



Crooked

Laura McNeal , Tom McNeal

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Clara Wilson has a lot on her mind. Her best friend, Gerri, has started moving in circles that will never in a million years include Clara and her crooked nose. Clara's parents are fighting again, and her mom keeps talking about teaching in France. At least Clara still has Hambone, her loyal dog. And her crush on Amos McKenzie, of course.

Amos McKenzie doesn't much like home these days. His dad's corny questions are bugging him more than usual, and his mom's gone religious for no apparent reason. On top of that, he's starting to fall for a major dink, Clara Wilson. And as it turns out, he's not the only one...

The Tripp Brothers are the biggest delinquents in town. They smash mailboxes, shoplift groceries, and cruise around in their Seduck (half sedan, half truck). They've just turned their sights on the school's newest, cutest couple. And that can only mean one thing for Clara and Amos: danger.

Clara and Amos--their lives turned upside down by each other, their families, and the two meanest brothers in town--discover that honesty may be the answer...but it can be awfully hard to find. In this emotionally compelling and suspenseful young adult novel, Laura and Tom McNeal present a searingly accurate look at life in ninth grade--where thrills, heartbreak, and intimidation can take place at a locker, in the lunchroom, or in a bathroom stall.

From the Hardcover edition.

Crooked Details

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Author : Laura McNeal , Tom McNeal

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From Reader Review Crooked for online ebook

Abby F. says

Crooked was a very well-written book that always kept me interested. I would definitely recommend reading it!

Megan Duke says

This is an excellent read for young adults! But you don't have to be a young adult to enjoy it. Books like this are what I considered to be classics on how to grow up.

Sophie says

A wonderful book about a complicated crush and even more complicated events to follow. this book held my attention from beginning to end and ultimately (?) satisfied my hunger for a good book that was mystery/teenage drama/ who knows?.

i highly recommend it.

Lesley says

Some kids might like the two points-of-view--one a guy's, one a girl's--but some might have preferred just one POV in a shorter book. Does help to have rare guy's POV of romance.

Sarah Walker says

This was a really good book because it had a surprising outcome. The book is written in two different perspectives, a girl named clara and a boy named amos. It switches back and forth about every other chapter, and really helps you understand the book more by doing this. Amos's dad dies in the middle of the book, which makes the book a bit sadder and creepier. Generally the idea is that you shouldn't worry about someone's appearance or judge them unfairly because they might turn out to be really nice people.

Jill says

It continues to amaze me that books by these incredibly talented authors are so hard to find in bookstores and libraries. *Crooked*, an ALA Top Ten Best Book for Young Adults, captures with startling verisimilitude the voices of the young people who populate this story set in a small town in upstate New York.

Clara and Amos, the fourteen-year-old protagonists, are sweet and shy, full of hormones and angst, and achingly believable. Similarly, the cruel girls in their class are as convincingly frightening and dangerous with their verbal and psychological abuse as are the malicious town misfits, Charles and Eddie Tripp, with their physical abuse.

This story of two nice kids who are targeted basically for being two nice kids is told so well you can actually feel the fear and bewilderment of Clara and Amos, and you can't help but hurt for them as school becomes a place to dread, rather than a place to learn. And as if this weren't enough, both Clara and Amos suffer significant upheavals in their family lives. Apprehension over what will happen to them and how they will cope with it increases as the story progresses.

Discussion: Clara and Amos are confused; they're not always "cool"; and they don't always do the right thing. But they are both decent and good-hearted kids, and manage to make the best out of some pretty badly drawn cards. In different ways, they slowly transcend the hurts, and ascend the awkward coming-of-age ladder. By virtue of their grace and goodness, they discover inner strength, courage, the ability to forgive others and themselves, and a recognition that value is sometimes lying just beneath the surface.

Evaluation: *Crooked* brought me back to the awful cruelty of junior high with flashback-like realism. There are some very tense moments in the book, but there is also a pervasive sweetness, which thankfully remains the dominant emotional strain of this close-up look at life in a small-town junior high. Parents will find this book provides an excellent opportunity to discuss a variety of issues that unfortunately come into play at the junior high stage.

Rating: 3.5/5

Spoilery Note (for Parents): There is a scene of *almost*-sexual-abuse, and while the fact that it *didn't* get carried out was probably the least realistic part of the story, I was very happy and relieved nevertheless!

Emill Coto says

The book started out with some fairly interesting plot points with the one of the main characters (Often switches POV throughout the book) having an emotional and relationship issue. Clara, the main female role, is not content with her looks and dreams. One should note that the time period of the book is aprox. 1950s so they have some pretty different ideals and values. Most of the conflicts that occur throughout the book are very "cliche" in some aspects too. Things like Amos Mackenzie (the other main character) having to deal with typical "girl problems" and the like. Overall, I did have fun with the book but in the end, wasn't very satisfied with the story. It was pretty hard to relate to the characters but I could see others being able to.

Jacqueline Vicente says

The book was interesting in a way. I did find Clara to be super annoying though & it made it seem as if Amos' father had like some deep dark secret but really he just had cancer. I'm not really sure when I just stopped kind of enjoying and just wanted to finish it. It was a decent read. Nothing really excited happened or popped out for me.

Nina says

why read anything other than YA fiction?

Hallie Pellegrin says

I picked this book off of Ms. Falkner's shelf one day because I forgot my free reading book and it turned out to be very good. The story follows two characters named Clary and Amos who share very similar problems. 1) Both of their parents are hiding something and 2) they have become targets of the two meanest kids in town- the Tripp brothers. This story follows Amos and Clary as they work together to evade the Tripps and support each other as their parents' secrets are revealed. I would recommend it to anyone looking for a quick and easy read.

Laura says

Um, I read this book twice because I didn't remember reading it the first time. I read it the entire way through without realizing I'd read it before.

Erika says

This book was good from what I remember, but it wasn't as powerful as I had hoped for... =(

Rachel says

I found this at a discount book store and picked it up because of the cover. I was surprised to find that I really liked this book. But, I read it so long ago that I can't remember what I like about it.

Angela says

I liked it, but not as much as Crushed. The McNeals seem to have a formula: sweet-but-not-hip-main character, misunderstood boy, thugs, betrayal, missing parents.

Jackie "the Librarian" says

Very good teen fiction, with an interesting mix of family drama and scary thug thriller. Great characters,

with all the details of school friendships and family dynamics done right. I loved how smart and tough Clara was. She didn't try to be friends with Gerri anymore after the mocking phone call, she stood up for herself when she was alone with Eddie, the tough guy, and later at the big climax, even when she was paralyzed with fear, she kept thinking instead of giving up. I wish Amos, her counterpart, had stood up for himself as well.

I hate it when an animal is introduced in a thriller like this, because you know immediately that it's a goner. If you have an aversion to that kind of plot point, avoid this story.
