

# Bibliotherapy

with

Courtney C. Stevens



Joy Hensley



Abandonment Violence Sexual  
families Disorders Loneliness  
Cutting LGBTQ+ Bullying  
Low OCD Car Body Grief  
Poverty Depression image Pregnancy  
accidents Domestic  
Suicide Sex

What we've seen firsthand:

August 24<sup>th</sup> - Email Excerpt

Dear Courtney,

I wanted to share something else with you, actually. :)

Last week, I finally came to the decision to report the one who raped me. The day I finally did it, I was terrified. I put on my oldest pair of comfy jeans, a black tee shirt, a big baggy dark gray colored thermal shirt and a gray beanie. I wanted to be invisible. Unfortunately, it was at least ninety degrees outside, and my car doesn't have AC, but I digress. I brought my teddy bear in a bag with me, and went to the police station. There, I talked to two cops until the female detective got there and I gave her an expedited version of the story. I was terrified and shaking, but I still did it. Then yesterday, I went back and give more details about each event. I really had to channel brave there. Your book really did inspire me, and I drew strength from your words.

There's still a lot that has to be done and it's gunna be hard, but I am going to be strong.

## July 11-Email Excerpt

“The ending was actually what impressed me the most...I was shocked that in the end XXXXX and XXXXX didn't end up together. But in a way that was the best part of the novel for me (can't believe I'm saying this :D) because it shows that the point of your novel is not in getting the guy, but standing up for what you believe, fighting with all you've got and even if you sometimes crack and show the world that you're vulnerable you can still be a badass.”

Dear Court,

I'm so done... I... can't say why... because I have a feeling you have to say something by law... but I'm so done... why Can't I be brave enough to kill myself....

Sincerely~ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



**Faking Normal** <channelingbrave@gmail.com>

May 21 ☆



to Amianne ▾

Just got this -- not sure what to do here but letting you know. I'm going to respond, of course, but I think your crisis counselor needs to know.

Sent from my iPhone

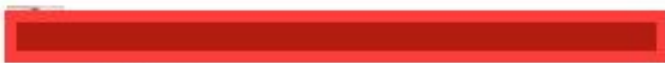
Begin forwarded message:



**Date:** May 21, 2015 at 7:42:04 AM CDT

**To:** [channelingbrave@gmail.com](mailto:channelingbrave@gmail.com)

**Subject:** Please read



May 21 ☆



to me ▾

I'm on it right now. I'll keep you posted.

## September 14-E-mail Excerpt

“In the darkness of your book, I saw positives unique to a military education: raw desire, intense bonding (you *nailed* the cadet brother/sister thing) and the rewards of putting up with d-bag NCOs. Things like the Society, sexism, Hell Week and tragic cases like Amos's are all part of the package, unfortunately... I'm not sure what you were going for, but I saw the good in the bad. The triumph, rather than the struggle. ”

## 5 Big Topics

- Depression
- Bullying
- LGBTQIA
- Abusive relationships
- Dangerous Coping Strategies



# Depression

...an email from this month

Hey Court,

It's been a while, a lot longer than I'd like, but life has sort of gotten in the way lately. So I'm hoping that maybe I could get some input from one of the people I admire most.

I'm fairly sure that I've told you about my OCD, anxiety, and depression before, but my sophomore year (last year) was particularly rough. I was only there about half the year, even though I had done intense exposure therapy to get my OCD under control. For a while I got better, but then a different kind anxiety manifested itself, along with depression. I had my first suicidal thoughts back in the spring, so I worked with my doctor all summer to try and get it under control before my junior year fell victim to the same curse. When school started back, I didn't even make it a week before things got very bad, very quickly. I was hospitalized because my parents and doctor were afraid of a suicide attempt.

