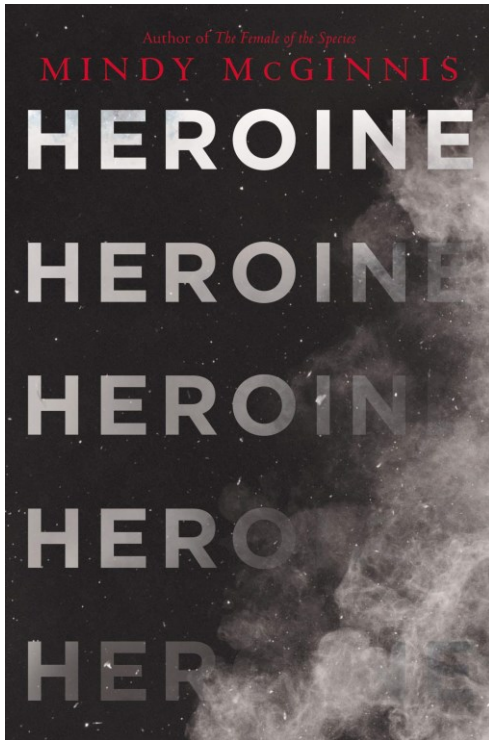


# HEROINE



*Young Adult*

**By Mindy McGinnis**

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## Book Summary:

A teenage girl becomes addicted to oxycontin and heroine after sustaining a sports injury.

## Summary of Concerns:

This book contains drug abuse; alcohol use; profanity; and sexual commentary.

**3** / 5

**Minor Restricted**  
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
29	"...Can I rub your back? How about your vagina?"
30	<p>"Damn," Bella Right says, spotting the lineup of orange bottles on my dresser. "That's some serious pills, girl." She picks up one, reading the label.</p> <p>"Oxy." She whistles. "Nice."</p> <p>"For real?" Bella Left asks, reaching over my stomach for the bottle. She takes it from Bella Right, shaking the little white tabs inside. I keep the leftover smile on my face pasted on.</p> <p>I pop one of those twenty minutes before I need to get up, relying on the warm fuzzies it provides to push me through the pain and get me on my feet. I couldn't even get a shower if it wasn't for the Oxy, and my teammates tossing the bottle around like a scuffed-up softball sets me a little on the edge.</p> <p>"You could get some serious cash for these," Bella Left says, eyeing my dresser.</p> <p>"Like, maybe even a new car."</p> <p>...A scuffle ensues, ending when Center gives Left a titty twister that makes even me cringe, and I've still got some Oxy in my veins.</p>
32	<p>"All I'm saying is, at a dollar a milligram-"</p> <p>"Dollar a milligram?" Carolina interrupts.</p>
39	It was supposed to come out light, like when I told her to suck my dick in Spanish. Instead the words sounded hard, all my pain going into them.
50	<p>"You're going through withdrawal," I shoot back, which isn't clever or accurate, but I've never been good at conversation with strangers.</p> <p>"No, because I got my prescription," she says, holding it up. "Or Betsy's, really. But you don't care where it comes from, do you?"</p> <p>..."Here," she says, unzipping her massive purse, which has three photographs of what I assume were her grandkids slipped into plastic pockets on the side. Her arm disappears inside the purse up to her elbow, reemerging with a little white pill, which she puts into my hand, folding my fingers around it.</p> <p>"First one's free because you're breaking my heart," she says. "After that it's a dollar a milligram. Dosages start at ten, but I'm betting you already knew that."</p>
52	I'm going to call this woman- Edith- who is apparently now my pill supplier.
59	I don't know how to buy drugs, don't know what I'm supposed to say to her, or if there is bargaining involved.
67	"Is this like a sixty-nine thing?" she calls after me. "I know what that is."
71	Our second baseman, Lydia, is also the point guard. She gives me a full-on hug, chest pressing against mine. She's given a few solid attempts at convincing me I'm a lesbian but hasn't had any luck. Carolina gives me a smirk from the corner where she's on the leg press anyway.
77	"Smart tends to go out the door when sex is involved," Ed says, pulling his own stool underneath him on the other side of the counter.
83	Time is against me, and I'm not at my sharpest thanks to the double shot of Oxy I just did in the bathroom.
94	<p>"I'm not a junkie," I say, too fast.</p> <p>"Right," Josie says. "Tell yourself whatever, but if you want to stay happy you'll need to up your milligrams. You've built up a tolerance to the 30s."</p>

