



## The Stone Girl

*Alyssa B. Sheinmel*

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*She feels like a creature out of a fairy tale; a girl who discovers that her bones are really made out of stone, that her skin is really as thin as glass, that her hair is brittle as straw, that her tears have dried up so that she cries only salt. Maybe that's why it doesn't hurt when she presses hard enough to begin bleeding: it doesn't hurt, because she's not real anymore.*

Sethie Weiss is hungry, a mean, angry kind of hunger that feels like a piece of glass in her belly. She's managed to get down to 111 pounds and knows that with a little more hard work—a few more meals skipped, a few more snacks vomited away—she can force the number on the scale even lower. She will work on her body the same way she worked to get her perfect grades, to finish her college applications early, to get her first kiss from Shaw, the boy she loves, the boy who isn't quite her boyfriend.

Sethie will not allow herself one slip, not one bad day, not one break in concentration. Her body is there for her to work on when everything and everyone else—her best friend, her schoolwork, and Shaw—are gone.

## The Stone Girl Details

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Author : Alyssa B. Sheinmel

Format : Hardcover 224 pages

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## From Reader Review The Stone Girl for online ebook

### Cara Blevins says

Going into her senior year at a prestigious New York City all girls prep school, Sethie struggles with body image issues. As the year progresses, her emotional state and personal relationships degenerate as she becomes more and more obsessed with her weight and appearance.

When I received this book, I was interested to see how the author demonstrated the hot topic issue of eating disorders. They are not something I have faced personally, but I have seen their devastating effects on friends. I wish I could say that after having read it, I feel I have had a glimpse into the mind of a person who battles these demons, but I really don't.

This book was written in the third person, however we only see Sethie's point of view. I feel this was a serious detriment to my involvement in her story. If ever a story called out for first person narrative, this is it. The bigger issue for me, though, is that this book tried too hard to be too many things. While it's easy to say it's about a girl with an eating disorder, so little of the book is actually spent delving into her thoughts. A considerable amount of time is spent on the three significant relationships in her life, her boyfriend, best friend and mother. However, we still don't see enough of any of these to make a real connection.

I wanted to like this book more because I do feel the author can turn a phrase. She created a believable character in a flawed and interesting world. I definitely saw myself in some of her actions, I was that self-destructive teenager, but I left this book wanting. And not in a good way.

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### Kari says

Uncomfortable but realistic, The Stone Girl is an aching but beautiful tale of body issues and friendship. Though the third person point of view creates a different kind of connection to the book, especially one so character and relationship focused, it's still engaging in an inexplicable way and. I fell into this one right away, stunned by the depth of Sethie's hatred towards herself, even when she couldn't see it for what it was. Sethie's entire character arc is so well done, so intricate from start to finish, and the book closes at the perfect moment for the story.

Sethie is a character that, in all honesty, I can see a lot of readers hating. More than once I wanted to shake some sense in to her but here's the thing. She isn't just that oblivious girl who doesn't realize her boyfriend is less than what he seems, who doesn't realize he maybe isn't even her boyfriend at all but a guy that just uses her to get some. As a reader, yes, it's easy to see early that the reality with Shaw isn't what's in her head. It is frustrating? Yes. But here's the thing. I understood her. I got that essentially, Sethie is a girl who has such a small view of herself, so much built up self-hatred, that just having a guy who is willing to sleep with her means everything. He wants her, out of all the girls. It's her that turns him on. And even when faced with some even rougher truths about him, her reaction is something towards herself, towards what that must mean for her, rather than anything outward. This, I think, is what makes this book so potent, but also makes it one of those books that can be easily misinterpreted. This is one of those books, and Sethie is one of those characters, that is so flawed she is painfully realistic, the kind of authentic that you want to turn away from.

