



Hannah's Voice

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School officials suspect abuse. Church members are divided—either she has a message from God or is possessed by a demon. Social workers interrupt an exorcism to wrest Hannah away from her momma, who has a tenuous grip on sanity.

Hidden in protective foster care for twelve years, she loses all contact with her mother and remains mute by choice.

When Hannah leaves foster care at age eighteen to search for Momma, a national debate rages over her silence.

A religious movement awaits her prophecy and celebrates her return. An anarchist group, Voices for the Voiceless, cites Hannah as its inspiration. The nation comes unhinged, and the conflict spills into the streets when presidential candidates chime in with their opinions on Hannah—patriotic visionary or dangerous radical. A remnant still believes she is evil and seeks to dispatch her from this world.

Hannah stands at the intersection of anarchists and fundamentalists, between power politics and an FBI investigation. All she wants is to find her momma, a little peace and quiet, and maybe some pancakes.

One word would put an end to the chaos... if only Hannah can find her voice.

Hannah's Voice Details

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From Reader Review Hannah's Voice for online ebook

Matt Sinclair says

Hannah's Voice has all the elements of a "best of the year" book: It's an engaging, entertaining story; it has a wonderfully interesting lead character; and it provokes the inquisitive reader to think deeply about what's going on in the story. For less inquisitive readers, the entertainment is still there. As Hannah, who chose at age six to stop talking because no one believed that she was telling the truth, comes of age, she discovers that people will inject their beliefs and opinions into everything, whether someone says something or not.

J. Leigh says

This author took on a challenging topic and with a lot of room for potential offense to readers. He handled it masterfully. I'm a fully committed Christian and I found his descriptions of some of the extreme characters to be humorous and, sadly, accurate on many levels.

This book was deep, beautiful, and it left me feeling as though Hannah would forever be a part of my life. The conclusion is not easy or rushed. The ending left me with a sense of satisfaction mixed with bittersweet emotions for all that Hannah faced in her young life.

My hope is that this book will be discovered and possibly made into a screenplay in the future. I encourage you to treat yourself to a copy of Hannah's Voice. You'll thank me.

Lanette Kauten says

All great art should have three essential qualities: It should either entertain or be aesthetic in some way. It should be provocative. And it should be relevant to the culture and preferably with timeless themes. Robb Grindstaff's HANNAH'S VOICE has all three of these qualities.

Hannah Cross is an honest but precocious six-year-old girl who wants to be believed when she tells the truth, and she doesn't want to be in the spotlight. She doesn't get either wish, and over the course of a week she stops talking. If she doesn't talk, no one will accuse her of lying. If she doesn't talk, she can't cause problems. But quickly her church becomes divided over her silence and problems come to her door. One faction believes she has visions and is a prophet of God. The other is convinced she's possessed with a demon, and a exorcise gets interrupted when the police and Child Protective Services steps in and whisk her away to foster care, separating little Hannah from her momma.

Ten years later, Hannah still doesn't talk, but every night she prays to be reunited with her momma. Through a series of events, the controversy surrounding her suddenly resurges and gains national attention. Now with the impending Presidential election, two factions wanting control of Hannah and her voice as their icon start to divide the nation. All she wants is to be left alone, find her momma, and have some pancakes.

The theme of truth is explicit and richly woven into Grindstaff's prose. Hannah brushes her teeth vigorously when she's a young child so no lie will stick to her teeth. And she stops talking because answering the same

question three or four times doesn't make the truth any truer. However, she's exploited for other people's agendas, and for them the truth is subjective and can be subverted for the "greater good" of their end goals. Since this novel has a political component to it, in addition to the obvious religious one, the theme of truth and the twisting of such for ideology expose the ugliness of placing agenda ahead of virtue. This contrasts beautifully with the people in Hannah's life who live a life of truth and simple righteousness and love Hannah as the girl she really is.

