

REVIEWS FOR DIANE GUNTRIP'S BOOKS

"A powerful tale told through the eyes of a young teenage girl as she struggles with finding herself. A powerful read for both children and adults alike!"

Andrea Thompson, Educator (Canada), 14/04/2019

"Dear H' by Diane Guntrip is a children's book written in diary form. It follows the story of 12-year-old Amanda as she endures bullying due to her weight and appearance. On top of the bullying, Amanda just doesn't feel like she can confide in her parents. She writes to her imaginary friend 'H' to help her cope with her insecurities and the relentless bullies at her school, the worst of which is a girl named Cassandra who will not let Amanda forget how 'fat and frumpy' she is. However, she might have just one trick up her sleeve to make the bullying stop. You'll have to read this book to see what that trick might be.

This is an amazing book with a great lesson. Amanda is a character that many children and young teens could relate to, especially if they have experienced bullying. This book teaches what some of the effects of bullying can be. I love that it does this in a light-hearted way that isn't too serious for such a young group of readers. Even though it is light-hearted, you really can't miss the message because it is coming straight from the character who is being bullied. Bullying is a very relevant topic in society today, especially for those close to Amanda's age, and this book did a great job bringing the problem to light.

The style of writing sounded just like a 12 year old girl who is confiding in her diary. It is very believable, and I found myself hanging on every word. Amanda was dramatic at times and vulnerable at others, and she reminded me quite a bit of myself at that age (frumpiness included). There were even a few parts I found myself laughing at. This inclusion of humour really broke up the seriousness of the book, which I think is important since it is intended for a young audience. As a whole, I think it is perfectly written for that audience.

I give this book 4 out of 4 stars. The writing was excellent, the grammar was on point, and the message was very touching. I honestly can't think of anything to complain about with this book. The author did a great job making such a difficult topic so easy to read about. I would recommend 'Dear H' to all children around middle school age, especially those who have been subjected to bullying."

Annelore. Official Online Book Club Review 04 Jan 2019

"We had a fabulous term thank you. Your book made it. So thank you for your input. Overall, I believe your book allowed for some challenging discussion topics to be approached amongst the class."

Bonita Barham, Secondary English Teacher, Bold Park Community School, Perth. 2018

"I had Diane visit North Morley Primary School and Embleton Primary School this year and witnessed her talk with the children about this book. I have read this book as well as other students, teachers and parents from these schools. The feedback from all was extremely positive. This book is directed at children from a child's point of view and the subject of bullying is something this book focuses on in a way that is easily read by the children. Even the boys were wanting to read this book. The text is easy to read and engaging. Being in a diary form, the children have expectations of the next page and what is going to happen next. This is one I would recommend all schools have in their library."

November, 2017 L Letizia

"Dear H' is a brilliant book. I like the way it ended because she gets her family back."

Chelsea, Year 5

"Dear H' - I felt as though I was in the book. It was amazing and funny. I'm reading it for the second time now!"

Lacey, Year 5

"Hi my name is Anh and I am from Beechboro Christian School. I've read 'Dear H' and I really enjoyed it because of how its relatable to regular life and how she is independent about the situation."

Anh, Year 5

"Hi Naomi here. I loved the part when something good happened and then something bad but it ended up good."

Naomi, Year 5

"It was interesting and engaging. It is like most young teenagers' lives. My favourite part was when she visited her grandma because she enjoyed her grandma's company."

Frankie aged 11 August 2017

"Diane Guntrip's first novel Dear H is written in diary form by the main character, 12 year old Amanda. She is an overweight, bullied and depressed girl plagued with self-doubts and hatred.

Her diary covers a period of approximately 18 months where her life changes dramatically. After the miseries of being bullied verbally and by text messages from Cassandra and her gang of girls, Amanda manages to forge strong bonds with her grandmother. The turning point in her life occurs when her grandmother buys Amanda singing lessons for her 13th birthday. When Amanda wins a singing scholarship at a distant boarding school, her parents realise that they have been far too self absorbed with their own busy lives and hobbies. Neither knew of their daughter's victimization at school.

Written wholly in diary form with a print style resembling handwriting, this novel should be read by all parents of young teenage girls as well as the children themselves. It effectively portrays Amanda's fears, panic attacks and later her triumphs.

Diane has drawn on her considerable experience in teaching primary school children to realistically convey the agonies of an isolated and bullied teenage girl. With just 185 pages, this novel is easy to read and engages the reader throughout the process of reading it.

It is a worthwhile read which should provoke much discussion within both primary and lower secondary schools."

Jenette Graham, Former Teacher/Librarian July 2017

"Being bullied - openly or covertly, is something that psychologically scars a child and/or young adult for life. It changes the way they walk, talk, breathe and think from the moment of impact. This is a truly moving and beautiful exploration of one girl's experience of bullying and her resilient way of coping. She draws on her internal and external resources and with guts, determination and grit she overcomes. Beautifully written, this is an inspirational story that any teenage girl would love to read - and should."