Then there's the eating disorder wrapped into the story, the way Sethie views herself, the fact that she hates

the natural curves a woman should have because those curves come from fat. Sethie isn't the kind of anorexic that weighs less than a Barbie. But she still weighs less than she should, she still punishes her body constantly, punishes herself for being hungry. A victory to Sethie is being able to skip a meal and not think about it, or being fine eating half a bagel with barely any peanut butter on it. And though as a reader, I know how much she's hurting herself, while reading, I understood that it made sense to Sethie, and therefore it made sense to me. Even more notable with this entire aspect of the story was that for Sethie, it just was. She didn't have a rough home life that pushed her into needing control of one aspect of her life. She didn't have a mom who made her feel imperfect all the time. She just had a different view of herself in her head, and it just... was. And honestly? I loved that aspect, because I do think there are a lot of girls who go through the same thing. Who can't adequately explain why they see themselves like that. If every eating disorder was the exact same, then I imagine treating them would be simple. But each case is different, and some of them are more mundane seeming, and that is showcased so beautifully in this book.

Adding another layer to the story is the note of friendship, of the goods and bads of it, of hurting someone and then figuring out how to make up for it. Jane is an amazing character for this, a girl who has a good head on her shoulders, even if she can be a bit selfish or show-offy at times. Understanding Sethie before anyone else does, she tests Sethie in some much needed, even if painful, ways. I loved watching the friendship form between those, particularly set against the backdrop of how Sethie views herself and her relationship with Shaw. And though Shaw is a character that you will probably want to kick in a certain painful place, he, too, has an honest realism to him and an essential role in the story. While instinct says what happens with him and Sethie isn't really that realistic, logic says that yes, unfortunately, it is. It's those kind of gray areas that are so perfectly woven into the story, the things that challenge even readers, that makes *The Stone Girl* a great and important read. Though hard to take at times, and certainly a bit of a train wreck to follow, this is a book that is, at its center, captivating.

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## **Neyra ♦ says**

### ***Actual Rating: No Stars***

I don't know whether I should be disturbed that Sethie's wasting away her life, or that NO ONE in her life seems to notice her obsession with food and weight loss. Smh.

I initially fell in love with this book, purely because of the cover, I mean look at it, it's gorgeous! Then the synopsis drew me in. I'd honestly thought it was a paranormal book because of the description, but once you get past the first paragraph, you start to realize this is realistic fiction. It's a book about seventeen year old Sara Beth Weiss, known as Sethie, and her struggle battling with weight loss.

Throughout the book her struggle became an obsession. I was disturbed on more than one occasion, and on so many levels. Actually reading this book made me feel FAT. I wanted to cry every time I looked in a mirror. I mean seriously, she's 5'4 and was 132lbs., but somehow Sethie got it in her head that she was fat and NEEDED to lose weight. So she drops to 111, but it's not enough.. it's never enough! At 5'4, I'd love to be 132lbs, I'd consider that healthy, so imagine my dismay when Sethie kept referring to herself as fat.. at 111 lbs!

I could have really enjoyed this book had there been more character development, and being realistic fiction, more credibility. We see Sethie struggle with her obsession while she's dealing with her every day life in

school, at home, with friends. But not once did I see much more interaction outside of Shaw and Jayne. Where was her mother the whole time? And the teachers? And though they were around her the most, didn't Shaw and Jayne notice something was wrong with Sethie? It isn't until the very end when finally her mother decides to step in, but at this point I just wanted to strangle her for not paying attention to her daughter more. And if she did, for not speaking up at all.

This was a very slow read for me, I kept putting it off. At one point, I almost DNF'd it, and being in third person narration didn't help one bit. Ultimately, I will not be recommending this book to anyone, I can't even give it a proper rating. The message that this story provides is not one that I'd want my loved ones to read about.

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### **Elizabeth Drake says**

This and other reviews can be found on [Reading Between Classes](#)

**Cover Impressions:** I do not believe that this cover would stand out on a shelf. It is not particularly unique. As for connection with the plot, the cover model doesn't look unhealthy or troubled and her expression does not evoke much of anything in the viewer.

**The Gist:** Sethie Weiss is determined. Determined to be the perfect, sort-of girlfriend for Shaw. Determined to ace the SAT and have her pick of colleges. Determined to control her body and watch the number on the scale drop lower and lower. She suffers from body dis-morphia and examines the other females around her, noting their perfect bodies and lamenting her own flaws. Sethie revels in feeling hungry and will resort to any means necessary to get rid of every last ounce of fat.

