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Wintergirls

Ruth-Anne Brown

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Reviewer: Anna Swenson  
Reading Level: Young Adult  
Rating: Outstanding  
Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction;  
Subject: Anorexia nervosa--Juvenile fiction; Death--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

*Wintergirls* starts out in the mind of eighteen-year-old Lia, as she learns that Cassie, once her best friend, is dead. Lia is 99 pounds and struggles to lose weight by eating less than 500 calories a day. Lia does everything to prevent her family from knowing about her anorexia. She fiddles with the bathroom scale, sews quarters into her bathrobe, and gorges on water before her weekly weigh-ins. She smears tomato sauce on her lips before her family comes home and splatters food in the microwave. Lia is constantly haunted by the 33 messages Cassie left for her before she died. Cassie appears to Lia as a ghost, constantly calling for Lia, her wintergirl, to join her. Meanwhile, Lia's body starts to shut down. When Lia's step-sister Emma finds her in the bathroom with a blood covered knife and cuts all down her body, Lia is rushed to the emergency room. Cassie continues to haunt Lia after she returns from the hospital, and Lia retreats to the motel Cassie died in. She passes out after taking a lot of pills. When she wakes up, she walks slowly into the room Cassie died in. Cassie is sitting there on the bed, ready to welcome Lia to the other side. Lia tells Cassie she is sorry and struggles to stay alive as she goes to office and calls her mother. *Wintergirls* ends with Lia beginning to "thaw" as she gains more weight and stops hating herself.

Anderson hit the mark with this chilling novel. The characters are fully-dimensional and Anderson's writing makes the story outstanding. Fans of her previous works won't be disappointed, as *Wintergirls* is just as good, if not better, than *Speak*. Lia's twisted logic throughout the book makes it all the more chilling as the story takes on huge waves of emotion and family strain. This book is definitely unforgettable and recommended to any young adult.

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