



ELANA K. ARNOLD

Interest Level: Grades 8-12

Reading Level: Grade 6

Lexile: 900

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Lerner 

# WHAT GIRLS ARE MADE OF

## Description

When Nina Faye was fourteen, her mother told her there was no such thing as unconditional love. Nina believed her. Now she'll do anything for the boy she loves, to prove she's worthy of him. But when he breaks up with her, Nina is lost. What is she if not a girlfriend? What is she made of? Broken-hearted, Nina tries to figure out what the conditions of love are.

## Selected Critical Acclaim

- National Book Award for Young People's Literature **Finalist, Short-listed, 2017**
- Children's Book Committee at Bank Street College Best Children's Book of the Year, **Winner, 2018**
- New York Public Library Best Books for Teens, **Winner, 2017**
- Chicago Public Library Best of the Best Books, **Winner, 2017**
- School Library Journal Best Book, **Winner, 2017**
- Kirkus Best Teen Books of the Year, **Winner, 2017**
- Amelia Bloomer Project List, **Winner, 2018**
- Best Fiction for Young Adults Top Ten, **Winner, 2018**
- Golden Kite Award, **Winner, 2018**
- Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) Choices, **Winner, 2018**
- ILA Young Adults' Choices, **Winner, 2018**
- California Book Awards Finalist, **Short-listed, 2017**

“Pair this with McGinnis’ *The Female of the Species* for a nuanced look at the complications of girlhood.”—*The Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books*

“[D]escribes all things ‘girl’ in the brutally honest way. . . . Teen girls should read this book, even if it is not easy.”—*VOYA*

“Smart, true, and devastating, this is brutally, necessarily forthcoming about the crags of teen courtship.”—*Booklist*

“Arnold interweaves myriad landscapes . . . into a narrative wholeness that is greater than its parts. Unflinchingly candid, unapologetically girl, and devastatingly vital.”—*starred, Kirkus Reviews*

“The author presents a hopeful conclusion as Nina learns that self-love and fulfillment can be found through helping others. Because of its complex symbolism and graphic imagery, this well-written novel is best suited to mature YA readers.”—*School Library Journal*

“Stunning in its honesty and depth, *What Girls Are Made Of* unapologetically examines the strength, determination, and vulnerability of girls. This book is for anyone who is a girl, was a girl, or wishes to glimpse the interwoven beauty and pain that comes with being a girl. With gorgeously spare prose, Elana K. Arnold has created a masterpiece that is

sure to live long in the memory of readers.”—**Brandy Colbert, author of the Cybils Award-winner *Pointe***

“Finally, finally, a book that is fully girl, with all of the gore and grace of growing up female exposed. Arnold’s gorgeous prose takes us to all sorts of places to show us what girls are made of: a high-kill animal shelter, an abortion clinic, a bridge to nowhere that adventure seekers bungee-jump from, and all the way to Italy, to the sites of classical and religious art, where our narrator Nina learns the sacred tradition of how stories are told via the contortion and pain of a woman’s body. If you’re looking to enter the mind of a girl navigating sex, love, and her own physicality, look no further than *What Girls Are Made Of*.” —**Carrie Mesrobian, author of the William C. Morris finalist *Sex & Violence***

“Beautifully written and evocative, *What Girls Are Made Of* fearlessly examines the courage and struggle of being a teenage girl in the modern world. With a deft hand, Elana K. Arnold opens up a conversation about how girls survive as a whole when they are too often acknowledged only for their parts.”—**Christa Desir, author of *Other Broken Things***

“We think we know what girls are made of. But not always. And Elana K. Arnold removes the veil—which is as gory as often as it is gauzy. *What Girls Are Made Of* shows the true, beautiful, and confounding complexity of women. This one will rip your heart out.”—**Martha Brockenbrough, author of *The Game Of Love and Death***

“Taught by her mother from an early age that unconditional love doesn't exist, Nina has no reason to doubt it—even her relationship with the boy she’s crazy about is dependent on what she can give him. But when he unexpectedly dumps her, leaving her heartbroken, she turns toward other sources for support. Arnold weaves short stories into her tale of a girl finding her way toward cherishing herself and finding her place in a larger, often violent, narrative of girlhood.”—**B&N Teen Blog**

“Realistic fiction at its most touching, following one young girl’s struggles to make her way through the world using a broken frame. Her attempts to free herself from that limitation, and to discover the truth beyond, make for a compelling and heart-wrenching journey . . . *What Girls Are Made Of* doesn’t flinch away from stark presentations of a struggling teen, from her sexual activity to her mother’s unflinching coldness and struggles. The novel is start, but relatable, and Nina’s final confrontation with her mother leads to both a frustrating—and perfectly fitting—end.” —

***Foreword Reviews***

“takes an honest and hard look at what it means to be a teenage girl today.” — ***Los Angeles Review of Books***

Sixteen-year-old Nina volunteers at a high-kill animal shelter, lives for her boyfriend Seth and is acutely aware that her parents' love for her is conditional. She's an unflinching observer of her curated, suburban world but only begins to confront its rules when Seth abruptly dumps her. A raw, unflinching novel that resists easy answers. — ***Minneapolis Star Tribune***