**Review:** *The Stone Girl* offers a glimpse into the mind of a girl not yet in the extreme danger zone but still, suffering from some major body (and self esteem) issues. While the book tackles a very serious and important issue, I don't feel that it accomplished anything that hasn't already been achieved by its predecessors.

The writing itself is very choppy and the sentence structure just doesn't work. The author seems to have an aversion to pronouns and sprinkles each paragraph with an abundance of names

"Sometimes he calls Sethie's father, who lives in California, for the money, as though it's the absence of a man that's making Rebecca late. But Sethie knows that like Shaw, Rebecca can't always be hampered by dates and times. Though her lateness isn't smooth the way Shaw's is. Rebecca's lateness is always messy, choppy, harried. Sethie knows the landlord would love an excuse to evict the tenants of 12A, Rebecca and her daughter, Sethie, the quiet girl who no one would have guessed might be a troublemaker."

This quirk is very jarring and interrupts the flow of the writing. I also question the choice of third person narrative for this subject matter. It is difficult to truly get inside Sethie's head and near impossible to see any type of growth by the novel's end. Were we able to experience more closely with her, we might have gotten a better understanding of the way her mind works.

As a character, Sethie is not particularly likeable. We are constantly reminded that she is smart, but never get to see this in action and instead are forced to watch as she makes a myriad of bad decisions and lets herself

be led around by the males in her life. I think I might have preferred the story if it had begun prior to Sethie's involvement with Shaw. That way, we could have seen her as a determined (if damaged) individual and would have been able to lament at her downward spiral. I did enjoy her budding friendship with Jane but the character seems to serve no other purpose. The other secondary characters are pretty forgettable, in fact, I had to keep going back in order to remember their names and Sethie's mom plays the chiche absentee parent who doesn't seem to have a clue what is going on with her daughter (or at least doesn't have the guts to do anything about it).

Despite these issues, the book was a sold 3 stars for me. That is, up until the ending. I don't want to give too much away, but it was simply too easy. Nothing had happened to make me believe that Sethie was about to take a step in the right direction and even her mother didn't make any brave moves toward saving her daughter.

As a final note, several times throughout the novel, Sethie mentions how lectures, books and articles on the subject of Anorexia and Bulimia had served as instruction manuals.

"Sethie is reading a memoir by a girl who was both anorexic and bulimic. She gets some good ideas from it ..."

"The only thing Sethie had ever gotten from these articles is tips on how to be better at dieting"

This is a personal fear that I have in putting books like these in my classroom. The last thing that I want to do is further aid a student in their self-destruction.

Due to the content and sexual nature, I would not recommend this book to my students and would probably steer them towards a book on anorexia that had more in the way of characterization.

#### **Teaching/Parental Notes:**

Age: 16 and up

Gender: Female

Sex: Described, but not graphically.

Violence: Self-harm

Inappropriate Language: Bitch, Ass, Fuck, Jesus Christ, Asshole

Substance Use/Abuse: Cigarette Smoking, Pot Smoking, Use of Cocaine, Underage Drinking

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#### **Felicia Chien says**

Book: The Stone Girl by Alyssa B. Sheimmel

Pages: 212

Genre: Young Adult

Source: Sent from Random House

Short Synopsis: Sethie is a complicated girl. She struggles with her weight but doesn't know how far is too far, and her relationship with the one boy she's loved, named Shaw is anything but what she expected it to be.

My Thoughts: A haunting tale of one girl's dream of being thin, and the struggles she deals with in everyday life.

Sethie Weiss is hungry, a mean, angry kind of hunger that feels like a piece of glass in her belly. She's managed to get down to 111 pounds and knows that with a little more hard work—a few more meals skipped, a few more snacks vomited away—she can force the number on the scale even lower. She will work on her body the same way she worked to get her perfect grades, to finish her college applications early, to get her first kiss from Shaw, the boy she loves, the boy who isn't quite her boyfriend.

