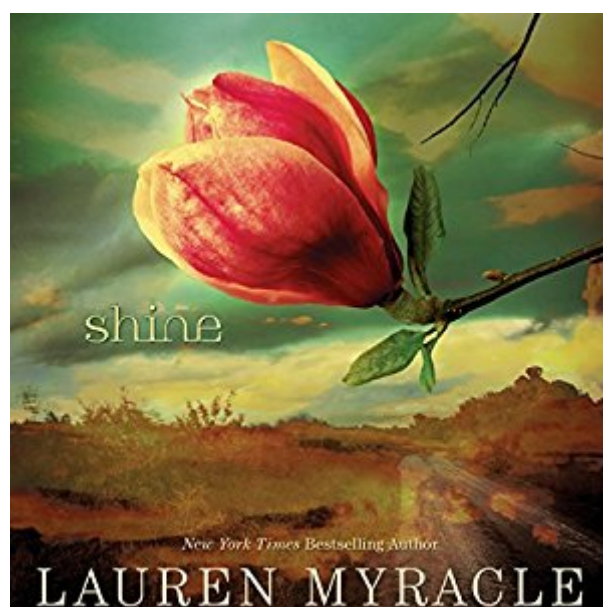


The book was found

Shine



Synopsis

When her best guy friend falls victim to a vicious hate crime, 16-year-old Cat sets out to discover who in her small town did it. Richly atmospheric, this daring mystery mines the secrets of a tightly knit Southern community and examines the strength of will it takes to go against everyone you know in the name of justice. Against a backdrop of poverty, clannishness, drugs, and intolerance, Myracle has crafted a harrowing coming-of-age tale couched in a deeply intelligent mystery. Smart, fearless, and compassionate, this is an unforgettable work from a beloved author.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Best Sellers Rank: #75 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues >

Homelessness & Poverty #373 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues

> Bullying #2764 in Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Mystery & Detective

Customer Reviews

It is October, 1998. I am close to the end of the first semester of my senior year of college, just a few months away from beginning my student teaching experience and one month away from my 21st birthday. Early in the month, the news is dominated by the story of Matthew Shepard, a boy the same age as me, who has been tortured and left for dead in a field in Laramie, Wyoming. His crime? Being gay. On October 12, Matthew died in a hospital, unable to recover from his injuries. This crime haunted me then and still does today. How is it that human beings can be so cruel to one another? What drives someone to act out so violently just because someone else is different? Reading the first pages of Lauren Myracle's *Shine* brought back all these emotions. The book begins with a newspaper clipping, "stunned residents of Black Creek, North Carolina, pray for seventeen-year-old Patrick Truman, beaten and left for dead outside the convenience store where he works." The article goes on to describe the abuse Patrick suffered, clearly the victim of a hate

crime. All the emotions I felt in college hearing about Matthew Shepard came back at once. This introductory article would not be the last time this story brought me to tears, Patrick's story is agonizing and, unfortunately, very familiar. Shine is narrated by Cat, one of Patrick's friends, who struggles with feelings of guilt for not having been a better friend and anger at the abuse he suffered not only the night he was beaten, but daily as he was the victim of school bullies. Unsatisfied with the attention the local police are giving this crime; Cat takes it upon herself to investigate and to bring justice to Patrick, who lies comatose in the hospital.

It's been awhile since I have read a book that I had such mixed feelings about. On one hand I love the setting and the premise, on the other hand I just couldn't get past some of the actions--or should I say inaction-- of the characters. The plot is engrossing and it's hard to put this book down once you get started. But I did find it a little predictable. I had things figured out before Cat did, but that didn't make it boring. I was still interested to see how things would unfold. That's where things started to fall apart for me. The ending, to me was inexcusable. I don't want to say too much and give anything away, but I was disappointed. Sure, I've never been in that situation, but I don't think I could just...let it all go. Is that cryptic? You need to read the book to find out what I am talking about! I would really like to hear some other opinions on the end! The setting is what I loved most about the book. It's very atmospheric. It takes place in this back woods southern town. I thought I lived in a back woods southern town, but it's nothing like the town in this novel. You can tell that Myracle has some experience with the bible belt, because she hits the nail on the head with the 'Bless his heart, but he had it coming' attitude. That is, unfortunately, how a lot of people are around here. It's sad, but true and Myracle really shines light on that. Cat was a good main character. She did some things I would never do, but for the most part I liked her. My biggest problem with the book--even bigger than the ending--was what happen to Cat and how everyone just went on their merry way afterward. I guess that's realistic, sometimes bad things happen to people and we choose to ignore it, but I've never been good at that.

I find this so funny because I'm not the Lauren Myracle reader in my house. That would be my daughter, Emma, and she is the main reason I picked this book up at all. You see, Lauren Myracle is one of those authors that writes both MG and YA novels, and not all of her books are appropriate for my (almost) 10 year old (this one is NOT, but I'll get to that later). When Emma found out she had a new book coming out, she begged me to buy it for her and I told her I would read it and let her know, so I guess I can thank her for one of my best reads so far this year, and possibly ever. I won't

do that yet though. That would make her only want to read it more, and that would be torture for her over the next 4-5 years..."So why do you feel the NEED to get the word out?", you ask. Well, for starters, it's a total page turner. It's one of those books that no matter what is going on around you, you cannot put it down. I got so sucked into this book I found myself thinking about it even when I had to put it down for basic human functionalities like going pee, making/eating meals, brushing my teeth, and showering. I actually took it to my six year old daughter's softball game and pretty much missed a nail-biting win to read... It's a mystery that keeps you guessing from the first page, but it is SO much more. Lauren Myracle manages to take a horrible event and make it a cathartic growing experience, not just for the protagonist, but also for the reader. When a book makes you look within yourself, you know it's a winner. The story is so heartbreaking, yet so beautiful. Honestly, it's beautiful cover (which is one that even my husband noticed and commented on) really does a great job capturing the essence of the story.

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