Robb Grindstaff's writing is pure, and free of the hyperbole and love for one's own words that often get in the way of a good story. His deft handling of the character and personality of Hannah at two distinct stages in her life showcase his mastery of language and characterization. He carefully chose each word to show the ten year difference in Hannah's life while staying true to who she really is. That is no small feat.

I only had one issue, which I hesitate to bring up. As with some of the characters in the novel, I am offended by the use of the Lord's name in vain. The usage is rare, and in one spot is both ironic and necessary. With the exception of that one caveat, HANNAH'S VOICE is breathtaking and a rare treat. And I can't help but wonder with religion being a major part of the novel and with Hannah's selective mutism if the author chose her name because of the Biblical Hannah who had a son by the name of Samuel, meaning "God has heard".

Colleen Ray says

I'm not sure why everyone seems to be so enamored with this book. It's ok, but I was often pretty bored throughout the story. Nothing much happens until the last quarter of the book, and it's all written with little emotion. I will say that it accurately portrays many fundamentalist religions as well as extremist social organizations, and colors both as dangerous to the core beliefs on which America was founded.

Ruth Hill says

I think it is safe to say that this will be unlike any story you have ever read, and this poignant, intriguing story will probably stick with you quite some time after you finish it. It is haunting, thought-provoking, and probably contains more truth about the state of our country and world than we would like to admit.

Let me put out one warning. There is some profanity--some of it rather "hardcore." Let me be honest here. The author used a lot of the profanity in such humorous ways that sometimes I was not even offended. There were other times that I was offended, but it pointed out hypocrisy within the various characters. I will admit that I could have done without some of it, but I was able to tolerate it.

I was so completely drawn into this story from the beginning, and the author certainly kept me guessing about various details from time to time within the story. And he thankfully tied up the loose ends by the end of the book--very much appreciated! This is a fairly quick read, but it packs a pretty powerful punch.

Speaking from a Christian perspective, I was not offended at the portrayal of Christians within this book. So many "Christian" people are church-going hypocrites who put down people and live "like the devil." I was quite amused at the depictions of these people and genuine impressed by the pastor and other genuine people in the church at the beginning of the story. It is never preachy, but you will find much truth in this book. I

definitely recommend this book to the vast majority of my readers.

I was sent a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review. I was not financially compensated, and all opinions are 100 percent mine.

JenniferJ says

It's only March but this was one of my best reads of 2013 so far! Hannah is six years old and has stopped talking. Nope she hasn't "lost" her voice she just has decided that no matter what she says nobody is going to believe her or pay her any attention anyhow so why bother? I must say after what this child went thru I can't say I blame her not one bit!

This book scared the crap out of me and it has nothing to do with The Wrath of God or even The Hounds of Hell but the pure stupidity of some folks and how easily this story could actually be a reality for some. Folks take her silence in many ways drastically in some instances to the point the poor child is removed from her home and placed in foster care! Some think she was struck silent with a message from God while others feel she needs an exorcism performed on her for fear she is possessed by a demon. All poor Hannah wants is her mom and to be left alone. Just goes to show how far things can get out of hand when you leave things up to extremist.

Marked By Books says

This book was absolutely incredible. Probably the best part about it was how perfectly the author captured Hannah's thoughts at each point in her life: six, sixteen, and eighteen years old. Each age felt so authentic, but still distinctly Hannah the whole way through.

While I liked the later parts of the book the best, I have to say that the thoughts of an inquisitive six year old girl were much more entertaining. Just the things that Hannah noticed and came up with on her own were amazing, but everything still always sounded like it was coming from a young child. It was really interesting to try to see the world through her eyes. Everything made absolute sense, but I kept thinking to myself, "Huh, I'd never thought of it that way before."

When I first started reading, I was a little nervous considering how it began. Usually, when books start with the "big reveal" in a prologue on the very first page, it doesn't leave the reader much to look forward to. This book, however, is the very epitome of the journey being more important than the destination. After getting all the way through the book, I can completely understand why the author chose to do it that way. Had he not given the readers a little sneak peek, it might have seemed anticlimactic and ridiculous instead of very fitting.