Sethie will not allow herself one slip, not one bad day, not one break in concentration. Her body is there for her to work on when everything and everyone else—her best friend, her schoolwork, and Shaw—are gone.

--From Amazon

Sethie isn't your average girl. She gets perfect grades, a boyfriend who doesn't quite appreciate her the way he should, and is struggling with weight loss. She has a mother who is rarely at home, a friend named Janey who she adores, and a boyfriend she adores but isn't practically up to par.

The Stone Girl is a memorable story, of one girl's determination to look the best she can. The Stone Girl, written in a third person tone, took awhile to get used to, but once I got into it, was entertaining.

The main character, Sethie, has a lot of insecurities, and issues, but has everyone fooled thinking that she is okay, from her own mother, to her best friend, and to her boyfriend. What started out as something harmless as loosing a few pounds, became something so dire, and life threatening.

I was annoyed with the character of Shaw, as he seemed very self absorbed, and didn't even really care about what happened to Sethie, even though her condition was apparent.

Her best friend Janey, wasn't much better, as she teaches Sethie how to throw up, but acts like it was nothing, and continues on about her business. I also felt that Janey had no right to feel remorse for Sethie, as Sethie was struggling with her disease.

I wasn't too fond of the ending, and felt that Sethie and her friend Matt should have had a happy ending. Overall, this novel is filled with drama, serious issues, and one girl's determination. With unforgettable characters thrust into unique circumstances, and a story that readers will not forget.

Would I recommend this book: Maybe ( sensitive issues involved)

Rating: I give this book a 3.5/5.

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### **Pam Camel says**

"She feels like a creature out of a fairy tale; a girl who discovers that her bones are really made out of stone, that her skin is really as thin as glass, that her hair is brittle as straw, that her tears have dried up so that she cries only salt. Maybe that's why it doesn't hurt when she presses hard enough to begin bleeding: it doesn't hurt, because she's not real any more.

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([www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com))

This book is a pass. It reads as though it glorifies eating disorders. A character saying every girl goes through that stage, which just isn't true. Somewhat reads as a how too manual while no graphic details are given it does cover a character being obsessed with her weight and vomiting, restricting calories and being happy about it. This is the nature of eating disorders. It did accurately portray a person so deep in the disease that nothing else matters. The ending leaves much more to be desired. No real fall out ever comes from her dramatic weight loss which may send the wrong message to some.

While you are reading this book you keep waiting for the other foot to drop and something to happen it just never does. It is written very monotone with nothing to pull the reader into the story. This is one book to pass on.

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## **Kelly says**

2.5.

Sethie is a very broken girl. While she could easily be labeled as a girl with an eating disorder, her challenges are much greater. She's depressed and that is what causes her to become needy, to seek control when it comes to her body and her weight, to use drugs heavily, to become extremely dependent on her cheating boyfriend and a girl who is anything but a real friend to her.

I appreciated how Sheinmel wrote this in the third person, removing the reader from Sethie, just as she's so far removed from herself. I believe the representation of the eating disorder is fair and the experience authentic. This is a very blunt story, and the extremes Sethie goes to in both her weight control and in her drug use are explicit. She's a very sheltered girl and frankly, she doesn't know what she's doing. (view spoiler) That's probably what made this so disturbing to read (and I don't mean that in a bad way but in an honest way). She's a good character at heart, but she's painfully naive.

However, the story was flat for me. I never felt Sethie grew much. At the very end there's the start of an arc for her, but it didn't leave me with much. I found myself bored reading about drug use and about her hatred for her body. I needed more of her thought. More of her emotional struggle. The third person is tricky in that it does limit this aspect of a character's growth. More than that, though, I feel like I've read so many books that touch upon eating disorders, and they do them with varying levels of success. There should be a variety of books touching on topics like this because real life experiences ARE so varied, but this was one of the weaker ones. I wanted more than what I got, and I almost feel like Sethie herself deserved more, too.

