



When She Hollers

Cynthia Voigt

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Newberry author Cynthia Voigt's searing tale of abuse -- and taking back your life.

Tish has taken enough. She will no longer be abused. She will no longer be passive. So she takes a knife with her wherever she goes. Today is not going to be like any other day. Today is going to be different.

When She Hollers Details

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From Reader Review When She Hollers for online ebook

Amber says

SUSPENSE CATEGORY

Tish is a teenager who is abused by her father and wishes some how to escape. Cynthia Voigt tells the story in such a dramatic way that you are thrown into Tish's world the second you open the book. You can relate to Tish in understanding why she brings the knife with her everywhere. I have been through abuse as well, this book really portrays the anger and betrayal you feel. I remember wanting to scream and tell the whole world so that I could be rid of the abuse. I am sad to say that Voigt did not cover what happens after the abuse has come forward. I wish Voigt would have given the readers more closure as the last thing you know is that Tish has gotten a little help by having a lawyer. When She Hollers demonstrates the honesty in how horrific abuse is, especially within a family, though I wish Voigt laid down the setting more in the story. It was an easy read, though sometimes frustrating as the writing needed more improvement.

Julie Suzanne says

Found this for a quarter, and it hung out in my office for a few years to be read before putting it on my classroom shelf. There are some Voigt novels that were on my classroom shelf when I moved into that room, so I thought she was a middle school level author. First of all, it's a good thing I didn't put this on my shelf. I'd get in big trouble, most likely.

Voigt brings the reader into the mind of a victim of sexual abuse, and it definitely answered a lot of questions I had, mainly, why would a girl put up with it? How can he get away with it? Why on earth wouldn't she tell? I am satisfied with the answers, and I think I have more of an understanding of and therefore more tolerance for the victims.

I loved the ending. I loved the beginning. The middle was just painful. And now I'm wondering....how many of my students are going through this?

Aimee Massey says

Suppose I described to you a book that opens with a teenage girl showing her stepfather a knife at the breakfast table and warning him that if he touches her again, she'll use it on him? What would you expect the book to be?

You'd probably say "scary," "suspenseful," "heartbreaking" or "exciting," wouldn't you?

What if I told you the word you wanted was "boring"? You wouldn't believe me, would you?

Yes, this book is boring. A big, crashing bore. Tish doesn't even really threaten Tonnie (what kind of name is that anyhow?) at breakfast; she just puts the knife on the table and stutters out a lot of "You better" and "you better never." He knows exactly what she's talking about but pretends not to, but at any rate he knows, and Tish does too, that she'll never have the guts to use that knife on him.

Even Tish's little brothers and sister don't seem to take much notice. The sister begins to cry at their verbal

argument, but nobody yells "Holy crap, she's got a knife!"

Tish's mother is obviously in denial but even she seems oddly unconcerned that her husband might possibly be in danger of being knifed.

This is another of those stories where the Big Important Message has completely dominated the book, to the detriment of a good or even readable story.

I guess we're supposed to see how Tonnie's abuse has turned Tish into a shell of a person, but the trouble is, she's such a total cipher that she seems faceless, lifeless and not anybody we'd care about. Pity can only carry a character so far, and in Tish's case it doesn't carry her nearly far enough to make me give a hoot about her or her trashy family.

Tish keeps thinking back to the suicide of her classmate Miranda, who was apparently molested by her own father. But how do we know this? It's never explained. Was it in Miranda's suicide note? Did she privately tell Tish beforehand? (They were not close.) Yet the "fact" that Miranda was an incest victim is apparently common knowledge now.

After a meltdown at school, Tish runs to the office of a lawyer, who happens to be the father of one of the girls who pass for friends of the closed-off, personality-free Tish. How she fetches up there we don't know; the lawyer's daughter witnessed her meltdown and called her father, thinking Tish might need him. Another not-very-well-thought-out element.

Anyway, after telling her story to the lawyer, Tish understands that because she is just shy of 18, he is bound by law to report her abuse, but they make a deal that he won't take any action as long as she calls him twice a day to report that she is all right. She emphasizes that all she wants is to reach 18 and leave home. No concern for her little brothers and sister, apparently.

The lawyer advises Tish to tell Tonnie that she has obtained his legal services, saying that a lawyer will scare him more than the knife did.

And there we leave them. Tish goes home and the last we see of her she is waiting for Tonnie to come to the door so she can tell him she has a lawyer.

And that's it.

No conclusion, no resolution, nothing. I almost thought there'd been some kind of mistake and the rest of the book was left out. My cynical mind tells me Tonnie is just as likely to use a knife on Tish that very evening as he is to do anything else.

Just a very unsatisfactory book about uninteresting and undeveloped characters.