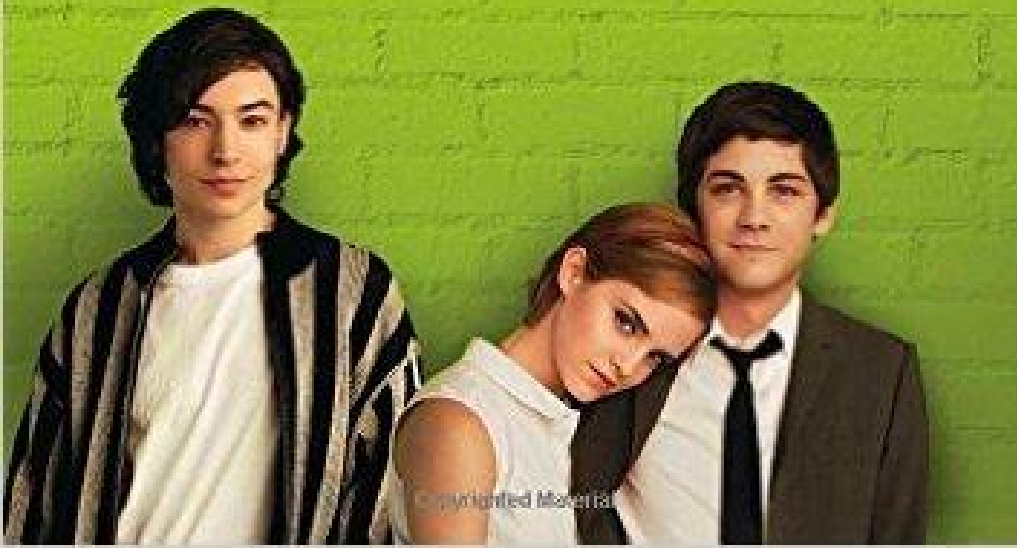
**THESE ARE OUR STUDENTS.  
THEY'RE HURTING.**

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE

the  
perks of being a  
wallflower

STEPHEN CHBOSKY



## Bibliotherapy

The Perks of Being a Wallflower  
By Stephen Chbosky

What's to Love?

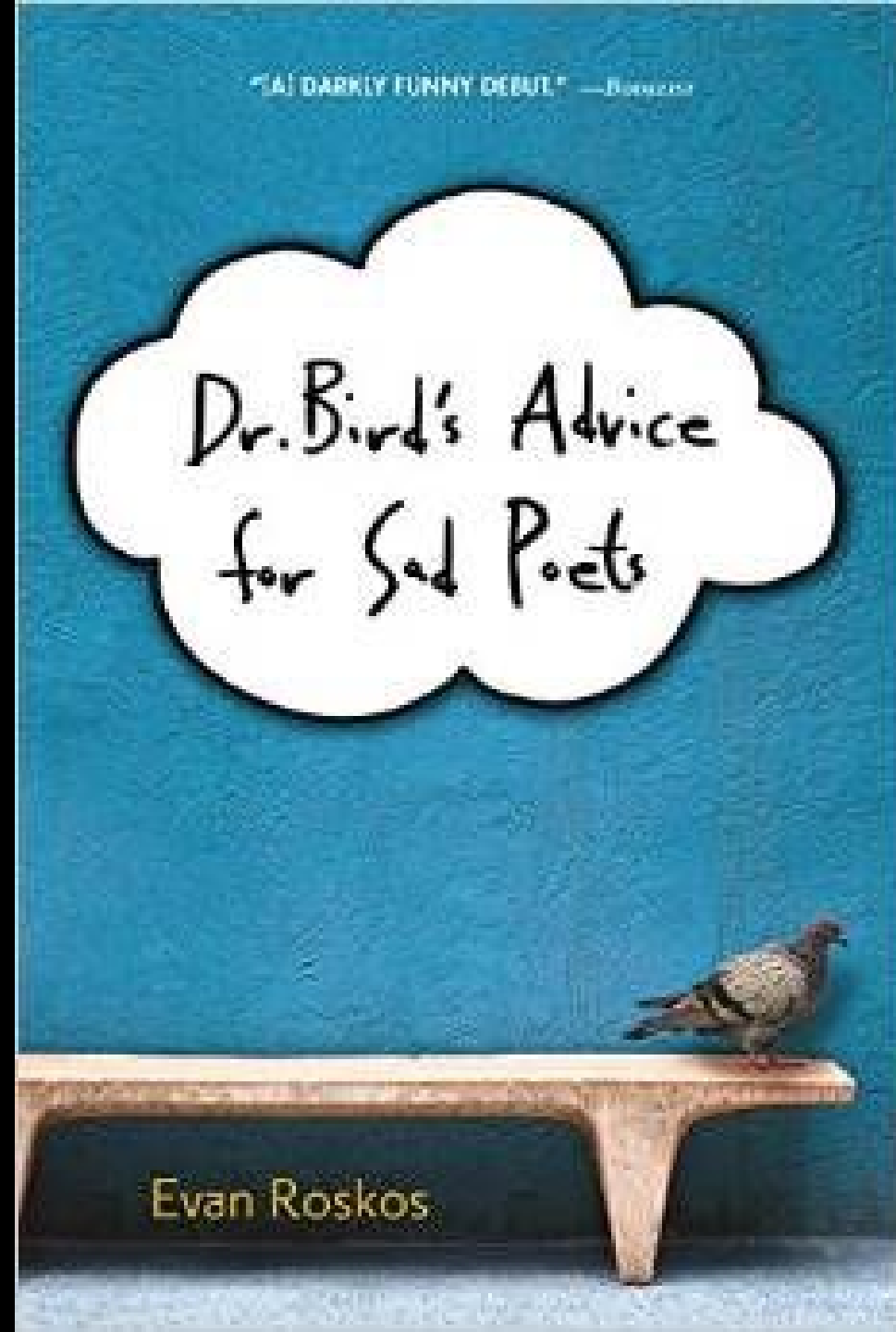
- easy access letter format
- written by a boy
- multi-dimensional character
- there's a movie to recommend