But he doesn't just end it there, in what would seem like a nice place to tie things up. Had this novel been just about the fact that Hannah wasn't talking anymore, it just might have been. It wasn't; that was what the entire world was focused on, everyone except for Hannah, that is. To her, it wasn't about some life changing message she had to pass on to everyone around her; it was about getting back to her life, and opening her mouth wasn't going to change that.

So the story continued, at least for a little while. Those final few chapters were my favorite because things

were finally starting to look up for Hannah. I really liked how the issue with her mother was handled because it explained her behavior so well, without making me dislike her for how she had acted when Hannah was a child.

The final page was the best, though. Some part of me keeps saying that it may have been a little cheesy, and that part is probably right. It doesn't really matter, however, because cheesy or not, it was exactly what the novel needed. Hannah's entire journey had been epic, and as I saw that the book was coming to a close, I was wondering how on Earth something like that could be wrapped up well. Somehow, the author managed to pull it off, and I can't possibly imagine a better way for him to have done it.

Out of all of this, the thing that amazed me the most was how willingly people are able to distort the simplest of things into some crazy idea that they just couldn't let go. It's like they see something that may in some way support what they're saying, and then suddenly they're making excuses for it and twisting it into their own image to make it fit. They want to believe something so badly that they'll take the most easily explained of circumstances and make it the most complicated thing out there just to prove a point that doesn't really exist. Suddenly a little girl's silence speaks volumes louder than any words ever could, yet it never seem to be saying the same thing to anyone.

Taylor

For the original review and more, please visit [Marked By Books](#).

Gregg Sapp says

When I was a kid and wanted to torture my siblings or worry my parents, I used to zip my lip, clam up, and refuse to speak a word. For the small effort of simply holding my tongue, I could drive my entire family to distraction – what was wrong?, what did I want?, why wouldn't I answer them? As a device for attracting attention, silence was far more effective than begging, arguing, threatening, or throwing a tantrum. It was also just a bit devious.

When the young lead character of Robb Grindstaff's "Hannah's Voice" chooses silence, she seems to do so not because she wants something, nor to hide from anything, nor, even, to play for sympathy or to make some kind of a point. Instead, when asked a repetitive question, she simply seems to calculate her options and reaches the reasonable decision that saying nothing is the most sensible thing to do:

"I raised my eyes to meet his. Blue eyes. Bright blue. Pretty blue eyes, but they were also red, like mine after I go swimming at the city pool. I started to speak, to ask why she would make up a story like this, why she hated me so. Was it because I always won the spelling championship? But I didn't say anything. I'd told him the truth. Saying it again wouldn't make it any truer. If he didn't believe me the first time, or the second time, why would he suddenly believe me if I said it a third time."

On the surface, "Hannah's Voice" is an engaging, fast-paced story with a clever, unique premise, a likeable cast of characters (and equally reprehensible villains), with an emotional core that tugs on the heart strings. And, at that level, the book succeeds admirably. Reading through several online reviews, I find any number of ardent and sincere testimonies from reader who were touched, emotionally, by Hannah's pluck, optimism,

and goodness in the face of extremely trying and downright peculiar circumstances. In places the story rather strains credulity, but even so, Hannah deserves her happy ending.

However, approaching this book as literal narrative misses what I surmise to be the author's more intriguing designs. "Hannah's Voice" works at a couple of levels. It is possible to read it as a kind of contemporary Christian parable, or a broader social allegory, or as a mischievous satire on faith and innocence. Personally, I think that the more rewarding interpretation is the latter, for it gently lampoons the mindset of today's "post truth" society, wherein simple, straightforward honesty like Hannah's is so rare that folks just can't process it.

When Hannah says that all she wants is pancakes, that's what she means, no more or less. Doesn't it?

