Top Ten

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Book Review

Top Ten

In a tangled story about two kids from separate castes in the high school ecosystem, Katie Cotugno unravels the complicated mentality behind teenage relationships. Gabby Hart, second daughter of suburban-bliss family, struggles through high school with crippling anxiety. An unlikely freshman-year party crosses her path with Ryan McCullough, freshman hockey star. During the four most turbulent years of childhood, Ryan and Gabby support each other through divorcing parents, panic attacks, breakups, and hospitalization. In the end, they try to date, but find that the true beauty of life, their true love, lies in being best friends.

Top Ten is definitely a young adult novel, with an audience of all high school students. It successfully tackles hard-to-address subjects up front and without apology. However, there is a high concentration of dramatic situations that, while it may make an interesting plot, may have a negative effect on teenage perspectives of life. This book normalizes behaviors such as teen sex and teen drinking. Ryan and Gabby are unique characters that are developed to the point that they become alive to the reader, but the rest of the characters are a little underdeveloped as a result.

*Contains severe language and severe sexual content.*