Andrea Valdez says

When She Hollers by Cynthia Voigt is a book about a girl who has been abused by her father for several years. She is always scared something will happen to her. For protection, she always carries a knife with her. she might not always use it but she keeps it there for protection. This book takes place in many different locations because the girl is always moving to different places based on her fear.

Overall this book was okay. there could have been a lot of things that could of changed throughout the story. The book started out with the main part of the book. which was the climax because that's where the main part of the whole book happened. this book could also have been better if other characters besides the main character would share their opinions towards either the main character or each other. that would have been the best thing to do with this book in order for it to be even more successful. There were some parts that i really enjoyed but there were not too many of these parts which made the book not that successful. in some things i could relate to the character and that made the book kind of good.

Victoria McArthur says

This book addressed some mature topics in a very effective way. Voigt creates an interesting lead character who is well developed both mentally and emotionally. Out of everything in this book, my favorite part was the writing style used. Various breath marks and breaks were created which made me feel literally afraid and out of breath as I read. It affects one physically, as if you're running and can't stop. For me this was an incredibly well thought out choice that the author made.

The whole time one's afraid for the narrator, who's the abused girl. You are transported into her shoes, and feel similar emotions to what she is going through. What really made this book for me was the lesson that it taught. She's so fragile and has closed off to the world. The idea that one would have to live in such fear is heartbreaking.

I want to become a teacher and this book has reiterated the importance of truly looking out for others. This establishes abuse as a major problem, and one that needs to be looked at. Reading this book has changed my perspective and I would highly recommend it.

If you're one who enjoys realistic fiction, or a book that delves deep into psychology you would probably like this book. It's a quick read and it's hard to stop once you get started because you feel emotionally attached to the character. This is a book that I'd read again.

Beth Rosen says

I was fascinated by this book - the terrible cover art and the terrible book title - why would an established author make these choices? Like somebody was going out of their way to make a book that would not sell. I picked it up at a little free library because I was curious. For me, the day-in-the-life of a sexually abused teenager story was hard to get through. It was like being thrown into a day in hell, without any context. Female main character has no friends and no other family, she is so traumatized she can't really tell anybody about the abuse, and the people that she tries to tell refuse to listen. All this is combined with endless internal dialogue "Maybe I really AM a liar.... Maybe I really AM crazy". In some ways, after establishing the completely hopeless situation it would be better to have it end with her throwing herself off a bridge. Instead it leaves her standing outside her house feeling ready to face her rapist, because she thinks she is "protected" by legal documents made privately with a friend's lawyer father. Like that's going to work. The story has always established that nobody sees her as credible. Because you never see the main character as anything other than a one-dimensional traumatized abuse victim, it is almost like she doesn't exist outside of her abuse. It does a great job of presenting the emotional reality of an abuse victim, but an entire book of emotional pain feels somehow incomplete - like it is an emotion and not a story.

Emily Hermann says

When She Hollers follows a day in the life of Tish, a teen who has been repeatedly sexually abused by her stepfather. The day begins and Tish has had enough of the abuse. She confronts her step-father with a knife in the morning, and the novel follows her as our protagonist deals with a disbelieving mother, unhelpful and reluctant to believe lawyers and school officials, as well as giving us powerful insight to the internal struggle and impact that abuse has had on Tish, not only physically, but emotionally and mentally.

This book is raw. I am a pretty sensitive reader, but this book is important. Voigt has handled a much-glossed-over crime with impunity and power, and it shows by how uncomfortable readers feel while reading

it. The book drew me in emotionally almost immediately, and I cried with Tish, I was so frustrated with her mother and every other adult that I actually got up and paced the room in anger. This novel certainly contains sensitive material, but it's important material, not only to promote awareness, but to promote understanding. The characters are incredibly done, the extremely limited time frame of the novel is engaging and unique, and even the rather unsatisfactory ending serves to further impress upon the reader the nuances and difficulty of sexual abuse cases.

Warnings: Sexuality, Violence, Language

Ashley says

I think this book may have been my first experience with a book that dealt with abuse like this. Cynthia Voigt has been a favorite of mine for years. I love her Tillerman Sage, and I love her Novels of a Kingdom novels. I picked this one up because I loved her other stories. I think I was in either 9th or 10th grade, and this was a hard book to read. I was amazed at the pain Voigt was able to capture on the page, and the level of emotion that came through from Tish throughout the story as she tried to deal with the garbage that life handed her was astounding. I love that she was trying to be strong, and do all she could to protect herself.

