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Read Between The Lines



Synopsis

Does anyone ever see us for who we really are? Jo Knowles's revelatory novel of interlocking stories peers behind the scrim as it follows nine teens and one teacher through a seemingly ordinary day. Thanks to a bully in gym class, unpopular Nate suffers a broken finger—the middle one, splinted to flip off the world. It won't be the last time a middle finger is raised on this day. Dreamer Claire envisions herself sitting in an artsy café, filling a journal, but fate has other plans. One cheerleader dates a closeted basketball star; another questions just how, as a "big girl," she fits in. A group of boys scam drivers for beer money without remorse—or so it seems. Over the course of a single day, these voices and others speak loud and clear about the complex dance that is life in a small town. They resonate in a gritty and unflinching portrayal of a day like any other, with ordinary traumas, heartbreak, and revenge. But on any given day, the line where presentation and perception meet is a tenuous one, so hard to discern. Unless, of course, one looks a little closer—and reads between the lines.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm struggling a bit in writing this review. I want it to be glowing, because this book is amazing, but I want it to be realistic because it's not an easy read in any form. I want to reassure those who think an entire book cannot revolve around one rude gesture; not only does it, this book fleshes out what that gesture means and how its intent may vary. I also want to caution those who think this is just a light-hearted look at *The Finger* because the issues go so, so much deeper than that. But mostly I

want to say...this book is brilliant. You need to read it. The idea of *Read Between the Lines* is that we're all subject to the one finger salute, but for different reasons and with varying reactions. But Knowles has taken the gesture and woven an entire world around it, highlighting the lives of several high school students, none of whom are defined by giving or getting the finger. In fact, the gesture itself becomes almost an after-thought as we become immersed into the lives and facades of Nathan, Lacy, Dylan, Jack, Grace, Stephen, and Claire (to name a few but not all). What happens inside the head of the kid who gets bullied by everyone, including his father? What does it take to become popular? When do you stop living a lie and come out? How long can you go along with your friends even when you know it's wrong? Over the course of a couple of days, we see what these high school students go through at the hands of those who supposedly love them and those who even sometimes hate them. Each chapter is from a different point of view, yet they all overlap in at least one way, and it's often unexpected. I got fully engrossed in every story and found myself changing opinions about characters as I saw events through different eyes. I loved them all and I hated a few.

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