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	<p>"What do you take?" I ask her.</p> <p>"Right now I'm popping two 80s twice a day."</p> <p>She takes way more than I do, and she looks like all her shit is together. If I did two 80s I'd be dead to the world, floating on my bed and high as hell. But Josie drove here, and doesn't fumble with her phone or have to search for words when she speaks. Me, I'm still working on putting together complete sentences in social situations when I'm one hundred percent sober.</p> <p>"What do you think I should do?" I ask her.</p> <p>"I'd say go to 40s, but that's not much of a bump. Buy a bunch of 60s too. Edith tell you about chewing them?"</p> <p>"Yeah."</p>
101	<p>"Addict," she says, cutting me off.</p> <p>..."Recovering," she manages.</p> <p>We've never touched before, but when I slide my fingers under hers and she drops the pill, slick with her spit, into my hand, I feel like I know her better than anyone in the world.</p> <p>I slip into the bathroom to take it myself.</p>
127	<p>"I'm even better at scanner codes than I am at blow jobs," she says, sucking on her fork.</p>
131	<p>"The county doesn't pay Edes shit," Josie says. "So she supplements her income with the old people's meds..."</p>
153	<p>The loser gets to go home and take an Oxy.</p>
157	<p>Josie almost does a spit-take with the whiskey that she's sipping, and over in her chair, Edith lets out a snort.</p> <p>..."That's the Oxy," Josie says, wiping her chin clean of a dribble of whiskey.</p> <p>...I ask Josie, who is crushing an Oxy with the base of one of Edith's Precious Moments figurines.</p> <p>..."Somebody told me if you snort it, you get high faster," Josie says.</p>
158	<p>"I crushed up forty," Josie says.</p> <p>I lean over the table, unsure. "I guess you just plug one nostril and snort, right?"</p>
163	<p>"Josie wants us to show her how to snort," Luther says. "Check your texts."</p>
167	<p>Being so damn happy on a Saturday when you're high and with friends is one thing; going through withdrawal two days later while trying to perform on the diamond is another.</p>
173	<p>"I'm getting good at hiding things," I admit quietly.</p> <p>"Like what?" Carolina asks.</p> <p>Like pain. Like fear. Like dead people's Oxycontin prescriptions.</p> <p>"Dick pics from your boyfriend," I say.</p>
225	<p>"Party with some Baylor kids. Just drinking, nothing else," he adds, like he's afraid I'll get my hopes up.</p>
226	<p>"Do you want these?" Luther asks, holding his palm out to me.</p> <p>...I hug him. It's spontaneous and a little awkward, since I'm grabbing for the Oxy at the same time. But it works out.</p>
227	<p>"That's one pill, between the both of us. Even if we snort it, all it will do is-"</p>