## Bibliotherapy

Dr. Bird's Advice for Sad Poets  
by Evan Roskos

### What's to Love?

- A boy with an addiction to yawping and hugging trees
- A boy who sees the world through Whitman-colored glasses
- Self-deprecating humor
- An imaginary therapist that takes the shape of a bird



How I know books intervene:



# Bullying

...an email

“I could totally relate to Sam's character in more ways than one, especially the 'being a female in a man's world' part. I'm currently at the end of my cadet training...and...there are still some people with the opinion that females don't belong...I've had officers being especially hard on me and treating me worse because I'm female.”

THESE ARE OUR STUDENTS.  
THEY'RE HURTING.

THIS WAS THE ONE DARE  
SHE COULDN'T TURN DOWN.



# rites of passage

JOY N. HENSLEY

## Bibliotherapy

Rites of Passage  
By Joy Hensley

What's to Love?

- Girl in a "man's world."
- Some serious action(this is *not* a romance)
- Playing in the mud
- A seriously dreamy drill sergeant who believes in girl power(okay, maybe a little romance)





## Bibliotherapy

99 Days

By Katie Cotugno

What's to Love?

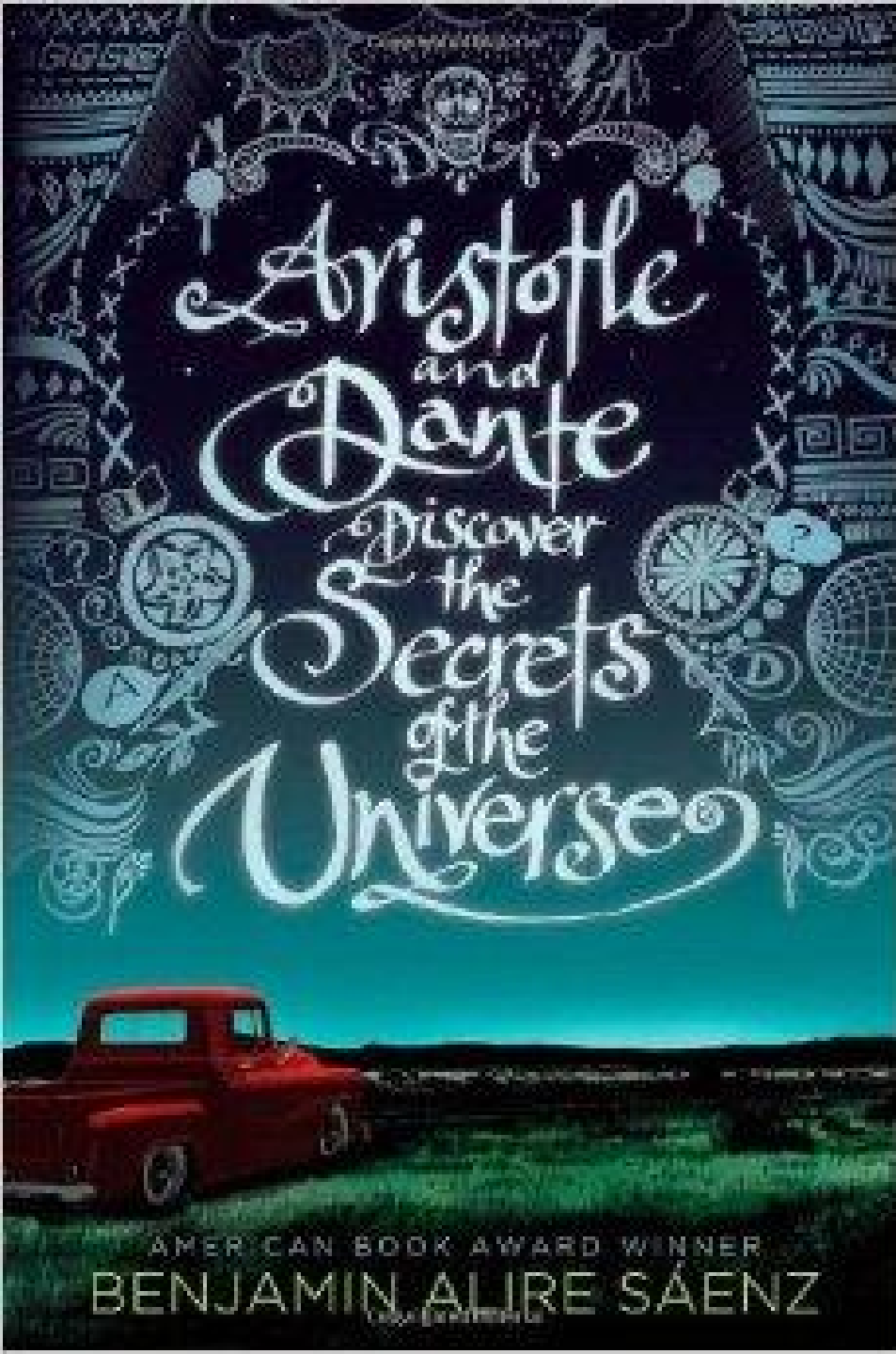
- A love triangle with brothers
- Great format—covers the 99 days between high school graduation and college
- mistakes, bullying, consequences

# LGBTQIA

There's no picture or email for a reason.  
These (often) marginalized students whisper their stories

THESE ARE OUR STUDENTS.  
THEY'RE HURTING.





## Bibliotherapy

Aristotle and Dante Discover  
The Secrets of the Universe  
By Benjamin Alire Saenz

### What's to Love?

- They really do discover the secrets of the universe
- Diverse characters
- Dogs, swimming, sickness, sweet parents, and rainy kisses
- Becoming and accepting who you are.