This reminded me of Zailcka's memoir SMASHED from a few years back in terms of how the issues -- of which there are many -- are presented, in sort of a series of experiences, rather than a more solid and coherent narrative. It's a chicken and an egg situation, wherein the complicated spiral of depression-eating disorder-drugs-drinking are hard to tease apart from one another.

I wouldn't pass Sheinmel's book off to younger readers looking for an ED or book about a character dealing with depression; it's much more mature. But because of Sethie's voice, because of the writing itself, it reads quite young.

Ultimately, I think this will be forgettable for me.

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### **Jamie (The Perpetual Page-Turner) says**

Can't give a review as I didn't finish it but basically I stopped reading because I was so, so bored. The MC annoyed me immensely. The writing bothered me..which is weird because I don't recall ever having a hard time with 3rd person ever. Plus everything just seems so awkward. Choppy? That may be the word I'm looking for. But really..I poked around looking at reviews and asked others on Twitter and most everyone I talked to said they had a hard time with it and that it never really got better.

Sad...I always like a good "issue" book and I've enjoyed (err that seems strange to say) other books about eating disorders as I've struggled with what we'll call anorexic tendencies in high school and college.

So be warned..this is NOT a review as I did not read the rest of it. Rather, it is my short reasoning of why I chose to put it down.

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### **Bethany Miller says**

Seventeen-year-old Sethie has two obsessions in life. The first is to be skinny. She counts calories obsessively and has lots of rules for herself about what and when she can eat and drink. Her second obsession is her "boyfriend" Shaw. Sethie likes to think of him as her boyfriend although she knows she can't really say it out loud. Though they have an active sex life, he has never once held her hand in public. At home, it's just Sethie and her mom, who doesn't seem to notice that her daughter is becoming skinnier and skinnier. Sethie meets Janey through Shaw, and at first Janey is an ally in her quest to be skinny. She teaches her how to make herself vomit, so that she can allow herself to slip up once in a while. Janey's boyfriend is a student at Columbia and he introduces Sethie to his fraternity brother Ben. Ben genuinely likes Sethie, but he also is the first to see that she has a problem. As Janey and other people in her life begin to recognize this, Sethie withdraws more and more and eats less and less. Ultimately, Sethie's friends and family must make her come to terms with the fact that she has a problem.

Unfortunately, Sethie is a girl with issues that many teens will probably be able to relate to. Many teen girls struggle with body image issues and eating disorders. Janey remarks to Sethie, "Every girl goes through that phase, doesn't she?" Though that is a disturbing comment, it is probably as accurate depiction of how some teens view anorexia and bulimia. Because she lacks self-esteem, Sethie allows Shaw to use her for sex while deluding herself into believing that he is her boyfriend. This lack of self-esteem and desire to be loved at any cost is also something that many teen girls can relate to. Though realistic, The Stone Girl is not an easy or pleasant reading experience. The up close portrayal of a girl who is destroying herself is very disturbing. The present tense third person narration made it hard to connect to Sethie, and made the writing awkward and clunky at times. It is troubling that her mother seems so willfully ignorant through most of the book; however, it becomes apparent towards the end that Sethie has turned so far inward that she has become unaware of others. The book wraps up a little too quickly and easily (though I was certainly ready for it to be over). There are plentiful references to teen sex, drinking and drug use. For a stronger novel that deals with eating disorders, try Winter Girls by Laurie Halse Anderson.

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## **kb says**

I know this one was very hard to write but it just didn't connect with me~

*Note: I received a copy via Net Galley.*

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## **Janina says**

I have conflicted feelings about Alyssa B. Sheinmel's The Stone Girl. At the beginning, the third person present tense made it really hard for me to get into the story. Although the author might even have aimed for it, a story about eating disorders and self-harm told in an almost clinical way just wasn't what I was looking for. While I did get used to the writing style with time, it definitely made it hard for me to feel close to Sethie or even grasp her motivations, to understand her and – most importantly – like her. Not having any kind of experience with eating disorders myself, I really needed the possibility to relate to the main character to understand what she was going through – and why.