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228	<p>She's quiet for a second, eyebrows furrowed together as she watches me make short work of the pill.</p>
232	<p>I Stop cold. Jadine is pulling needles out of her purse. They're on a roll like lottery tickets, and sealed in paper like a Band-Aid. It looks sterile and proper, like we're playing doctor or something. But this isn't a hospital, and Jadine is no nurse. Josie has gone white, but she does what her sister says. mixing the Oxy I already crushed with water, then filling a syringe.</p> <p>"Okay, so," Jadine says, as she flicks the syringe. "This is actually really simple. Look at my arm."</p> <p>She holds it out, thin and white, her veins easy to spot when she makes a fist. She tells us how to find a good vein, how to make sure it won't roll, how to tell if you're in it or not.</p> <p>"Who's first?" she asks, needle in hand.</p> <p>Josie and I look at each other, and Jadine laughs.</p> <p>"Look, kids, all the needle does is take out the middleman. The Oxy goes Straight into your bloodstream; you don't have to wait for it to get absorbed."</p> <p>It's pure logic, not taking into account the wicked edge of the needle, the slant of the tip and the drop of Oxy-infused water glimmering there. Jadine doesn't mention the tearing of our skin when it goes in, or the hole left behind from where we crossed that line. Jadine glances at her phone. "I got to go, guys. Either help you out or you fumble around poking each other after I leave."</p> <p>That does it for me, as I imagine Josie's shaky hands or Edith's soft, unfamiliar ones having a go at the inside of my elbow. At least Jadine knows what she's doing. I roll up my sleeve and do as she says, making a fist, then watching as she finds a vein. She shows us how to pull back on the syringe So we see the blood flowing into the water, proof we've hit a vein.</p> <p>I'm used to waiting for my Oxy, and I almost enjoy those ten minutes or so of anticipation, knowing that relief is on the way and all I have to do is relax and enjoy it. But then Jadine pushes the plunger and I get everything, all at once, pure bliss in a rush that almost lifts me right up off the ground.</p> <p>Fuck waiting.</p> <p>One glance at my face and Josie is rolling up her own sleeve, though she doesn't watch as her sister finds a vein and does the same for her, using a new needle. She makes a small noise, something in between either ple4sure or pain, and I don't know if it's because of the poke or what comes after.</p> <p>"Better?" Jadine asks, rubbing the inside of her sister's arm almost tenderly.</p> <p>"Better," Josie agrees automatically, her voice soft and dreamy.</p> <p>"How 'bout it, Edes?" Jadine asks, but at some point our host has dropped Off to sleep in her chair. Jadine gets to her feet, tearing Off a few more needles from the roll in her purse.</p> <p>"I'll leave you a few, sis," she says. "Thanks for the ear, and let me know when you're ready to graduate."</p> <p>"Graduate?" Josie looks up from the string of needles tossed across the table.</p> <p>"To heroin," Jadine calls over her shoulder.</p>

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249	<p>"When's the last time you talked to Josie?" I ask him. "When she called Derrick a pussy because he didn't want to go to a crack house for her," Luther Says. "I'm not in a big hurry to see her again."</p> <p>I think of Josie, the loss in her eyes when they left, the shaking of her hands as she positioned Jadine's needle.</p> <p>"She didn't mean it," I say. "She was just—"</p> <p>"Strung out. Yeah, I know," Luther says. "Josie hits it too hard."</p>
257	<p>"So," she says, "remember what my sister said about graduating?"</p> <p>"To heroin, yeah. No way," I tell her.</p> <p>"I know, I know." Josie rolls her eyes. "You've got this whole, 'but I'm not a druggie' thing going on."</p> <p>..."But you're already doing heroin, you know that right?"</p> <p>..."Oxy is basically heroin, babe," Josie says. "I looked into it."</p>
259	<p>"Fine, instead of leading you to knowledge I'll spoon feed you. Look, Oxy is basically synthetic heroin, just in a pill form. The only difference between them is the delivery system."</p> <p>"Also one is illegal and one is not," I contradict her.</p> <p>"Uh, you really think the way we've been using Oxy is okay? We're not taking our own pills; we're buying other people's. And that is illegal."</p> <p>"My doctor wrote me a prescription—"</p> <p>"For Oxy," Josie interrupts, "which is heroin. Then your prescription ran out and you found someone who would fill it. You're basically already doing heroin, Mick. You're even using a needle."</p> <p>"Once," I correct her. "I have used a needle."</p> <p>"Fine," Josie admits. "But chemically, it's the same drug. The way you're getting it is illegal. You've got experience with the needle. The only difference is, it's cheap."</p> <p>"Cheap?" My ears perk up. With Mom already on the lookout anything valuable coming up missing, I'm headed for a hard-core withdrawal in a day, at least.</p> <p>"Yeah, cheap," Josie says, flipping another page to a column of numbers. "I talked to Jadine. Her guy said he can hook us up with someone here and we can get a balloon for maybe ten bucks or so."</p>
261	<p>"...I guess a few years ago Viagra made some pens that look like a dick, and if you know the right people—"</p>
280	<p>"Mickey and I shot up last week." While that's not exactly true- we did use a needle, but we weren't doing heroin- the looks on the boy's faces leave me without words, my usual resting place.</p>
285	<p>That's the one thing about being a natural leader: people look to you even in situations you don't know shit about, like just because I have absolute command of a diamond means I should make the call on who is going to shoot heroin first.</p>
286	<p>I make a fist.</p> <p>I find a blue line.</p> <p>I break my skin.</p> <p>I puncture a vein.</p> <p>I pull blood up into the syringe, watch it dissipate for a moment, a part of my body outside of myself, diluted in heroin, drowning.</p>