T.C. Slonaker says

This book was so riveting and well-written, it should be a classic. The character of Hannah is original because her interactions with almost everyone else in her life never convey what is going on within her. She is completely misunderstood throughout the whole book, and so the reader feels her frustration. Her voice has become an absent secondary character that we miss and long for its return, to save the day by explaining herself.

The beginning of the book is set when Hannah is a six-year-old child. We immediately deduce that Hannah is really a brilliant girl, but is surrounded by many adults who don't take her seriously. They can't comprehend her maturity. Maybe because I have a daughter who is six (and also one named Hannah!) I cried even before the end of the first chapter and continued through most of the book. I wanted to shake the adults for misunderstanding her and treating her wrongly. But it also made me appreciate characters such as her father (in flashback appearances) and Brother Ronnie, the only ones sane enough to understand her and comfort her. Later, she is able to find this same comfort in Daniel, another mistreated youth.

Looking at mental illness (or selfishness) from the perspective of a child was humbling. It made me look at myself and realize that sometimes I don't give my own kids enough credit for knowing what they know. Adults can be so wrapped up in ourselves, we don't see the rapid growth in the spirits of our children.

As the book progressed, we find many more characters in Hannah's life that also range from the self-centered ones who need her only to use her and exploit her selective mutism to benefit their own causes, to others not completely accepted by society who seem to accept her for who she is and see the normalcy in her. Hannah, of course, clings to the latter, while not always hiding from the former.

When I began the book and saw how much fundamental Christianity was involved, I was excited as a Christian to see how religion affected Hannah's life. Many of her religious leaders as a child completely let her down. A Christian needs to read this with an open mind, more as a reminder of how we shepherd children in Christ's love, like Brother Ronnie, rather than the others who did not see the person of Hannah at all. It was a reminder to focus on the importance of individuals over what may be perceived as "the great good." I would also like to note that Biblical references in the book were very accurate.

Another note to Christians who might read this work, there are several instances of vulgar language. It made me blush, but it contributed to the reality of the circumstance which Hannah faced. A reminder of the world

we are in and need to face, even when we want to put our head in the sand.

Bravo to this author for an excellent work.

Nai says

We all choose to read books for different reasons, thought perhaps not as extreme a choice as Hannah's silence, choosing what to read can be tough.

The central 'voice' (or in this case lack of one) ties the entire story together brilliantly. Robb Gridstaff is an amazing author working with Evolved Publishing, and you should definitely check out his work. There are many reasons people quit talking, quit engaging and try to take a step back from the world at large.

Sometimes, and I think in the case of Hannah, the world is simply too much to deal with, and we all need a break. Or, maybe we all just need to feel like there's some aspect of our life we can control. For Hannah, it's her voice. For the rest of us, it can be many things. For me, it's music and writing. When I do those two things, I know I have a piece of the world only I can control and have access to.

In this case, I'm not sure why it took me so long to start the book, as it was an astounding read, and a book I would recommend far and wide.

Upon further recollection, I probably needed to be in the right head space. Some of the religious and social issues the book deals with (unbelievably well) are really tough issues. I wasn't sure from the synapses what stance the book would take, but the openness, and brilliant writing that allowed the reader to form their own conclusions on some aspects was a pleasant surprise.

I think, while there are many adult aspects of the book, it's the kind of literature that can reach out to many different genres. I'd give it to my daughter in highschool - if I had one, or son. I've already recommended it to a few people, and they've all picked it up and enjoyed it too. There will be something in this book for almost every reader, and that's why I gave it 5/5 stars on Goodreads.

Or was it Riffle? Or It's a Library Thing? There are so many book apps/networks to choose from. Soon, I'll even post about why I use what I do, and what's keeping me from jumping ship on some of the big name book sites. You know, when i find that magical time-monkey in the sky.

Today though, Hannah's voice will get all my attention.

When six-year-old Hannah's brutal honesty is mistaken for lying, she stops speaking. Her family, her community, and eventually, the entire nation struggle to find meaning in her silence.