Yet, Sethie never really managed to make the jump from slightly annoying spoiled brat to likable, but troubled teenager. I could make out glimpses of her character, especially towards the end, but overall, while she didn't exactly remain pale, she still seemed somehow far away, not someone I could reach. And while I am not exactly proud to admit it, I loathed her in some moments. I have to say that I generally have a hard time empathising with characters that take drugs and/or drink a lot – I just cannot understand it because it's not something I am "attracted" to at all. At the same time, I couldn't believe how someone who is apparently so very smart could at the same time be so dumb and let a guy take away all her self-esteem and pride. How Sethie could believe he really felt something for her and not only used her as a means of some pastime amusement. And honestly, I expect a skilled author to be able to pull this off: to make a loathable heroine likable, to make me see reason behind seemingly incomprehensible decisions, to make me rethink my picture of someone.

While I do not really possess the knowledge to comment on the accuracy with which Sethie's eating disorder was portrayed, I found a few things hard to understand. First of all, Sethie and her friends consume weed on regular occasions. Basically, Sethie does nothing much but smoke pot with her so-called boyfriend, have sex, go to parties or think about her so-called boyfriend. On top of that, she barely eats – which I believe should definitely affect her ability to concentrate. Yet, she still manages to pull off the grades you need to get into an Ivy League college, her marks don't drop and she is apparently able to do all her homework with little to no effort.

Secondly, the ending really made me angry on behalf of people who suffer from eating disorders. It makes everything seem too easy, as if there is just this switch you have to flip, and most of the work is done. Also, I have to say that the overall focus on boys as both trigger and cure of the disease did not resonate well with me (I am not saying they are the only cause, but they play an important role).

In the end, though, I can't deny this book its certain addictive quality. I read it in a matter of a few hours, and despite the fact that I found it hard to sympathise with Sethie, I definitely had an urge to know what would happen to her, how her story would end. Especially after she befriended Jane – a character I really liked – I found it a little easier to come to terms with Sethie's destructive behaviour and began to hope she would be able to battle her disorder.

Still, The Stone Girl left me disappointed. While I can't fully claim it doesn't give an accurate portrayal of an eating disorder, it definitely didn't succeed in pulling me under and actually making relate to its heroine.

*Thanks a lot to Netgalley and Random House for the review copy.*

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### **Maggie61 says**

Well this book did have a lot of conflicting reviews, some rating it the highest and some the lowest. I am meaning toward the latter.

This is an extremely important and relevant issue with teens and adults, primarily female but can affect anyone. The author captures a lot of the classic symptoms of both anorexia and bulimia; the obsession with fat and the number on the scale. Sethie is obsessed with the fat around her waist and has the need to remain at 111 or lower, although no one weighing that amount will have a layer of fat at her waist. She has learned the tricks of making people think she already ate, or moving the food around and playing with it to make it look like she is eating or throwing it up if she overate. For the most part, she had a self hated and eventually she has the need to self mutilate.

So for the most part while this book captured so many of the issues of the disease, the writing style was what didn't work. It read like a grade school read. Sethie did this and Sethie did this. I didn't mind the third person writing so much as the juvenile way it came across. And her name Sethie? I couldn't get the image of a three year old boy out of my head. Apparently Ben thought the same as he never called her anything but Sarah Beth.

And what was with the people in her life? For the most part there wasn't anyone she could count on. Janey became her best friend and the person Sethie took her anger out on since she couldn't take it out on the one who deserved it. Shaw was just an ass, used her and when she realized they had the relationship that wasn't, set her spiralling downward more. Even Ben who was supposed to be the knight in shining armour, realizes she's in trouble and claims he cares about her, even he bolts. And mom, well she's just daft. And she has no other friends she spends time with?

I think this book had so much potential but just couldn't get it together to tell a better story. It is a quick read, I read it in a couple of hours but I had higher expectations for it.

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### **Isamlq says**

See if I started this with an 'Isa didn't get this book' then proceeded to say 'Isa this,' 'Isa that...' the same the Stone Girl progressed with its 'Sethie this and Sethie that,' well, I'd likely drive you crazy. That is if you've an issue with third person which I didn't realize that I had an issue with myself.