UPDATE:

I just reread this one, and I'm struck by a lot of things I didn't really remember. I pray that I am never like the adults in Tish's life. Her mom chooses to ignore what her husband does because it's easier that way, no matter what damage it's doing to her daughter, and the teacher that Tish tried to confide in STOPS her and TELLS her, flat out, that she isn't going to believe her, so she should keep her mouth shut. WHAT TYPE OF PEOPLE SO THAT?! Seriously. How can you look at such a young kid, and WANT them to just keep quiet, so you don't have to deal with the fallout?! Special place in hell, I say. Special place in hell.

Catherine says

This novel covers one day in the life of a girl who is being sexually abused by her adoptive father. Voigt shows well the manipulation, the mother who refuses to see what is happening, and the teacher who refuses to let Tish tell. She shows the jumbled thoughts of the victim, the way the victim uses all the manipulative things the abuser says to believe she is worthless. She shows the disassociation that happens.

The problem I have with this book is that it doesn't go far enough. The book was published in 1994, but we are not given a time setting in the book. The students use slang from the 70s, but I am unsure if that is when the story takes place or if Voigt got the slang wrong for 1994, which is important for how sexual abuse is treated. If the story is set in the 70s, telling isn't going to change a lot, but if the story is set in the 90s, telling will make a difference for her.

Voigt doesn't really wrap up the story - it just ends without the reader knowing if Tish is going to be safe or not. I think this book brings up a lot of important things, but one thing it doesn't say is that if you are abused and the first person you tell doesn't believe you, keep telling. Find the strength to keep telling. It is the only way to stop the abuse and to stop the abuser from hurting someone else. Yes, it is hard and takes superhuman courage, but it is possible.

I hated Tish's whimpy mother. (view spoiler) Stupid, stupid women.

This book contains some pretty dark themes along with the F word that I feel is used appropriately in this case even though this book is for teens. This book talks a lot about suicide. I don't know if this book would help or hurt a child who needs to tell. Would it make them afraid to tell because no one will listen, or will it empower them to tell? This book made me cry; it is raw, very raw and emotionally powerful. I debated giving it three stars, but it ends too abruptly. I wanted to see her win. I wanted to see her abuser go to prison or die, but telling is hard and what comes after is hard, but it is the first step toward freedom - freedom from abuse and terror and hate.

Ria says

A hard hitting book about a day in the life of a teenager who is being sexually and physically abused by her stepfather, her mother knows but turns a blind eye and Tish feels no one can help her.

Until the day she takes a knife and hides it in her boot for protection, when asked to change her shoes for gym class she has a breakdown in fear of the knife being found.

Things turn ugly and in desperation Tish tries to find someone to confide in but who can she trust with her secret?

Powerful and very well written but to be honest I think the ending let it down, wrapped up too quickly so essentially there WAS no real ending and you don't find out what happens to Tish, how her situation improves or if it does and what happens to the offender in the novel, Tonnie her stepfather.

Overall a great read, just wish the ending had been more black and white for me.

Jen says

I got to page 6, by skimming. I, personally, do not like reading books that are written in such a disjointed way. I understand that the protagonist has gone through some horribly traumatic things and maybe people really do think like that in those situations, but I don't like reading from that fractured of a viewpoint.

I also got VERY upset that the mother of the protagonist didn't do anything to protect her daughter from the step-father. I was friends with someone in the same situation, the mom didn't believe the daughter. It's sad, but I guess that part of the book is true to life.

Tawnie says

Grades: 7 to 12 Genre: Realistic Fiction

One week after a girl in her school kills herself, Tish has decided that she can't take it anymore. That morning she threatens her step-dad that she won't put up with his abuse anymore as she is going to carry a knife with her at all times. This knife becomes her security blanket that she carries with her through out the whole day. To hide her knife she wears her big Doc Martin boots to gym and her teacher won't put up with it and tries to take the shoes off. That is when she loses it and starts to scream during gym. This book really expresses the emotions and torment that Tish feels about her situation. The strength that Tish finds when she

decides that she can't take it anymore, goes in waves, and teens will relate to the moments of doubt and confidence that she feels through the day. Would recommend to teens that are interested in real life issues.

Annemarie Visser says

Het boek gaat over de 17 jarige Tish, die door haar stiefvader, Tonny, seksueel misbruikt wordt. Moeder gelooft Tish niet, maar gaat ook niet echt het gesprek aan met Tish.

Vanaf het begin van het boek, waar het gezin aan de ontbijttafel zit, tot aan het eind heeft Tish een mes bij zich. Ze wil zich hiermee verdedigen voor haar vader. Tish gaat naar school en houdt bij de gymles haar kistjes aan, omdat het mes erin verstopt zit. Daar ontstaat een flinke scene, de gymdocent wil Tish haar schoenen uittrekken waarop Tish het op een gillen zet. Tish belandt bij het schoolhoofd op kantoor die eerst haar moeder probeert te bellen maar niet te pakken krijgt en dan haar vader die wel de telefoon beantwoordt en naar school wil komen. Tish zegt dat ze naar toilet moet en ziet op die manier kans om weg te lopen. Doordat Tish voetstappen achter zich hoort, blijft ze rennen. Het blijkt Crissie te zijn, een klasgenoot wiens vader advocaat is. Uiteindelijk besluit Tish bij hem langs te gaan en vind vertrouwen in deze man en verteld haar verhaal.

