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# Cut Me Free

Lisa Packard

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# Book Review

**Title:** Cut Me Free

**Author:** J.R. Johansson

**Reviewer:** Lisa Packard

**Publisher:** Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers

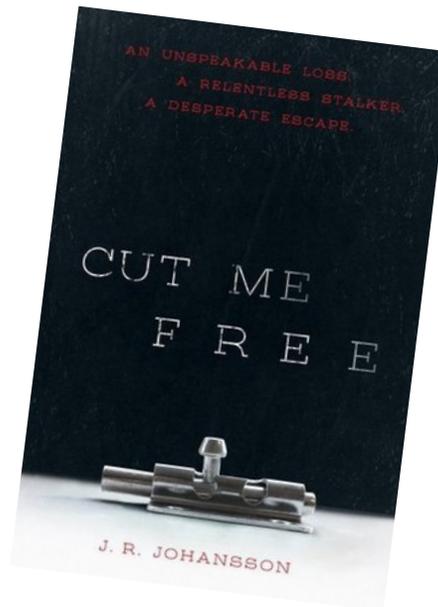
**Publication Year:** 2015

**ISBN:** 9780374300234

**Number of Pages:** 295

**Interest Level:** Young Adult

**Rating:** Outstanding



## Review

Piper has barely escaped with her life from the Parents. She runs to Philadelphia to start a new life and meets Cam. He helps people that are in trouble to start a new life with a new name. Piper is now Charlotte. As she starts to trust again, especially Cam, she notices things around her that no one else does. One day she sees a little girl with burn marks and cuts all over her body being dragged around by a man. Charlotte follows them and sets the girl, Sanda, free but in the process kills her captor. Charlotte doesn't understand the feelings she has for Cam and doesn't want him to get hurt, but she has to continue to trust him and have his help—especially now that she has a stalker that knows her real name. Mysterious boxes keep showing up at her house with the name 'Piper' carved into them. Cam and Charlotte soon discover that Brothers, Sanda's captor, didn't die and is now trying to hurt Charlotte and Sanda. They track him down and he ends up getting killed. Charlotte and Sanda are safe and Cam and Charlotte can be together.

Because of its premise, *Cut Me Free* would appeal mostly to teenagers, especially those who are interested in law enforcement or a social career designed help those who are less fortunate. Although the police are not very involved in this book, the reader can still benefit by learning to be observant of his or her surroundings. The author demonstrates Charlotte's attentive abilities by sharing her point of view in the text. She takes in her surroundings and listens to her gut to keep her safe, even if it sounds crazy at first. Through the characters interactions, the audience can learn how to read even the most closed off people—a skill that can be practiced and translated into real life situations. The author does an excellent job of portraying Charlotte's contrasting and heightened emotions. For example, when she feels safe everything seems happier and friendlier to her, but the moment she is frightened she feels trapped—as though everyone is out to get her. This book will inspire others to be kind to those around them, and to help when you can. Charlotte risks a lot by saving Sanda and putting herself out there and trusting Cam, but because Cam is always kind, gentle, and patient with Charlotte, she trusts him and knows he is safe. Johansson teaches a vital lesson of standing up for yourself, even if there might be unpleasant consequences. Although readers may not be in a situation like Charlotte, they can still learn the value of confronting bullies and facing hard things that come at them in life. One detail that may be off-putting to parents or teachers is that the characters, despite their dangerous situations, never turn to local law enforcement to help them. It is important to understand that for this fiction piece the author chose to enhance the suspense and action of the story by having his characters independent of law enforcement, however that the police are here to protect and in real life situations readers should look to them for help.

\*Contains mild language and moderate to severe violence.