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Want To Go Private?



Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Praise for *Want to Go Private?* "[A] harrowing cautionary tale about the dangers that lurk online."
•Publishers Weekly "[C]ompulsively readable . . . a realistic portrayal of the sordid nature of predators."
•School Library Journal "*Want to Go Private?* is a bold investigation of a potentially lethal, if common, mixture for teen girls: emotional immaturity, technology and emerging sexuality."
•The Los Angeles Times

Sarah Darer Littman's widely praised first novel for teens, *CONFESSIONS OF A CLOSET CATHOLIC*, won the 2006 Sydney Taylor Book Award. She is also the author of the YA novel *PURGE*. She lives in Connecticut with her family and a house which never seems to have enough bookshelves.

Grade: A Abby's freshman year sucks. Her bratty younger sister is constantly reminding her what a loser she is. Abby's crumbling under parents expectations of perfection. And she only has one class with her best friend. Then she meets Luke in a teen chat room, who thinks she's beautiful. And he's older. She knows all about Internet safety from school and her parents, but Luke would never hurt her. He loves her. Sarah Darer Littman has created another important and meaningful novel

appropriate for teens and tweens. She vividly captures Abby's insecurity and low self esteem with Abby's first part narration. The second portion of *WANT TO GO PRIVATE* alternates narrators with Abby, her sister, best friend and the boy who likes her. Littman writes great, authentic teen voices and her characters authentically feel like people we know. She gives the book true closure where other writers might end at a certain climax I don't want to spoil. I love that about Littman's writing. Littman also develops her characters with strengths and weaknesses. Her teens make age appropriate bad decisions and the adults are imperfect parents. THEMES: sexual abuse, teens, high school, sisters, friends, gossip, internet. Parents and tweens should read *WANT TO GO PRIVATE* and discuss the story before adolescents are allowed to go online or chat.

I completely connected with the main character of *Want to go Private*? Abby is such a smart girl, and doesn't have the confidence or the popularity. She is pretty and smart, but she doesn't see herself that way. I have always had self esteem problems and I saw so much of myself in her. So when a guy, online starts telling her she is beautiful and worth it, she listens. I can see how easy it would be to fall into this trap. I mean, we all know about online predators, and that we can't give out our personal information. But she gets to know him, he asks her questions, remembers details of her day, and most of all makes her feel special. So, little by little, she gives more to him. Her address, because he wants to give her presents, and taking off her shirt, because it all of the sudden doesn't seem like a big deal. He thinks she is beautiful after all, right? This is the guy who listens and understands how she doesn't feel like she fits in at high school. He is the guy that sees beauty in her where people at school she might as well be invisible. I can see her getting more and more obsessed with Luke and being by her computer. It is so hard to watch her giving up things in real life, friends and grades, all because she is addicted to Luke, to feeling special, to being his girl. I so wished that the story could have gone differently... That she didn't isolate herself from her best friend since 2nd grade Faith, or cute and flirty while very nerdy Billy. She just didn't realize what was in front of her. Speaking of Faith and Billy. I loved the secondary characters in this book. Their depth and kindness and sincerity. Faith is not perfect.. she doesn't realize that Abby feels left behind when they all of the sudden don't have classes together, and Abby feels replaced by a new friend, Grace and the drama club that Faith joins. But Faith loves Abby, and is and has been there for her. And Billy is so sweet, nerdy and funny. I LOVE characters like him. He isn't broody, or super hot, he is a normal sweet guy who sees the good in Abby, that she is pretty and funny, and smart but he has been too shy until it was too late and she was wrapped up in Luke. I did not want to put this book down, and I kept rooting for Abby to open her eyes, and wishing that I could pad the ground for her

for her inevitable fall into danger. I also really appreciated the other pov and what it brought to the book. It really showed how others saw Abby and how it effected them. Bottom Line: Powerful book where I was sympathetic to the main character.

I bought *Want to Go Private* based on a review that I read by Lori at Pure Imagination, but also because it covers a subject matter that actually rings true with me. I was a regular user of chat rooms for nearly ten years, and I even met (and eventually moved across the world to be with) my current boyfriend. But there are a lot of very very creepy people in Internet chat rooms, and although the vast majority of teenage girls wouldn't be interested in chatting with a man in their late 20's, there are vulnerable people who will believe everything they hear, despite what anyone would say. Abby isn't the most of inspiring characters - she's quite shy and negative about herself, and lacks the confidence of her best friend, Faith, that high school will be the best years of their lives. And when she starts talking to a guy in a teen chat room about music, her problems at school and with her best friend, she immediately feels a connection to him. But those characteristics are exactly what makes this story so realistic - a confident, popular girl just wouldn't have felt right. Abby's sister Lily is the exact opposite - snarky, opinionated and popular, their relationship really sets up the family dynamic, and without a doubt Lily was my favourite supporting character. One character I really didn't like was Faith's boyfriend, Ted. I found him to be quite unkind considering that Abby had been Faith's very best friend for years, and honestly if I was Faith I would have told him to piss off. *Want to Go Private?* is split into three sections - Abby's perspective, the perspective of her family and friends after she goes missing, and the ending. The first section really grabbed me, especially through the relationship development phase. As a reader I could see some very disturbing actions from Luke's side, but as Abby was completely wrapped up in their little world it was like watching a car crash. The second part told from multiple perspectives is where I lost a little interest - and not because I didn't want to know their stories, which I think were as equally important, but because there's very little insight into what is actually happening with Abby. On the other hand, I can understand what the author was trying to do in writing the story this way, as this book is already quite explicit and adding that perspective would have made for an incredibly disturbing read. The ending is sweet but I was left wanting a little bit more as not every loose end is tied up, and it also at times seemed a little fairy-tale-ish but the overall message is incredibly well presented. I can imagine that some readers would find this book unrealistic in a way. After all, in this day and age, what teenage girl would start chatting with a stranger in his late twenties and agree to meet him to piss her parents off? But that also made it far more realistic, because the psychology behind it was so

convincing.

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