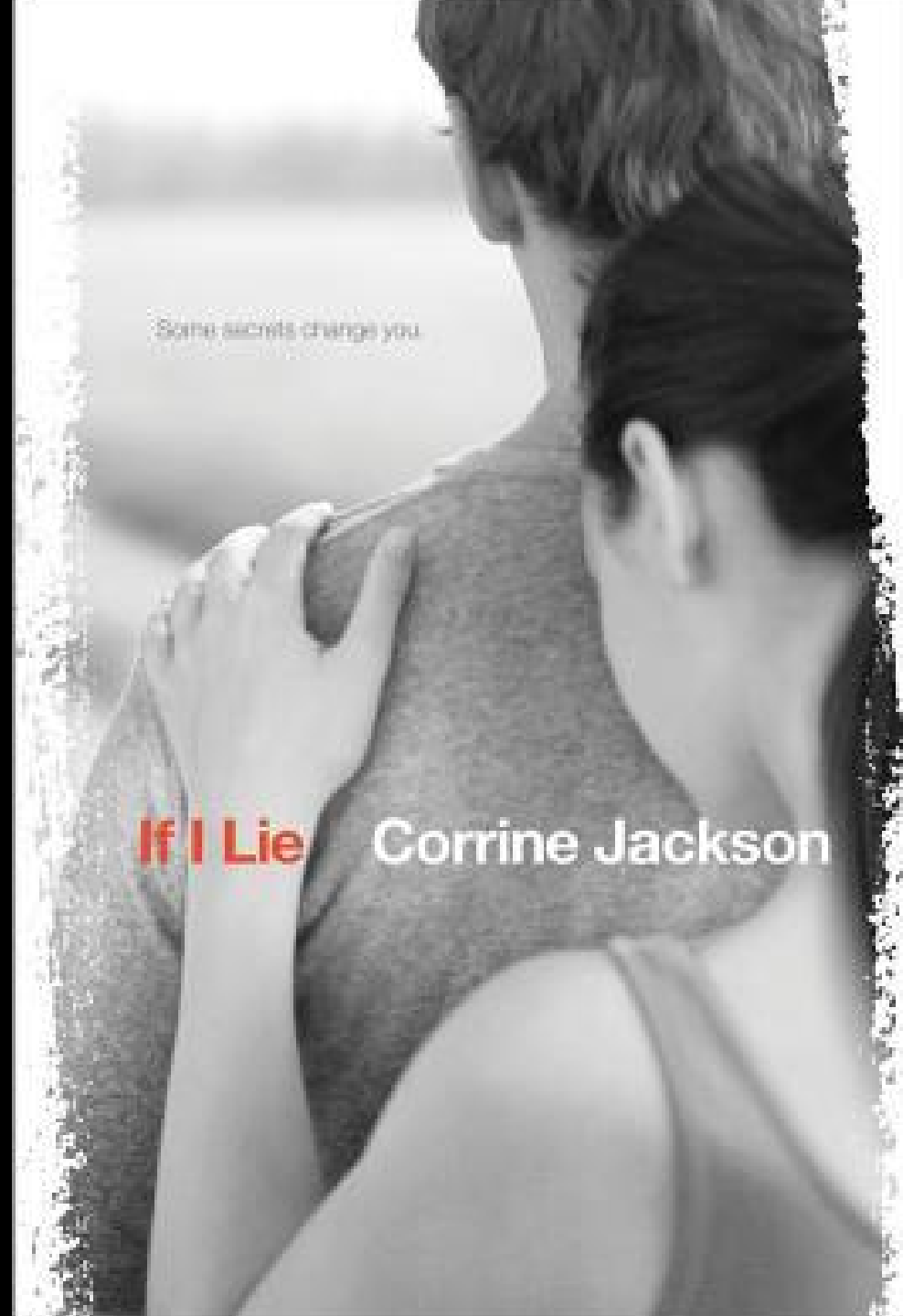
## Bibliotherapy

If I Lie

by Corrine Jackson

What's to Love?

- Military setting
- A girl caught up in a big lie
- A lost, hurt boy she's trying to protect
- A town, and time, against her