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	<p>Then I plunge. I am suspended in warmth, elongated like my blood in the barrel, dissipating. I am wholly without pain or caring, even when I vomit. The act itself is almost graceful, robbed of its unnaturalness as everything in my stomach makes its way to my mouth as if that were only to be expected.</p>
292	<p>When Bella Right lost her virginity she told us all about it at Lydia's house, detailing it to a degree left nothing to the imagination and answered most the lingering questions any of us had, except for one. "How did you feel the next day?" Carolina as "That's always my thing, you know? Like, how can I just get up and use the bathroom and brush my teeth drive to school and talk to Mom without thinking t whole time, I'm not a virgin anymore?" Bella Right only shrugged. "You just don't. It's supposed to be this big life-changing thing, right? But it's not. You've still gotta pee, and eat and go to school do all the same shit the next day just like you did the one before. Only difference is a guy's dick has been in you. And you know what? By third period it's like wasn't even a thing. I had sex, but oh well..."</p>
300	<p>I wish it felt as good as being high.</p>
303	<p>All I know is that there's an important game coming up, and we need to win. And that means I need some heroin.</p>
304	<p>"Damn, Catalan," Coach says, pulling the chest protector away from me. "We're going to have to tighten this. Where'd your tits go?"</p>
306	<p>Edith hasn't mentioned her buddy with the hookup again, apparently happy to let us shoot up anybody's heroin as long as we do it at her house.</p>
307	<p>Right now there's no one to grab the rope, no one to take the rush away from me. So I load a little extra in the syringe, and I to far, far higher than everyone else.</p>
310	<p>Thursday morning I'll still high when my alarm goes off.</p>
322	<p>Part of managing my heroin habit is keeping my door closed.</p>
336	<p>I just did a whole drug deal on my own. My dealer even fronted me the stuff.</p>
340	<p>There's a puddle of shit where my heroin is supposed to be and I don't know if it's salvageable.</p>
350	<p>"You want heroin, right?" "Yes," Josie and I say at the same time. "So..." He pulls something out of his pocket, a little white baggie with a stamp of a cat's face on it. "Black tar," Josie tells him. "That's what we want." ...He jams the bag back into his pocket, offended.</p>
352	<p>...where we dump the bags on the coffee table and Google for advice on how to shoot powder. ...Josie is drawing up a needle for herself when Derrick and Luther come busting down the stairs,...</p>
354	<p>"Whatever," Josie says, plunging her syringe. Her head rolls back.</p>
356	<p>Need anything? Yes, I fucking do. I need every balloon he's got and I need it right now so that I don't have to think about what just happened.</p>

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357	<p>"Out at the truck stop?"</p> <p>"Yeah."</p> <p>"No good. That's some bad shit they sling out there." "You think?" I snap at him, my voice cracking. "So Josie and Derrick and Luther, they all shot it, but I still had some of your stuff so I did that instead so I'm okay, but they're not. They're all dead."</p> <p>"Uh-huh," Patrick says, like the reiteration of the fact is mildly boring. Josie would be so pissed if she knew.</p> <p>"So what do I do?" I ask, sniffing.</p> <p>"Nobody knows you were there, right?" "No," I agree.</p> <p>"Then you're fine. Cops'll just say, look, bunch of kids OD'd. Another Friday." And it kind of sounds like that's how Patrick feels about it too, like "stay safe" was just his catchphrase, not actually a motto.</p> <p>"But what do I do?" I ask again.</p> <p>"Shit, I don't know, Mickey. You're shooting heroin. people die. That's it."</p> <p>"That's not it," I argue, useless words that only make his more powerful.</p> <p>"Look, do you want anything or not? I missed three calls talking about this."</p> <p>"FUCK YOU!" I shout so loudly my spine vibrates. "My friends are fucking dead!"</p>
358	All he wants to do is smell me heroin to get me through this and if I had any cash on me at all right now I would call him back.
359	<p>"Focus on the good things."</p> <p>I would love to.</p> <p>But I don't have any heroin.</p>
362	She might have Oxy. It might be enough to get me through the game.
365	"And a junkie!" I yell back, anger erupting. "She was a fucking junkie."
373	My own sweat looks sickly to me, heroin leaking out of my pores.

Profanity	Count
Ass	11
Bitch	2
Dick	5
Fuck	46
Piss	15
Pussy	2
Shit	61