweat that's dripped down her face. Looks around herself, at the frightening mess.</p> <p>IT is still there on the floor, still screaming. Searching and squirming between her feet in its own bloody fluids.</p> <p>Devon reaches for the wrinkled, red thing. Her hands, two pieces of herself, grasp IT. Pull it up by where IT screams, the tiny face between her palms, small like a grapefruit. The legs kicking.</p> <p>Devon pushes her hands together ever so slightly. The small face, so fragile. So loud. She could squeeze it silent.</p> <p>Instead she screams, "JUST SHUT UP!"</p> <p>...She pulls herself up. Carefully lifts IT over the counter. Lowers IT down toward the basin.</p> <p>But the intense cramps come again, rip across her abdomen. She cries out.</p> <p>IT is slick; the slippery body slips from Devon's grasp. The body slides into the sink with a thud. The head, unsupported, snaps back. Slams into the faucet. Drops down, following the body, down into the sink.</p> <p>Devon shrieks. Yanks the towels from the towel racks, the bath mat from the side of the tub, the hand towel. Throws them all on the floor to soak up the mess. She limps out to the kitchen for a trash bag.</p>
250	<p>The scene is still there, lingering in her mind. Between her hands, she'd held IT tightly. But then IT was gone, slipped from her grip. The neck limp, no strength there, can't hold the weight of the unsupported head. The head slams into the faucet, catching the rim of the sink on its way down. The sound, it echoes now in Devon's mind. The sound of something soft hitting something hard.</p>
286	<p>Dr. Bacon nods. "Of course. Devon's primary painful reality—or the event that triggered everything else that followed—occurred when she first engaged in sexual activity. When she denied this fact to herself—the fact that she ever had sex at all—then the natural extension of this primary denial was avoiding the subsequent reality. This subsequent reality was the resulting pregnancy from that one sexual encounter."</p> <p>"But, Dr. Bacon, in today's society, teen sexual activity is rather rampant. TV, movies, and popular music generally portray sex as something positive, an</p>

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	experience to strive for. So why would Devon feel so negatively about having engaged in sexual activity herself?"
287	"...Devon's mother was generally very open about sexuality."
292	<p>IT is there. The legs moving. The hands. The mouth opened and howling. She hesitates a moment, watching. Then drops the towel over IT. She holds her breath and pulls the towel upward, scooping with both hands, IT snug inside. Looks down at the open black trash bag, bends at the waist, and places the bundle into it. Grabs the wastebasket beside the toilet. Dumps it. The stripped toilet paper roll and tampons she'd used to try to stop the blood from running down her legs, they tumble into the bag, too. She lugs the bag into the kitchen... ...She ties the bag shut. ...She closes her eyes, drops her bag in with the others. Places the lid back. And quickly turns away.</p>

Profanity	Count
Ass	2
Bitch	1
Dick	1
Fuck	3