Some secrets change you

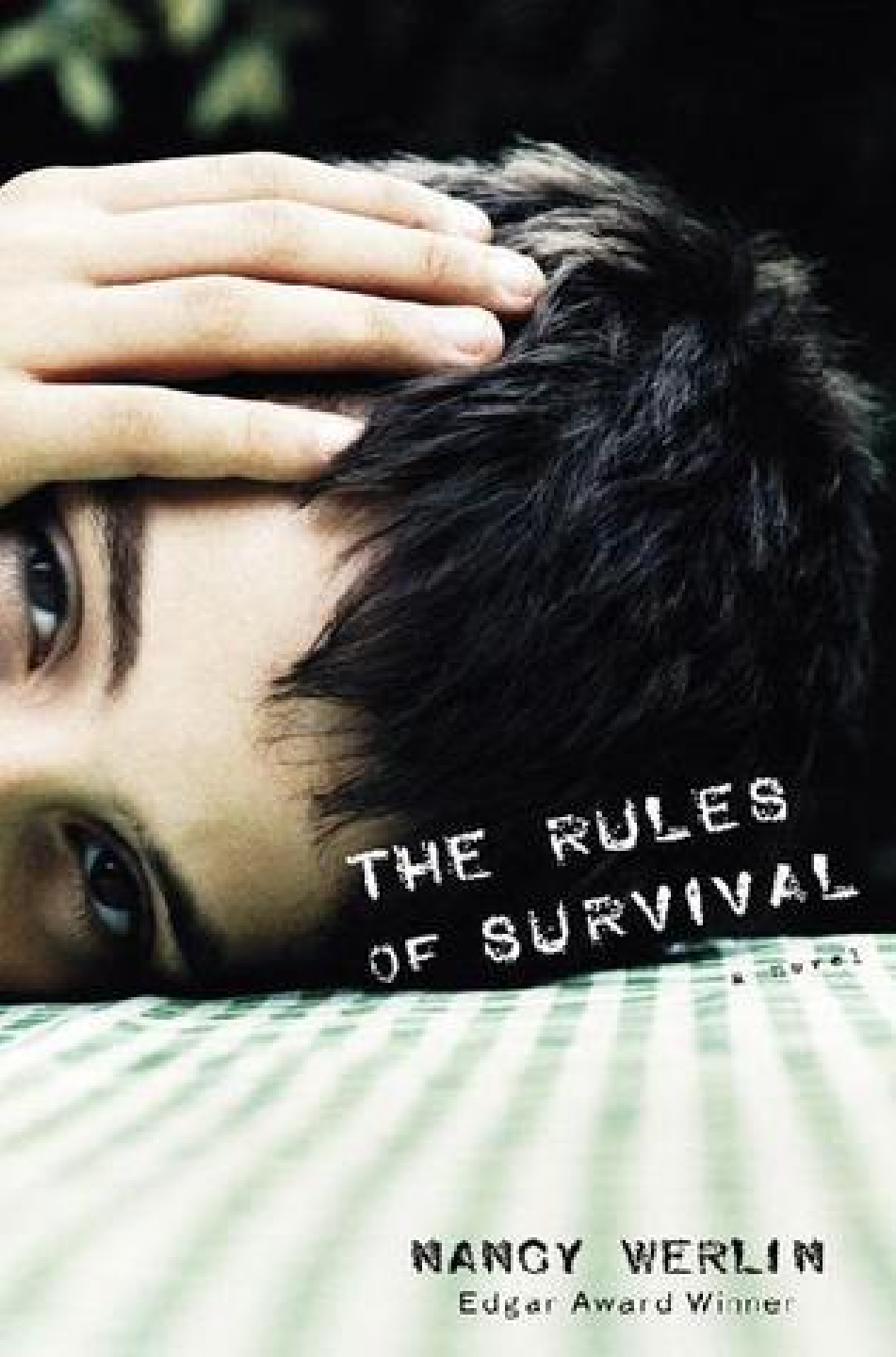
**If I Lie** Corrine Jackson

# ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

A facebook message from this year:

You also signed the book 'faking normal' and handed them out at my school library. I just wanted to let you know that I am having a hard time right now. When I read your book, I cried. It reminded me of when I was abused. Now, I am trying to get emancipated. I don't think it will happen, but I am going to try my best. If I don't make it I will most likely end up in foster care. But over all, it is better than what I have went through in my past. The saying, "Channel your brave," is helping me as well. For that I thank you.

THESE ARE OUR STUDENTS.  
THEY'RE HURTING.



## Bibliotherapy

The Rules of Survival  
By Nancy Werlin

What's to Love?

- Letter format--Written by a boy
- Loving difficult and terrible people
- Forging family under impossible circumstances

## Bibliotherapy

These Gentle Wounds  
by Helen Dunbar

What's to Love?

