



## Empty Cup

*Suzanne Costigan*

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Mom's new boyfriend is creepy.

On the night of her seventeenth birthday, Raven finds out he isn't just creepy, he's dangerous. He leaves Raven broken and bleeding, but Mom blames her for what happened. She kicks Raven out of the house with nothing but a blanket to protect her from a frigid winter night.

Alone.

Devastated.

Abandoned.

As Raven struggles with the aftermath of the ultimate betrayal, she seeks solace in her imagination and a teacher who seems to understand her situation. She ultimately discovers that her world won't change if she relies upon someone else to do it. Real change begins within.

## **Empty Cup Details**

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Author : Suzanne Costigan

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## From Reader Review Empty Cup for online ebook

### Sarah LeBlanc says

First off, I must say, being Canadian I love to read Canadian writing. I had a goal to read more Canadian writing this year, and I am glad I read this book.

I knew, when I read the description of this book, that this book was going to be a hard one to read. Sometimes, the hardest books to read, the are ones that need to be read. This lovely book touches on many conversations, and topics, that we as people sometimes tend to avoid in life. It brings to life the harsh reality that some people face daily.

Raven has a less than perfect home life, dealing with a mother who turns a blind eye to what her boyfriend does to Raven. Her mother tosses her from the house, and we see Raven trying to heal herself, as well as deal with other personal issues a young person can deal with. It's a gripping, heart breaking and powerful story. Being a mom, this really hit me in the heart. I couldn't imagine doing this to my daughters, but it also reminds you that this does happen in our world. And quite often.

This is a fantastic book, and I am so glad I had the opportunity to read this. I look forward to reading more from Suzanne in the future.

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### Dianna says

Empty Cup dealt with hard topics, yet author Suzanne Costigan kept the story fairly clean and ambiguous. There aren't gory details tossed around; nor was there an abundance of profanity. Enough is left to the imagination that you probably won't blush if you read this with your older teen. Empty Cup is short enough to finish within a couple of hours, so it will likely appeal to those who don't have a lot of available time for reading. I received this book from the author; opinions shared are mine. You can find my full review at my blog [savingsinseconds.com](http://savingsinseconds.com).

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### Bèbè ♦ RANT ♦ says

Raven is just like any other teenager who goes to school, hangs out with her friends, and even though she does not live in the most prestige neighborhood, she knows that she has a future. On the day of her birthday, she gets really creepy vibes from her mother's boyfriend - Trevor. And even though she always thought he was weird, this time he goes a little too far. And her mother blames her for it. This incredible novel is filled with raw emotions & attempt to feel normal after a tragedy.

***“With the water almost hotter than I can stand, I scald him off. I scrub with soap, but no matter how hard I press the facecloth into my skin, no matter how red and raw my skin gets, I still smell him...”***

I almost couldn't bear to read this book. I could not believe how cruel Raven's mother is and how she said that she stole everything from her including her youth and future. Reading books like this makes me want to help these poor girls to try to understand that it's not their fault. I'm glad that Ravel had a good support among her friends, I would not be able to bear the thought of her being alone. Great read, really recommended!

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### **Bri says**

**What I liked:** This story deals with so many things that can happen to some people. Its stories like this that remind me how messed up some people can be with how they use and abuse others and frankly it made me angry and a little sick to realize that it's way more common than I would like to think. This story presents realistic events that could happen, though honestly there is a series of events I don't recommend any students to do. Seriously, when I realized that was a very big potential for the story I wanted to shake some sense into Raven and tell her to snap out of it.

**What I didn't like:** I still don't understand why Raven ends up with who she does after what's said in this short novel. Really, I was expecting it to end differently too. I also wish it had been fleshed out more so we got to know more about the characters and that could have made the story more suspenseful for me than it was, especially with more detail. I just wanted to know a lot more than I was given about Raven's story so I could connect better, see her develop more.

**Overall Review:** This is a really intense novel that spoke to me in a lot of ways because of its content, especially with what happens at the beginning of the story. I really liked the characters and, for the most part, the way the story ended. Raven's ending was one that felt right for her and showed how much she's grown as a character though without certain revelations for us to see how Raven decides a few important things for her it all seemed a bit sudden when it's revealed at the end. Overall though, this was a good, quick read!

**Recommend?:** Yeah! This may have been a short read but it was a good and important one.

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### **Rasy33 says**

This was an excellent book! It caught your attention from the very first page and didn't let go until the very last! It was heartbreaking but so worth the read.

I received this book for free through the Goodreads giveaways.

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### **Laura Thomas says**

While this story delves into a traumatic and, sadly, common subject, it's also about courage, hope, and strength.

Raven's home life isn't perfect but she manages. Until her birthday, when her step-father goes from the usual leers and innuendos to an attack that leaves her beaten and bloody. Saved by her mother arriving home, she's mistaken to think she'll be okay. Her mother refuses to believe her, blames her, and throws her out in the

winter cold with nothing but a sheet wrapped around her naked body.

Raven now has to find a place to live and face what's happened to her. She'll need to be strong, rely on friends, and find the courage to begin her life again.

