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Faking Normal

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Book Review

Title: Faking Normal

Author: Courtney C. Stevens

Reviewer: Lisa Packard

Publisher: HarperCollins

Publication Year: 2014

ISBN: 9780062245380

Number of Pages: 321

Interest Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding



Review

Alexi has a secret. One that she'll never tell. She deals with her pain and guilt by scratching her neck and counting the spaces in her air vent. As she's trying to deal with her pain, a boy from school that everyone calls the Kool-aid kid moves in with her family. Although everyone makes fun of Bodee (the Kool-aid kid) and thinks he's weird, Alexi befriends him. He listens and understands her. She knows she's safe with him and they quickly become best friends. Alexi eventually tells Bodee she was raped by her sister's fiancé. As Bodee is trying to convince her to tell her family, Alexi slowly falls into despair until she realizes she can't do it anymore. When she tells her sister, Alexi receives the comfort she's been craving. Bodee and Alexi start dating and continue to help each other be strong. Alexi no longer needs to count the spaces in her air vent; she can count the kisses Bodee gives her instead.

Stevens does a wonderful job of telling a story about a young woman overcoming a traumatic event in her life. While you never know what exactly happened to Alexi, you just know she's hurting. And you only learn the full story when Alexi is able to admit to herself and her family. When Alexi finally overcomes her fear and speaks up, you want to cheer for her. As you come to know Alexi, you can see the changes she makes and how hard it was for her. Even Bodee has some amazing developments as well. He may not be the main character, but he is security and sanctuary. Stevens even includes a little "Dear Reader" letter at the end to help any person struggling to know that they can overcome their fears and hardships. She does a wonderful job of bringing to light the sadness and feelings anyone would be going through after such a traumatic event, and how to be strong despite of it. This is a wonderful book because it shows you that you don't need to hurt yourself or keep things secret. It's not your fault and you don't have to carry that burden with you. Although this is a sensitive subject, *Faking Normal* is a great read for any boy or girl going through something traumatic, or those individuals who would like to understand their peers more.