



2010

### You Are Not Here

Debbie Barr

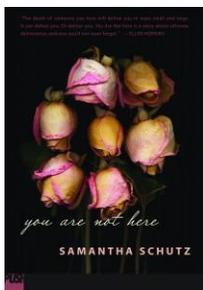
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Schutz, Samantha. *You Are Not Here*. PUSH, 2010. ISBN 9780545169110. \$17.99. 295 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fiction; Contemporary Realistic Fiction;

Subject: Loss (Psychology)--Juvenile Fiction; Grief--Juvenile Fiction; Death--Juvenile Fiction; Books--Reviews;

Annaleah thought she was in love. Brian swept her off her feet, into a romantic and daring but secret relationship. Then Brian dies unexpectedly, and Annaleah cannot seek comfort with his family or his friends. She is alone. She spends weeks in grief, visiting Brian's grave every day, talking to him, looking for signs, and trying to understand why he wanted to keep the two of them a secret. One day she thinks he's trying to tell her to get a job. She does, and meets Ethan, a cook at a pizza parlor. He is friendly, and likes her, but Annaleah is confused. Can she really move on? Finally she realizes that she'll never know why Brian acted the way he did or what would have happened with their relationship. She can't change that, though, and so she learns to continue on with her life, even though it is hard.

Schutz has written a beautiful story in verse. She addresses the issues of death and heartbreak well. *You Are Not Here* deals with surprisingly complex issues, not just the death of a boyfriend, but also trying to understand bad relationships and why people have disappeared from our lives. Though the pacing is a little slow and the issues heavy through the first half of the book, the story and characters are redeemed by the end, making this a thoughtful read. Some content and language make this book would fit best for mature readers.

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