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Facts Speak For Themselves, The



Synopsis

An uncompromising look at a sexually active adolescent adrift in a world where she is neither victim nor fool.

Book Information

Age Range: 12 and up

Lexile Measure: 600L (What's this?)

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Customer Reviews

Fans of Brock Cole's savvy, independent protagonist in *Celine* may be shocked by the raw young woman they meet in *The Facts Speak for Themselves*. The novel challenges our ideas about young-adult books and about young adults themselves: its story is gritty; its rhythm is oddly primitive; its level of honesty about people and events is unparalleled. Cole tells the tale of 13-year-old Linda who, when we meet her in the beginning of the book, has just come to the police station after witnessing the murder of a man--an adult who may be her lover. The situation is extreme; the nuances are deep. Linda struggles madly against everyone's presumptions about who she appears to be. She tries to tell the story straight, to let the facts speak for themselves. This important book will stimulate discussions in classrooms and between friends.

PW's Best Books citation called this story of a sexually abused 13-year-old who witnesses the murder of the man with whom she's been having an affair a "brilliant psychological study. The author's stringent refusal to resolve disturbing questions raised by the girl's version of events gives

his writing a devastating authenticity." Ages 12-up. (Apr.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Linda, the thirteen-year-old survivor of a disastrous family life, tells her story in this realistic and unblushing account. At the beginning of the novel, we find Linda going into protective services following a bloody and climactic debacle in which her alcoholic mother's sometime boyfriend commits suicide after shooting to death, in Linda's presence, Linda's middle-aged seducer/lover, who was also Linda's mother's employer. The novel is made up of Linda's subsequent telling of her life story to her caseworker. CHARACTERS: Linda--A born survivor: capable, brave, resourceful, and cunning. In spite of all the appalling neglect and abuse to which she is subjected, one ends the novel with the impression that she is equal to the task of getting on with her life. Sandra--Linda's mother: Good-looking, a doctor's daughter, and a complete mess. She is vain, self-centered, self-pitying, uncaring, alcoholic, depressed, willful, and incapable. She is, in fact, an exceptionally destructive train-wreck of a person, unable to manage her own life, to say nothing of the lives of her children. COMMENTS: The book is exceptionally well written in straightforward and realistic first-person language. Caution: Four-letter words are used and sexual situations are frankly described.

: This book is extremely well written and affecting. Since this book contains a realistic portrayal of sexual and emotional abuse, *The Facts Speak For Themselves* would be an excellent choice for bibliotherapy. I would recommend that a teenager have someone trusted to talk over the subject matter of this book. In fact, this book could be so upsetting that a person who reads this book might need a professional counselor. Evaluation: *The Facts Speak For Themselves* by Brock Cole contains a sad and powerful story. Cole writes in a beautiful and simple style that gives us access to Linda's inner thoughts. The protagonist in this book, Linda, is a victim of years of psychological, sexual and emotional abuse. This abuse is so normal for Linda that she does not recognize it as abuse. As she describes her situation Linda writes in a flat tone about taking care of her little brothers, being molested and watching the murder of her adult lover. It is heartbreaking to see adult after adult either abuse Linda or not offer her any help. Although this is a sad book, in the end Linda is removed from her situation and in a group home. Linda seems relatively happy in the home and she is grateful for the small things like having access to pencils. This ending puts a happy ending on the book that otherwise could make a reader lose all hope.

Linda is thirteen when her mother's ex-boyfriend approaches Linda's lover, who is also her mother's boss, and shoots him. Soon after, her mother's ex-boyfriend also shoots himself, leaving Linda as the only person who could really say what happened. Because of her age and the complexity of the situation, including the fact that her mother isn't fit to take care of her, Linda ends up in a group home while everyone tries to sort things out. She meets with police officers and psychologists who put together reports on her. One day while the psychologist is out of the room, she reads the report and is offended by the way it makes her sound. She decides to write her own report of her life. Linda's life was never easy. Her mother and father split up when she was a small child because her mother was having an affair. Shortly after that, her father died. The guy with whom her mother was having the affair was young--a college student, whose parents wouldn't let him marry her. Things go downhill, through Linda's mother's depression and a brief stay with Linda's grandparents, then through a new husband who eventually loses his mind. Finally Linda's family ends up in Florida with her mother's new boyfriend. Linda likes her mother's new boyfriend, and she likes the place they are living. One day while she is playing in the yard, a man stops his car to talk to her. Soon Linda and this man become lovers, and he gives her mother a job in his real estate company. Linda feels happy and secure, although her mother's relationship is going steadily downhill. But when Linda's lover's wife finds out about their affair, things go badly quickly. I liked that this book was told entirely from Linda's point of view. It was less horrifying hearing her words directly from her, although it was still an extraordinary tale of child neglect and abuse. It was sad to read about a child who fell through the cracks so many times. There were several different times when someone should have picked up on her bad situation, but she always ended up being overlooked.

For me, this book follows the title to the letter. It is told through the eyes of Linda, a sexually active 13 year old of low to average intelligence. She has been forced to grow up at an astounding rate due to the indifference of her mother, raising her brothers and taking care of one of her step fathers after he has a stroke. She is unaware that any of the molesting and emotional damage to her is abuse. I grew fond of her as the story unfolded but I never loved her. I don't think she quite had the charisma I wanted although I think she certainly had the potential. It might have been because of the way the story was written. It seemed completely stripped of emotion, as the title suggests. But I think this would make it much easier for people to read who haven't come across the subjects before. For example, when she is raped there is very little description other than, "When he was inside me I didn't like it. I hit him. I said hurry up." I did enjoy this book but I think it seemed a bit

mugged in places. It also doesn't use speech marks, which I found extremely annoying and confusing to read. I couldn't say what age range this book should be for. Perhaps 13 +. Some of the things in it might disturb some people but I honestly think it is told in such away that people won't feel nearly as horrified than of something which is told in detail and with emotion.

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