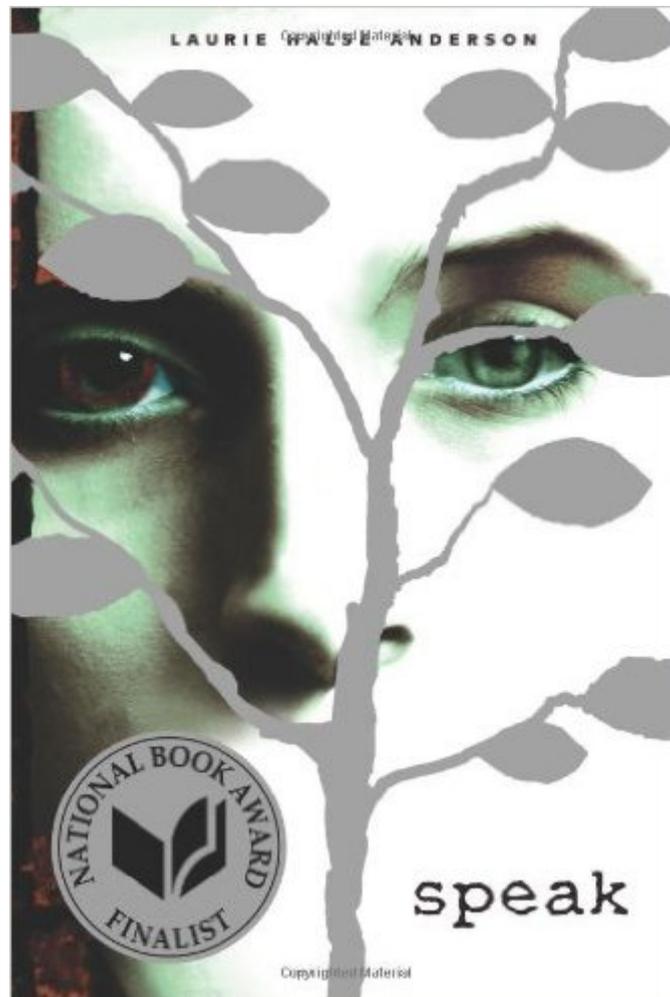


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# Speak



## Synopsis

The first ten lies they tell you in high school. "Speak up for yourself--we want to know what you have to say." From the first moment of her freshman year at Merryweather High, Melinda knows this is a big fat lie, part of the nonsense of high school. She is friendless, outcast, because she busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, so now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. Only her art class offers any solace, and it is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party: she was raped by an upperclassman, a guy who still attends Merryweather and is still a threat to her. Her healing process has just begun when she has another violent encounter with him. But this time Melinda fights back, refuses to be silent, and thereby achieves a measure of vindication. In Laurie Halse Anderson's powerful novel, an utterly believable heroine with a bitterly ironic voice delivers a blow to the hypocritical world of high school. She speaks for many a disenfranchised teenager while demonstrating the importance of speaking up for oneself. *Speak* was a 1999 National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature.

## Book Information

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Shipping Weight: 12.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (1,949 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #803 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Depression & Mental Illness](#) #1 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Sexual Abuse](#) #4 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Being a Teen](#)

Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

## Customer Reviews

This book is definitely one of my favorites. It's so different from anything I have ever read, the style,

the tone, and the way it was written. It was a compelling read from the beginning to the end. The story is not written as your average outcast "popular people are stupid" cliché. It's an original. The tone is like Melinda is just relaying her thoughts and what she sees to the reader, rather than her feelings and rage and anger against the people that hurt her. Her character gets stronger as you read on, as she begins to stand up for herself. I liked how the author didn't just tell you what had happened to Melinda in order for her to stay so silent - instead, bits of the incident unfolds as you read along. I was caught up in Melinda's world, and even though I'm glad to say that I haven't been there and done that, it was easy to just recognize the pain, fear and confusion she went through just because the author doesn't say it right out. Overall, an excellent read and I highly recommend this to anyone who wants to feel the triumph of "Speak".

Melinda Sordino, a student with good grades and great friends, has made some mistakes. At the end of a summer party she calls the cops, yet when they arrive she doesn't tell them anything. Back at school the next year, her friends won't speak to her, and people she doesn't even know hate her as the fink who wrecked everybody's party, and her grades start dropping. Her relationship with her parents deteriorates quickly. She becomes sullen, and withdrawn. However this picture is not the whole story. Her parents know something is wrong but cannot get her to open up. Her only hope is her art teacher; he realizes something is very wrong and through the assignments he gives her tries to draw her out. This is a story of a girl who is abused, and who doesn't know how to talk about it, but in keeping it inside she is self-destructing. Can Melinda find her voice and speak of her sorrow, or will her silence destroy her?

This book was amazingly well written. I received this book for Christmas ('99) and finished it the next day. I didn't want to put it down. The characters are portrayed in a way that relate to teenagers like myself. The author confronts a fear most girls and women don't want to even think about, much less experience. The main character, Melinda, spoke in a way that makes the reader understand the pain and fear that took control of her, keeping her from saying what needed to be said. This is one of the most touching books I have ever read. It inspires one to face their fears and move on.

All Teens should read this book. Peer pressure does a lot of bad things, one of those things is convincing victims to feel like they have done something wrong. Speak is a fast-paced read that involves the reader emotionally from the very start. Speak is an accurate portrayal of the very common existence of high school cruelty and peer pressure. Every reader should identify with most

of what happens in this novel, no matter what their age. You will get mad at the good characters as well as the bad. I found myself talking out loud to the characters, which is why I know the book involves you. Speak passes my Young Adult novel test. The book allows you to read without wanting to put it down, and it flows straight to ending. Laurie Halse Anderson has written a book that will be around for a very long time.

As a black male in my late 20's, I didn't think I would get as interested as I did in the novel. I'm a Librarian and I always see the book being checked-out or returned to the branch so I picked it up...WHOA!!! From the beginning I was intrigued by the main character, Melinda. She has a voice that is forgotten in the literary world. It reminded me of "Catcher in the Rye". The settings and characters take you back to a time when High School was all that mattered. I recommend the novel strongly. It's a quick/easy read and by the end of the novel, your cheering for Melinda. PS. I gave the book for my wife to read and she got the "secret" right away...is this a woman's intuition???

Speak is one of the best teen novels that I've read in a long time. Anderson didn't merely tell a story, she let the reader inside the mind of the heroine. Descriptive language and active monologue allowed me to actually feel the torment and confusion of a young rape victim. Melinda ended her freshman summer with a party at which she was raped by a popular senior. Her call for help was misconstrued as a call to break up the party, and she spent her entire freshman year as a social outcast; even her closest friends turned their backs on Melinda for breaking up the party. She became increasingly withdrawn until she almost completely stopped talking. Only a special teacher and a few somewhat confidants kept her from totally withdrawing into herself. Even so, no one besides IT (her term for her attacker) knew what actually happened at that party. But as she matures, she comes to realize that what happened to her wasn't her fault, and that it was her right to SPEAK. I totally recommend this book to anyone in need of a good story and a good cheering session. YEAH!

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