- A broken boy learning how to put the pieces of his life back together and love after unspeakable abuse
- A half-brother who rescues him
- A girl who builds him up and gives him hope
- A need to protect the protagonist

Copyrighted Material

*these*

G E N T L E

W O U N D S



HELENE DUNBAR

Copyrighted Material

## Fan Inspired Poetry from June 2014

he hit us  
you hit us  
he put a belt by our bed  
as a reminder  
of how much power he had over our 3 and 4 year old  
bodies  
he liked pain  
but only in others  
you like him  
you chose him  
over us  
that was the best choice you ever made for us  
even though it was not for us  
you can abuse me  
you can scare me  
you can continue to even after 10 years  
to hurt me with the damage you did and let happen

But there's one thing you can't take from me  
my words in my heart  
you said I was selfish  
that I did not care about my only mother  
because I would not stay silent  
not even he  
with his threats of violence  
took away the words in my heart  
I can fight you in ways you can't imagine  
just like you hurt me  
in ways I could not imagine  
and I will fight you  
until your power over me and my emotions is  
gone  
I will fight for my words  
and you can't take that away

# SELF-HARM

...an email

I have secrets myself. I have never been abused or raped, but I spent a good portion of my sophomore year of high school scratching my wrists open with my own fingers just like Alexi did with her neck. It helped me and I ached for it in the worst of times. I did it because I blamed myself for losing my boyfriend, and for feeling like I wasn't enough.

THESE ARE OUR STUDENTS.  
THEY'RE HURTING.







Bibliotherapy

Faking Normal

By Courtney C. Stevens

What's to Love?

- Two friends fighting through terrible circumstances
- Lyrics written on desks
- A legit treehouse

