



2010

Tell Me a Secret

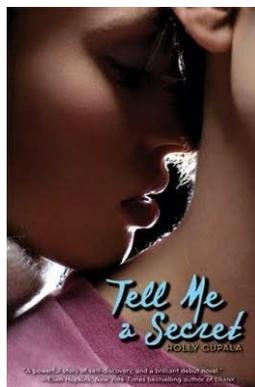
Debbie Barr

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Cupala, Holly. *Tell Me a Secret*. HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 9780061766664 \$16.99. 292 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Pregnancy--Juvenile Fiction; Secrets--Juvenile Fiction; Family problems--Juvenile Fiction; Books--Reviews;

Stuck in a family that's still in pieces after her sister's death, Miranda Mathison has ways to cope. A boyfriend, a best friend who is uncannily like her dead sister, and dreams of attending art school, keep her going. Everything goes wrong, though, when she finds out she's pregnant. Her friends and boyfriend abandon her, and her controlling mother is furious that Miranda wants to keep the baby. As punishment, she is no longer allowed to apply to art school. When Miranda tries to make amends with her boyfriend, she goes into a dangerously early labor. After the birth she lives at the hospital, hiding from her parents and her old life, taking care of her tiny NICU baby girl. While there, she realizes that she must forgive those around her and let go of the past if she wants a good future for her daughter. In the end she returns to her parents and finds another art school to attend, taking her baby with her.

Tell Me a Secret is a powerful and unique novel about teenage pregnancy. Though books about this subject can sometimes feel tired and overdone, Cupala stayed away from stereotypical characters and situations, and instead created a beautifully written and emotional story. Miranda is a likeable character, despite her flaws, and readers will enjoy seeing her grow and develop right along with her baby. The depth of her interactions with other characters, including her mother and supposed "friend" Delaney, add richness to the plot. Though not everything is completely resolved in the end, the book ends on a note of forgiveness and hope for the future.

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