

The Way I Used To Be

Amber Smith

Reviewed By: Jasmine Han, 15

Star Teen Book Reviewer of the Be the Star You Are! Charity

www.bethestaryouare.org

All her life, Eden McCrory is characterized as a goody-two-shoes geek who mainly focused on academics and had very few friends. However, this rapidly changes. During her freshman year of high school, Edy goes through a traumatic and unimaginable event; she is raped by her brother Caelin's best friend Kevin. Her innocence is stolen from her and she eventually becomes dissatisfied with who she is as a person. In an attempt to get rid of her self hatred and disgust from what happened to her, Edy undergoes a transformation to make herself seem older and more attractive during her sophomore year. During this time she meets a senior named Josh, in which they quickly become close and start to secretly date. Josh reveals a lot of personal details about himself and his family to Edy, but Edy has a hard time truly opening up to him. As one lie leads to another, Edy and Josh break up. In her junior year, it is obvious Edy is headed towards a really bad place. She begins to drink and do drugs often, and becomes known as the party girl who is willing to hook up with anyone. She also begins to distance herself from her own family and friends. By senior year, Edy is a complete mess, with no plans for her future. She constantly parties and hooks up with strangers to escape all of the troubles in her life. This is also when Edy and her family learn of an accusation of rape against Kevin by his new girlfriend. While her family is in disbelief and doesn't believe Kevin is guilty, Edy struggles to decide whether to tell anyone about what had happened to her. She eventually meets up with Josh and tells him about what had happened to her during her freshman year, and gathers up the courage to tell her brother and the police. This story depicts the downward spiral of a high school girl who is affected by rape and how much it affects her life.

This book carried some pretty heavy topics but was overall captivating and a really interesting read. I enjoyed this book because it was so different from any of the other books I had read in the past and the author had made the story realistic and potentially relatable to other girls. It had topics in it such as sexual assault, a prevalent and widespread issue in today's society. The book was emotional and really helped me understand what Edy was feeling when she was losing herself.

I can't say there were any parts of the book I disliked. It was a decently long story, but I read the book faster than I thought I would; I had such a hard time putting it down. This book is definitely more mature and contains some heavy topics that are not appropriate for kids 13 and younger. The book is not particularly high in difficulty but contains some touchy subjects for some readers. This book would be good to give as a gift and I think that it should appeal to a wide range of readers.

Recommended Titles:

The Last to Let Go by Amber Smith

They Both Die at the End by Adam Silvera

A List of Cages by Robin Roe