



## Children's Book and Media Review

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### After

Anna Swenson

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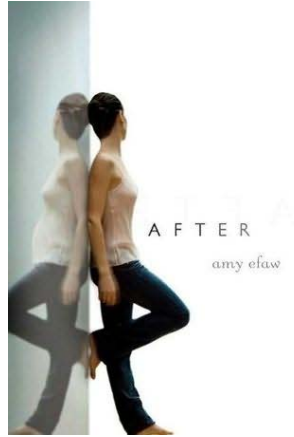
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Eflaw, Amy. *After*. Viking, 2009. ISBN 9780670011834. \$17.99. 350 p.

Reviewer: Anna Swenson

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fiction; Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Pregnancy--Juvenile fiction; Infanticide--Juvenile fiction; Denial (Psychology)--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Devon is a mature, straight-A student with a dream of playing soccer in the Olympics. So why would she leave her own baby in the trash to die? *After* allows the reader to follow Devon as she deals with the consequences of her actions. Readers come to their own conclusions about Devon as a human being as she goes through the processes of denial, realization, and redemption. Eflaw carefully explores the psychological aspects leading up to the event and takes the reader through the legal and moral consequences of attempted murder. Devon slowly comes to terms with her actions, and it is almost impossible to not feel compassion for this poor girl.

*After* is thought provoking and delves into heavy material, like the "dumpster baby" phenomenon, that most books shy away from. This book turns preconceptions on their head and brings a new perspective to the situation. Eflaw does not say Devon should not be punished for making this mistake, but she does not condemn her either, which is the true triumph of *After*. Eflaw's writing style is wonderful, and although Devon can be empathetic, she is a real character that the reader can truly connect with. *After* is a wonderful, unique, and intense story, recommended for any young adult.

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