School officials suspect abuse. Church members are divided—either she has a message from God or is possessed by a demon. Social workers interrupt an exorcism to wrest Hannah away from her momma, who has a tenuous grip on sanity.

Hidden in protective foster care for twelve years, she loses all contact with her mother and remains mute by choice.

When Hannah leaves foster care at age eighteen to search for Momma, a national debate rages over her silence.

A religious movement awaits her prophecy and celebrates her return. An anarchist group, Voices for the Voiceless, cites Hannah as its inspiration. The nation comes unhinged, and the conflict spills into the streets when presidential candidates chime in with their opinions on Hannah—patriotic visionary or dangerous radical. A remnant still believes she is evil and seeks to dispatch her from this world.

Hannah stands at the intersection of anarchists and fundamentalists, between power politics and an FBI investigation. All she wants is to find her momma, a little peace and quiet, and maybe some pancakes.

One word would put an end to the chaos... if only Hannah can find her voice. (From Goodreads)

My thoughts?

It didn't make me cry, and it only made me chuckle in sarcastic laughs. What it did do, was make my heart ache.

So why do I think you should read this book?

Simple, for a new perspective, and for a story with so many levels, and so much time and effort to draw you in and really develop a character who doesn't speak for most of the book. Does that mean Hannah regains her voice?

We clearly I'm not going to give that up, and that's just one of those things you have to read and experiences and find out for yourself.

I've been less active on my blog for a variety of life business reasons, but plan to release a number of reviews shortly. one book I'm very excited about reviewing is an ARC copy of The Dream Palace. I can't wait to share with you :) I'll also be taking part in the Blogger Book Fair and the upcoming Novel Publicity Tour for Along the Watchtower!

Orsayor says

Silence is Golden.....

Hannah's Voice is one of my surprise reads of the year. When I read Hannah's words – “I want the goddamn pancakes.” I knew this was going to be an interesting read. Author Robb Grindstaff's novel is, despite some controversial subjects, both thought-provoking and enjoyable. Hannah's Voice will stay with you long after reading this book.

I really enjoy discovering new authors to add to my Authors to Read. I highly recommend this book.

Gaele says

I have been mulling this review over in my head for days: every day I have a new approach, a new thought about the story, or a new idea that is the best thing ever about this story. There are so many things to adore about this story, which makes it more difficult to not miss an element. I should start by saying that this book will call to you if you put it down, it demands that you continue on the journey with Hannah, and doesn't allow you to savor it slowly. Were it not so beautifully written with a style that shows Robb Grindstaff as a wonderful storyteller, this would be a simple book to review. So unlike any other book I have read, yet so comfortable in its difference, it is safe for me to say that this is another of my favorite reads of the year.

Hannah is different from the other children in her community: with a father who lost a long battle with cancer and a mother who's ability to cope with the world was tenuous at best, this child grew up far too fast. She was a clever and artistic child, not comfortable with the company of other children, preferring to draw and take care of her mother to being singled out at school for her skills.

Like all children, Hannah has a singular thread of reasoning: if adults won't believe me when I tell the truth, for she always did, and their reactions cause trouble when I speak: then speaking is something I should not do to not be 'trouble'. As her silence becomes more noticeable, the community becomes alarmed, and the more fundamentalist members of the church start to take action.

Hannah is always silent but never without her own thoughts and opinions, her confusion, anger and sense of unjustly being used by those who should have known better: from the self-proclaimed Christian community, to the media to an "occupy wall street" type group founded by a trust-fund baby in an obvious in-your-face to her parents. The notoriety does little but bring danger to Hannah's door: fearful people are dangerous people, fearful fanatics are deadly.

What sits at the core of this story is Hannah's commitment to truth: and we see all of the variations and manipulations that are used to spin a belief into the "truth" that all should see from the other characters she encounters. Mixing religion, media and politics in a manner that feels very now and far-reaching , yet is wholly specific to the story of Hannah, Grindstaff has penned a novel that works on several levels to expose the fallacies in the "true story" and the way that belief is manipulated and influenced by belief, dogma and even a need for power.