I was surprised to discover this was the authors debut novel. It's powerfully written, and while it touches on a delicate subject, it also breathes hope.

Raven is so sweet and so broken. I loved her courage. The people she should have been able to trust and protect her, instead did the opposite, and while she was ashamed and hurt by what happened, she turned to her friends and a kind teacher, drawing on their loyalty and wisdom.

This was a book I was hesitant to read as it's a tough topic and one many avoid. The authors writing is tough where it needs to be and delicate too. I'd recommend this to teens and adults.

I received this book for my honest review.

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### **Tamara says**

This is one of those books where it is so hard to write a review because you don't want to give anything away. But what I will say is that this story will make you mad - really, really mad. You will want to wish horrific things on Raven's mother's boyfriend and you will be shaking your head at the total insensitivity of Raven's mother. I mean, the actions of the mother? Who does that to your own child? There are other aspects of this story that will have you shaking your head, but in the end, this is a story of one girl trying to survive a terrible act with really no support group and in the end knowing that if she wants to change things, it is up to her to make it happen.

Empty Cup is a story like no other. It's a story that will make you cry and a story that will infuriate you. At least that is what the story did for me. Rape is never a fun topic, but the author has taken a very tough subject and created a story that will draw you in from the very first sentence and you can't help but hold on for dear life as you travel this journey with Raven.

This story broke my heart right from the start, and continued right until the very end. Raven's story will definitely have a place in my heart for quite some time and is one that I would recommend to anyone.

\*I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review

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### **Melinda Friesen says**

This book captures your attention from the very beginning and just won't let go. You're immediately submerged in the story and you have to find out what happens to Raven. This story is beautiful and heartbreakingly. It evokes strong emotions (it made me want to hunt down a certain character and bring him to justice). Definitely worth the read!

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## **Naturalbri (Bri Wignall) says**

### What I Thought:

I really felt this book. From the first page, I connected with Raven. She is a strong girl, trying to get herself through a very difficult situation. When the unthinkable happens, she is left with nothing and no one she can truly trust, an unfathomable, evil betrayal.

I was in tears more than once for this read. At points, the tears were tears of sadness, fear and personal connection, but at other times the tears were for happiness, pride and belief in Raven. Though she has been through the unthinkable, she comes out the the event, with literally nothing, and starts to look at life. Though she is young, she starts to see through the eyes of one who has truly seen the world. She realises she can depend on herself, and only herself, to make her life what she wants to be. This is something that only those who have truly seen the bottom of life's barrel can contemplate, at such a young age. She uses her new enlightenment to push herself forward, to build new and leave the past.

I love Raven. Though she has been through something that, sadly, some of us experience. There are many levels of such evil, not all go as far as Raven's, but some take place over many years, leaving a stamp of tarnished childhood on the victim. It can hang over their head, influencing their decisions and experiences for the rest of their life. Raven is strong and determined, though she is broken, and she picks herself up, from the filth she has been forced to endure, ready to make a life for herself. Such a strong girl, in both character and ability.

I found the story ver touching. It is a theme that some may find very disturbing, especially as it is graphic. However, it is a must read, whether you have experienced abuse of any kind or not, Raven's story is emotional, real, raw and truly inspirational. I was addicted to her story from the first page, and have found myself thinking back on Raven's strength and journey, well after the final page has been turned. I highly suggest you give this book a read. It will open your mind to what you can endure and how much strength we truly have, inside and out. It is a beautiful, deep and truly fab book.

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## **Susan says**

Stunningly dark and edgy, Empty Cup is an incredibly intense and emotional story that's hard to read. Suzanne Costigan pens a beautifully written and realistic tragedy that will drag your emotions through the gamut and wreck you. It will frustrate you, incense you, and move you to tears as you embark on the painful and traumatic journey that Raven goes through in order to discover that change comes from within and only she can make that happen. Alone and devastated, dealing with the aftermath of what she's endured at the hands of her mother's boyfriend, she's frightened and trying to find solace in the depths of her own vivid imagination and immersing herself in the presence of a teacher who seems to understand the hell that she's just been through. Raven's life is filled with so much pain, betrayal, abuse, and torment that it's hard for her to see any glimmer of light in the darkness that she's been tossed out in.

She's drowning, while still gasping for air and any small trace of hope that could possibly give her any bit of

comfort to hold onto. Suzanne Costigan, doesn't shy away from writing about the hard stuff, the kinds of topics and issues that the world would be all too happy to turn a blind eye to, because they don't want to go through the pain of acknowledging that kind of evil and torment exists in this world. The way that she writes about it, packs such an emotional punch that it will leave you gutted by the time you finish reading. It's one of the things that I loved most about this book, the realism that it symbolized, the hard realities that evil does exist, and that if you want there to be a change it starts on the inside and then radiates outward. No one else can make that change for you, only you can do that for yourself. She puts Raven through sheer torment and hell, only to have her realize in the end that she's the only one who can make the change from within herself.