f a k i n g  
n o r m a l

COURTNEY C. STEVENS



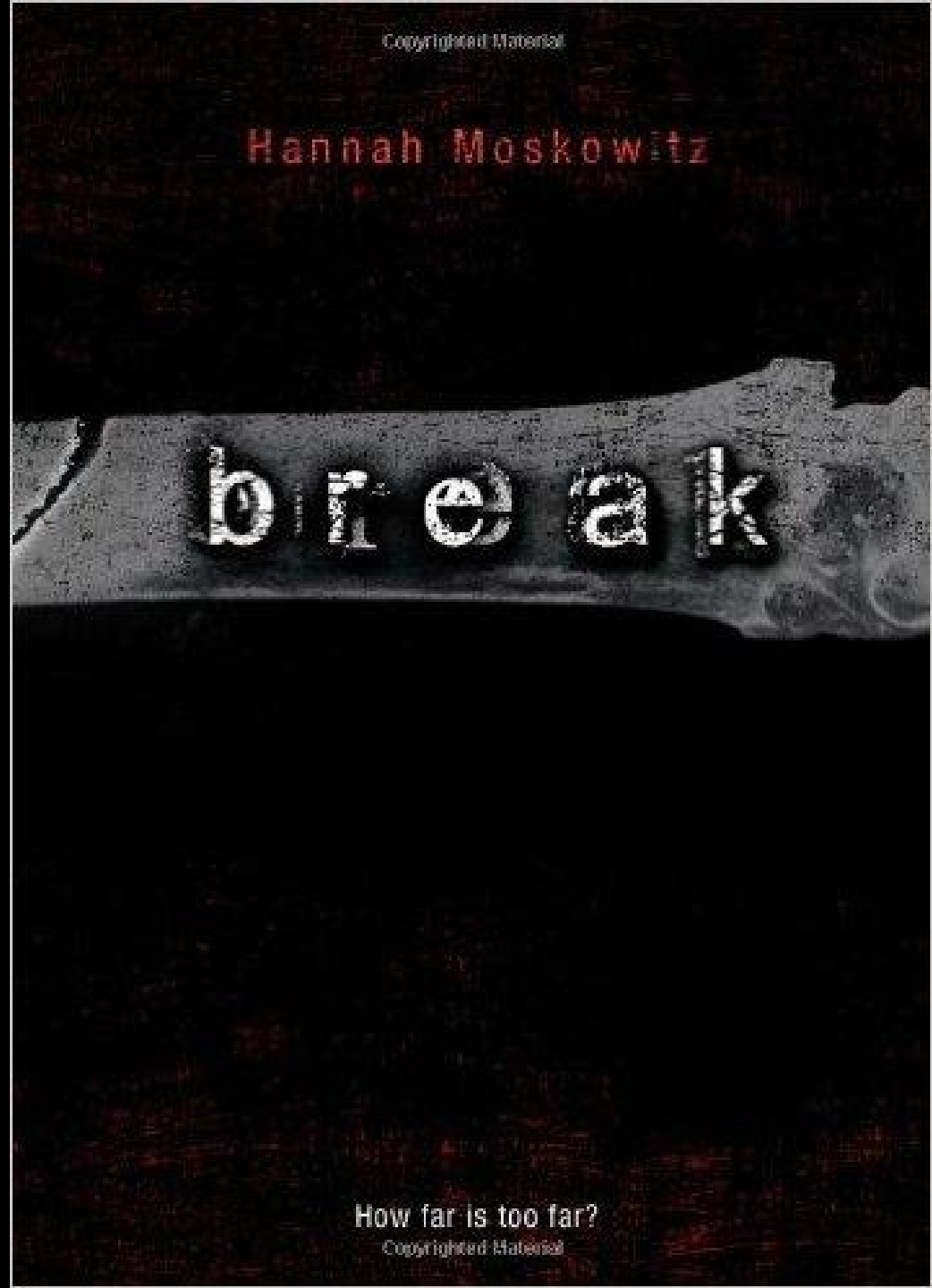
## Bibliotherapy

### Break

by Hannah Moskowitz

#### What's to Love?

- Daring boy protagonist
- The heaviness of responsibility
- Finding the strength to stop



How one student stopped cutting:



Need Resources? Need Resources? Need Resources?

[www.joynhensley.com](http://www.joynhensley.com)

# Joy N. Hensley

Young Adult Author

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## Book Recommendations

Interested in starting or building up a classroom library? Want to start reading young adult books but don't know where to start? This is by no means the end-all be-all list, but it'll certainly get you going. I'll be adding to this as I read more, so check back every once in awhile. I'm a contemporary girl at heart, so you'll find this list contemporary-heavy--sorry in advance. While many of my books were read and loved by many students, a \* indicates books I couldn't keep on my classroom shelves and for which I needed a waiting list! (Thanks to my amazing sister for the linky-links!)

Note for teachers: All of these books were in my 8th grade classroom. While I did not believe in censoring my classroom library--I found kids could do the censoring all on their own--some of these are "heavy" books that deal with tough topics and some of them have lots of cuss words. I never had a parent question a book on this list, but that doesn't mean it couldn't happen. I found the best way to judge whether or not a book was "appropriate" for any given student was to read as much as I could and talk to the students about what they're reading. While it's impossible to read every single book out there, feel free to contact me at [joynhensley@gmail.com](mailto:joynhensley@gmail.com) with questions about any book on this list!

### Life-Changing Books

[\\*These Gentle Wounds by Helene Dunbar](#)