There are no extras added to this story: each phase of Hannah's life is solidly voiced and appropriate for her age, showing small changes in perspective without losing the core of the child we first met. There is nothing added for effect: this is a beautiful story that will stir emotions and thoughts as you read, and will stay with you long after the last page.

I purchased a copy of this title for my own library. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

Lynn Worton says

Review 6*****

I received a copy of this book from the author for an honest review.

WOW!! This is an extremely touching story! I loved it!

Hannah is a wonderful character. She is a precocious six year old when the story begins, but picks up again 12 years later.

This is a fantastic story that had me on a roller coaster ride of emotion! I struggled to put this book down, as I was completely hooked with Hannah's tale. Hannah as a 6 year old is sweet and curious. However, due to an event where the truth is seen as lies, Hannah decides to stop speaking. I can understand why she did what she did, but I honestly don't know how she kept from speaking for so long! Twelve years is a long time not to utter a single sound. I struggle not to talk for 5 minutes, even if it's to myself! Selective muteness is usually due to trauma, but there are those who consciously decide not to talk; Hannah is one such person. This story has a few scenes that had me in tears, so be prepared with a tissue! There is an element of religion, but it is in context and is not preachy. The older Hannah has matured into a wonderful woman, who knows what she wants - to find her Momma. Oh, and to eat some pancakes!

Robb Grindstaff has written an amazing debut novel! To say this is his first novel, it certainly doesn't feel like it! The story flowed beautifully, and the pace of it never left me feeling bored. I would certainly read the next book written by this author. I highly recommend this book to everyone! - Lynn Worton

Melissa Storm says

This book was incredible! It has the distinct honor of being the second novel that made me cry upon reaching the end. The only other book that did that to me was my all-time favorite, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*. This book is amazing on every level--the characters, the plot, the religious and political implications and discussions, and the symbolism of pancakes (they're not just for breakfast, you know).

Hannah's Voice easily makes my top three reads of 2012--along with *Jellicle Girl* by Stevie Mikayne and *Wither* by Lauren DeStefano.

I only wish I could assign a star-rating to this book, but since I'm creating the book club guide, Mr. Grindstaff is my client, which means I'm not allowed :-)

Look for *Hannah's Voice* on January 15, 2013. This is an absolute must-read!

TAMMY CUEVAS says

Things have been going from bad to worse for six-year old Hannah. Her father passed away and her mother's actions are getting stranger. Their church is made up of some serious religious fanatics, and when half the church decides Hannah is demon-possessed and the other half believes she had a vision, all hell breaks loose. Hannah retreats behind a wall of silence until she's unsure if she can't speak, or won't. The officials step in and place Hannah in the foster care system, where she remains for twelve years. Meanwhile, fundamentalists

on both sides continue to use her as a poster child for their political cause. All it would take to end the chaos is for Hannah to find her voice.

There are books that are interesting, and then there are books that you just can't put down. This is one of those books. This story will follow the reader long after they have closed the book for the last time. The political aspect, along with the religious aspect, combines with the subject of the foster care system to create a timely novel. Not to imply that it is serious from beginning to end; there are moments that are laugh-out-loud funny. Having been raised in the South, I've known people like Mrs. Buchanan and the Stovers. Fortunately, I've also known people like Brother Ronnie and Sheriff Dunleavy and his wife. As the author points out in the interview at the end of the book, this is not a Christian novel, but a secular novel with characters who are Christians, and those who claim to be Christian, while also containing characters who are not religious. This is a good reflection of real life. Something in Mr. Grindstaff's writing style is reminiscent of Flannery O'Connor. He captures the quirks of Southern characters while maintaining their humanity. It would have been easy to write so many of these as stereotypical comical buffoons, but he avoided the easy way out.

Excellent novel; may offend some of fundamentalist religious backgrounds; strong language.

5 stars

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