



SPEAK by Laurie Halse Anderson

FSquare Fish, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, 2011

ISBN: 9780312674397 (Trade Paperback)

*Age Range: 12-18

BOOK SYNOPSIS

From 2023 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award laureate Laurie Halse Anderson, the groundbreaking modern classic *Speak* is a bestselling National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature with more than 3.5 million copies sold.

"Speak up for yourself—we want to know what you have to say." From the first moment of her freshman year at Merryweather High, Melinda knows this is a big fat lie, part of the nonsense of high school. She is friendless, outcast, because she busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, so now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. Only her art class offers any solace, and it is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party: she was raped by an upperclassman, a guy who still attends Merryweather and is still a threat to her. Her healing process has just begun when she has another violent encounter with him. But this time Melinda fights back, refuses to be silent, and thereby achieves a measure of vindication.

In Laurie Halse Anderson's powerful novel, an utterly believable heroine with a bitterly ironic voice delivers a blow to the hypocritical world of high school. She speaks for many disenfranchised teenagers while demonstrating the importance of speaking up for oneself.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "In a stunning first novel, Anderson uses keen observations and vivid imagery to pull readers into the head of an isolated teenager. . . . Yet Anderson infuses the narrative with a wit that sustains the heroine through her pain and holds readers' empathy. . . . But the book's overall gritty realism and Melinda's hard-won metamorphosis will leave readers touched and inspired." —*Publishers Weekly*, **starred review**

★ "An uncannily funny book even as it plumbs the darkness, *Speak* will hold readers from first word to last." —*The Horn Book*, **starred review**

"A frightening and sobering look at the cruelty and viciousness that pervade much of contemporary high school life, as real as today's headlines... The plot is gripping and the characters are powerfully drawn... a novel that will be hard for readers to forget." —*Kirkus Reviews*, **pointer review**

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“Melinda's pain is palpable, and readers will totally empathize with her. This is a compelling book, with sharp, crisp writing that draws readers in, engulfing them in the story.” —*School Library Journal*

“A story told with acute insight, acid wit, and affecting prose.” —*Library Journal*

“Melinda's voice is distinct, unusual, and very real as she recounts her past and present experiences in bitterly ironic, occasionally even amusing vignettes. . . . Melinda's sarcastic wit, honesty, and courage make her a memorable character whose ultimate triumph will inspire and empower readers.” —*Booklist*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Michael L. Printz Award - Honor
- A *New York Times* Bestseller
- A National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature
- American Library Association Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adults
- American Library Association Quick Picks for Young Adults
- Books for the Teen Age, New York Public Library
- Golden Kite Award for Fiction
- *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* Blue Ribbon Award
- American Library Association Best Books for Young Adults
- An Edgar Allan Poe Award Finalist
- Kentucky Blue Grass Award
- NYPL Books for the Teen Age
- *BCCB* Blue Ribbon Award
- Golden Kite Award Winner
- PA Carolyn W. Field Award
- California Young Reader Medal
- Edgar Allan Poe Award Nominee
- ALA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adults
- *Booklist* Editors' Choice
- *School Library Journal* Best Books of the Year
- ALA Best Books for Young Adults
- *Horn Book* Magazine Fanfare List
- A *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize Finalist
- A *TIME Magazine* Best YA Book of All Time
- A *Cosmopolitan Magazine* Best YA Books Everyone Should Read, Regardless of Age

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Laurie Halse Anderson response to challenges to *Speak*](#) (via madwomanintheforest.com)
- [Speak Classroom Guides and Resources](#) (via madwomanintheforest.com)
- [Speak Hands-On Activities and Social Projects](#) (via madwomanintheforest.com)
- [Speak Teaching Units](#) (via madwomanintheforest.com)
- [Speak Playlist](#) (via madwomanintheforest.com)
- [RAINN \(Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network\)](#)

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- [CNN.com “Speak author: ‘We as adults struggle to talk to kids honestly about sex’”](#)
- [Entertainment Weekly “Speak turns 15: A chat with author Laurie Halse Anderson”](#)
- [BookRiot.com “15 years of SPEAK: An Interview with Laurie Halse Anderson”](#)
- [TIME Magazine “She Spent 20 Years Teaching Teens About Sexual Assault. Now She’s Sharing Her Own Story”](#)
- [BookRiot.com “8 YA Authors On The Enduring Impact Of SPEAK”](#)
- [School Library Journal “Laurie Halse Anderson Discusses Censorship, its Frightening Impact, and the Need for Conversation](#)
- [Watch this video of Laurie Halse Anderson](#)

***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book’s intended use.

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