[The Chance You Won't Return by Anni Cardj](#)

[\\*Winger by Andrew Smith](#)

### Contemporary

[Something Like Normal by Trish Doller](#)

[Where the Stars Still Shine by Trish Doller](#)

[Side Effects May Vary by Murphy](#)

Need Resources? Need Resources? Need Resources?

# Courtneystevens.com

Home of young adult author Courtney C. Stevens

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[Channel Your Brave](#)

[Educators](#)

[Appearances](#)

## Educators

As a teacher and former youth minister, Courtney is very comfortable making classroom visits, leading workshops, and communicating in assembly-style formats with students of all ages. If you would like to know more about Courtney visiting your high school to speak about *Faking Normal*, the life of a writer, or achieving goals (even if you're from a small town), you can click here [School Visit Flyer](#)

Want to see part of your welcome kit? Click here: [Behind the Scenes](#)

If you would like to watch a short trailer for Courtney's motivation talk, Channel Your Brave, please email Courtney at [channelingbrave@gmail.com](mailto:channelingbrave@gmail.com) to request the link.

**Please email Courtney at [channelingbrave@gmail.com](mailto:channelingbrave@gmail.com) to set up your visit.**

(If these prices are beyond your school's budget or you are a title I school, we can negotiate. There are many ways to make a visit more affordable. You can partner with another school in your area and share travel expenses as well as classroom time or you can promise to purchase a certain number of books. If I can afford to visit your school, I would love to speak with your students.)

Librarian Links:

[Book Talk 2015 Powerpoint](#)

[Book Talk 2015 Printable](#)

[Psychology List](#)

SIBA



photo by Jen & Chris Creed, 2013

About Me



 **Court**

Nashville, TN

I am a storyteller. My debut