Hoe het eindigt blijft een raadsel; het boek heeft een open eind.

recensie dossieropdracht:

In het boek Met het mes op tafel, gaat het om problemen die passen bij hier-en-nu verhalen.

Een gebroken gezin, met een stiefvader, geestelijke mishandeling en incest. Dit verhaal zou zo maar echt kunnen zijn. Er zijn, denk ik, in ieder geval heel veel van zulke verhalen in de wereld hartstikke echt.

Het verhaal gaat over Tish, door haar stiefvader wordt mishandeld, geestelijk en seksueel. Ze wil dat niet meer, niet meer bang zijn voor die man en draagt voortaan een mes bij zich, dat ze tijdens het ontbijt binnen handbereik op tafel heeft. Het mes neemt ze in haar schoen mee naar school. Bij gym escaleert de situatie wanneer Tish zich niet wil omkleden. Ze beland bij de rector op kantoor en die belt haar stiefvader om haar op te halen. Tish ziet kans om naar de wc te gaan en rent daarna weg. Ze komt terecht bij de vader van een klasgenoot die advocaat is en in hem krijgt Tish een beetje vertrouwen. Het boek heeft een open einde, dus hoe het verhaal eindigt, is aan de fantasie van de lezer....

Het boek sprak me aan doordat het emoties bij me opriep. Ik ben boos geweest op die stiefvader, voelde de frustratie/machteloosheid, de angst van Tish. Het gevoel van er helemaal alleen voor staan. En dan denk ik: "Hoe kun je zo met een kind omgaan?" En over Tish haar moeder, onbegrijpelijk dat zij haar eigen dochter niet gelooft, eigenlijk amper de moeite neemt om naar Tish te luisteren.

Het boek leest makkelijk weg, door een vlotte schrijfstijl. Gebeurtenissen volgen elkaar in logische en chronologische volgorde op. De spanning hangt samen met gebeurtenissen. Maar het gedeelte dat zich afspeelt op school, tijdens de gymles en daarna bij de rector, daar is de spanningsboog wat langer.

De ruimtes/plaatsen die in het boek beschreven worden zijn heel divers; thuis, op school verschillende ruimtes, op straat en later het kantoor van de advocaat.

Ik vind het boek geschikt voor lezers vanaf een jaar of 12-13. Ik vind het lastig aan te geven voor welke doelgroep. In ieder geval lezers die geïnteresseerd zijn in de thema's die voorkomen in het boek, maar ook lezer die in hun omgeving te maken hebben/ te horen hebben gekregen over incest, kan dit boek gelezen worden. Het zou de lezer kunnen helpen begrip te krijgen voor het slachtoffer. Het boek geeft een kijkje in hoe zo'n leven er uit ziet en ook wat het mentaal met het slachtoffer doet/kan doen.

Lily says

When I was in sixth grade, I picked up this book, simply because I had liked Homecoming and wanted to read more by this author. Re-reading this book, I am surprised that eleven year old me was able to comprehend, accept, and even revere this very mature and painful novel about sexual abuse.

It is real. Very real. Voigt did her research. Some reviewers on here cannot comprehend how Tish's mom can pretend not to know about her abuse, how Tish could go years without telling anyone, how Tish's teacher could stop her from telling....it happens. As someone who works in this field, I can tell you it happens. Even the lawyer's response of pretending Tish is eighteen is realistic. Many people don't realize that our Child Protective Services still don't always do an adequate job of protecting abused kids. Reporting is a sticky issue on many levels. (I am certainly for reporting abuse, always, but I am saying that the adults' hesitation in this circumstance is realistic). Tish's very dysfunctional family? Yep, realistic. And the ambiguous ending? Also realistic. So, if you're looking for a book where everything works out nicely, skip this one. But if you want a real glimpse of what it is like to be a teenager who had been sexually abused, pick up this one and you will not be disappointed.

Nerline says

This book was absoulty HORRIBLE!!!! I hated how the author started the book, she started it right into the action. The book did not have any flash backs to help you understand whats going on. Also the plot was so slow i mean they wasted a whole chaptre on one single scene! My main issue with this book is that there was too much action and not enough character development. I decided to read this book because a friend reccomended it to me. Apparently my friend dosent have the same taste in books as me. So thats the last time im going to read a book that she reccomends to me.