It felt clunky and clumsy at times with the all the telling going on. And if that's not bad enough, the POV effectively distanced the girl from me. It kept me from feeling more sympathetic to what she was feeling. Though she did have me confused by how blind she could be with a certain someone.

The ending too left me feeling cold. I felt it oversimplified matters. That all that she'd been going through felt reactionary. That suddenly there's an amping up of what she was doing, feeling, experiencing came into focus after Shaw. I mean what about prior to that? How did Janey put it? That the way she was, was not a normal reaction versus healthy one? This felt like it was discounting everything Sethie had been saying even prior to it. I mean, somehow, Sethie recognized there was something wrong; she just didn't have a name to

put to it. Why make it seem like a mere reaction when something was wrong the word go.

**Thanks Netgalley!**

2/5

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### **Sarah (Workaday Reads) says**

This is definitely an “issue” story. Sethie has a serious eating problem, something between bulimia and anorexia that progresses and worsens as the story moves forward. It’s a very slow slide for Sethie, one that she doesn’t really recognize as happening as it does.

Sethie is easy to feel bad for. She has normal body issues in the beginning, that seem to get out of control. She is naive when it comes to guys and her “boyfriend” Shaw. I use quotes because he’s a jerk and while Sethie knows something doesn’t make sense in their relationship, she really doesn’t get it until someone tells her point blank.

The last scene of the book is so sad. Be prepared to cry. It’s touching and poignant, and I won’t spoil it by saying anything else.

This was a very disturbing read. Sethie and her friends are only 17, and yet the book is full of drinking, smoking, sex, and heavier drugs, including a usage of cocaine. There is a severe lack of parents, and an overly casual party atmosphere.

Overall, I enjoyed reading the book, even if it was uncomfortable, because that’s what it was meant to be. It focussed on eating disorders, and the slow way they can take over your life. It’s sad and yet has a glimmer of hope for everyone.

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### **Anna says**

Sethie Weiss is in control of her body and the way it makes her feel. She is in control of her grades, her friendships and the relationship she has with Shaw, even if he isn't exactly her boyfriend yet. All she has to do is keep pleasing him, taking drugs with him and making sure to keep it low pressure. Than he'll finally want her for more than just sex. But when everything starts to disappear, leaving Sethie alone with her body the last thing she can control, will it be enough for her? I could not STAND the format this book was written in. It was third person, which normally speeds things along really well because it allows for great description and gives access to thoughts and actions both, of multiple characters (usually). This time it was very clunky. Every sentence was 'Sethie sees this' or 'Sethie does that.' It was extremely boring and doesn't allow for any real character development to occur. Everything was TOLD instead of being shown and I couldn't stand it. Also, Sethie has pretty much no parental supervision, which is somewhat of an old-school YA standard (parents that are strict, not there, or try to hard to be cool). But the fact that she was supposed to be a smart, straight-A student while doing marijuana and cocaine on a regular basis is just so totally unrealistic and laughable that I feel crazy even describing it. Sethie is also hanging around with a guy who uses her for sex, probably deals drugs and will never value her in the slightest bit. Even though she suffers from anorexia, that

doesn't go hand-in-hand with such a lack of self-respect. If anything due to the complex thought process of the disease, it's usually the opposite. The way that Sethie comes to terms with her disorder and vows to end it so she can go to college (on the urging of her best friend Janey) was so highly insulting to me as a reader that if hadn't been an e-book it would have been tossed at the wall several dozen times. This book had a good premise, that has worked well in the past. Unfortunately, the author's research was shoddy and misinterpretive; it shows big time in the overall plot and resolution of the book. If you want good books about eating disorders, you should read *Insatiable* by Eve Eliot and the sequel, *Ravenous*.

VERDICT: 1/5 Stars

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\*I received an Advanced Reading E-book Copy from the publisher, via NetGalley. No money or favors were exchanged for this review. This book's expected publication is August 28th, 2012.\*