It's hard for me to truly talk about this book, without giving too much away because I feel like this is definitely a book that needs to be read by every young woman. It's important to raise awareness for the issue that is tackled within this story, the pain, emotional tragedy, and physical abuse that happens on a daily basis to anyone. Not just to young women, but to anyone. As broken as and tormented as Raven is, she's a gorgeous compelling character that my heart went out to. At times, I wanted to reach through the pages and hug her, for being so incredibly brave and having so much courage to accept the truth of who she is and what she has to do in order to survive the painful past she's been through. It's refreshing, to see that with the help of her friends and teacher that she was able to come through this and start to put the shattered remnants of her life back together so that she could function in a more healthy and productive way.

If you are looking for a novel that's going to leave you floored, break all of your emotions, and then lift you up I would suggest Empty Cup to you. It's not pretty, it's damn hard to read, but it's worth every bit of the time you'll spend with it.

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### **Larry Verstraete says**

An intense story that kept me glued to the pages. In unflinching sweeps, but with great delicacy too, Suzanne Costigan takes readers on Raven's traumatic journey. A difficult topic, but handled expertly. Highly recommended.

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### **Jodi Carmichael says**

Stunning writing. A difficult and important topic written so well. I highly recommend Empty Cup. I am so impressed that this is the author's first published book. Wow!

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### **Ella Drayton says**

Empty Cup is a book that will tug very hard at your heart strings. And if you're anything like I am, it will make you cry. A lot.

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Raven's home life is terrifying and is a tragedy that no child should ever have to live through. Unfortunately, for Raven and children like her, it happens far too often. Raven's mother takes her anger out on Raven and often blames her for the life that she's living. Raven tries to be strong and tries to endure the abuse that's thrown her way but once her step-father crosses a very dangerous line, Raven can't take anymore. After being kicked out of her house by her hateful mother, she ends up at her friend Lyla's house. Lyla's mother

does what she can to help Raven and to nurture her in order for Raven to understand that not all people will let you down.

Lyla and Raven's relationship takes a turn for the worse when Lyla's crush on their friend Cole drives a wedge between her and Raven. Throw in an inappropriate relationship with a substitute teacher and you've got one heartbreak after the other.

Suzanne Costigan's ability to write this book in a teenage girl's voice is amazing. Raven's character is believable and when I read this book I could really hear that teenage voice in my head. The dynamic between Lyla and Raven is a great one and I honestly think that Lyla saved Raven's life by being there for her at just the right time. The petty fights between the girls reminded me of being a teenage girl and having arguments with my girlfriends about guys.

My favorite part about this book would probably be the relationship between Raven and Cole. They've all been friends since they were kids but Cole promised himself years ago that he would protect Raven and when he finds out what really happened to Raven he blames himself. They both are going through a lot in their young lives and they try to save each other which I think in turn helps them save themselves.

The subject matter of this book is really dark and it can be very depressing. It's hard to say I enjoyed this book because of the subject matter but I did honestly enjoy this book and how Suzanne chose to portray the characters, their issues, and how they resolved those issues. Books like this really serve a purpose to bring awareness to the fact that things like this happen to young people far too often and far more frequently than people realize. I enjoyed Suzanne's writing style and I sincerely hope that she plans to write more books in the future because I would love to read more by her. You will not be disappointed if you choose to pick up this book!

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\*\*I received this book via the author in exchange for an honest review. Any thoughts and opinions are my own.\*\*

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### **Heather Duff says**

For some this will be a hard book to read, it covers a difficult subject, abuse.

Raven lives with her mother, they do not have much love for one another and Raven certainly does not have any love for her mum's partner Trevor.

He gives her the creeps and he will have the same effect upon you, Suzanne has done a good job of creating a menacing aura around him, he watches Raven, he touches her when he shouldn't, he comes in to her room when he shouldn't, one night he comes in to her room and doesn't leave until he gets what he wants, what he shouldn't take.

Raven's mum is horrified, not for her daughter, by her daughter, why has Raven seduced her boyfriend? She won't listen to reason, she ignores her bruised and battered daughter and does the worst thing possible, she throws her out on to the street with nothing.

Empty Cup follows Raven's journey as she copes with her demons and tries to lay them to rest, will she be able to find peace after such a traumatic time?

As I said this can be quite brutal in parts, the scenes before Raven is thrown out of her house are very close to the bone but Suzanne has done a very good job, she has created a young character who despite having gone through many things still continues with her life, yes she does make a few wrong choices but she tries to distance herself from what happened.

My only downside was the fact that this is written from the POV of a seventeen year old and she can come across as a little childish but that is probably my 36 year old self struggling to cope with the way teens act which is nothing like it was back in my day (aaargh I'm old!!)

A good read, awarded 4 out of 5

Thank you to Chapter by Chapter for providing me with a copy in exchange for an honest review

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### **Betty says**

A very well written book that covers some of the issues facing teenagers today. Issues of neglect, abuse, deceit, drugs, rape and teenage pregnancy. Raven is a strong teenager who has had to be self-reliant and make her own way. She's never been loved by her mother and then her mother kicks her out to fend for herself. This is Raven's tale of overcoming and finding hope to make a better life for herself. With thanks to the author for my copy.

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