Claire Orange, Children's Mental health Specialist and Author. Perth, WA 4th February, 2017

"An excellent story proving and encouraging yourself to not give up, follow your dreams and to listen to people who care. In this book, a very trusting Gran."

Gail S, New Zealand, 19th January, 2017

"I thought this was a wonderful, well written book. I love the way it is written in diary format and think all teenagers should read it."

Janine L, Sheffield, UK June 2016

"I liked reading about Amanda and how she overcame her problems to do what she wanted to do. I also enjoyed how the book was written and it was easy to read."

Samantha, aged 12, Western Australia, June 2016

"This was a delightful book that explores a teen's struggle with low self-esteem, bullying and being over weight. She finds her way to a better self via two keys to adolescent well-being - a 'lighthouse' and finding a spark. Quietly inspirational and empowering."

Maggie Dent, Perth, WA, 10th February, 2016

"A must read for every teenage girl who is being bullied. Loved the book, written with feeling about the problems of bullying."

Sheila B, UK, 16th November, 2015

"Absolutely brilliant! A book well overdue!"

Keith C, Perth, WA, 8th November, 2015

"It addressed the need of parents to be involved in their children's lives, as well as the problem bullying is in our society. It is written clearly and was easy to follow and would be great for kids who aren't that 'in' to reading as well as others who really enjoy reading."

Alyssa, aged 12, Perth, WA

"I had to write and congratulate you on your wonderful book. I read it in one go on Sunday afternoon and I couldn't put it down. It is topical, fast paced and should do extremely well."

Brenda B 7th Sept 2015

"I didn't read the first book, 'Dear H', but found I could read this and pick up the gist of the first story. The book is well written and is in the form of diary entries of 14 year old Amanda. It covers bullying, anxiety, mental health, study pressure, parenting issues and much more. It is suited for ages 13 years + and would be ideal for parents to read too. I think it would be an excellent book to be in schools to be read and discussed in the class."

Tracy Mackay 24th December, 2018

"Just read this book and it is so well written. It's fantastic. I love how you feel you are a part of the main character's highs and lows. The story highlights how bullying can affect young people and also how life can get better. I can't recommend it enough."

Janine Laver, Sheffield, UK Sept 2017

"This book continues the story of Amanda, and again is written in "easy to read" diary form. It tackles several issues that worry teenagers, and I would recommend it, not only as a good read for aged 13 upwards, but also as a basis for discussion."

June Smith, Nottingham, UK Sept 2017

"Bullying as a social issue and injustice in homes, schools and workplaces is a topic that piques the interest and attention of children and adults all over the world."

Diane's sequel to 'Dear H' - 'The Daisy Chain' was a beautiful read and clever exploration of the internal and external repercussions of bullying. Using the concept of developing a bullying support group to explore the long term psychological scars of bullying, Diane explores the complexities of the wounded internal voice driving self-protective behaviours in various characters. Whilst some, like

Amanda, find healthy ways to understand and restore themselves after serious bullying, others have less well adapted behaviours that result in long term life fall out - like unwanted teen pregnancy, self harm and mental illness.

I loved that Diane kept the narrative real and true to the ramifications of bullying. Is it always comfortable reading? No - but that is exactly why this wonderful novel should be on the reading list for all our young teens. Bullying has a serious impact on those who have experienced it, for their families and their friends. It is a daily reality for some children and at some point in life, it will be the reality for almost everyone.

Knowing that building a strong support network is part of a solution is the greatest learning that Diane's novel imparts. Overcoming the shame, the isolation and the lingering psychological scars requires reaching out and developing a strong and supportive safety net of people.

Diane, congratulations on an engaging, deep, confronting, warm novel that does the difficulties associated with bullying justice. You have remarkable insight and have captured it so beautifully in 'The Daisy Chain'. It is certainly a worthy read that I would recommend - in fact, encourage. Thank you for sharing with me - I eagerly anticipate the sequel."

Claire Orange, Children's Mental Health Specialist and Author. 14th June, 2017

"Diane Guntrip's second novel, 'The Daisy Chain' is written in diary form. The main character, Amanda, is a 14 year-old teenage girl who boards at St Celia's Academy of Music. She keeps a diary of the major events of her life by writing to an imaginary friend Dear H. With a very readable style the novel is a sequel to 'Dear H' which explored Amanda's problems when she was bullied at primary school.

Teenage pregnancy, bullying, pressures with school work as well as the stresses of being away from parents are all topics which are addressed in this novel. Several students form an anti-bullying support group called the Daisy Chain. Clear guidelines are given to readers as to how to combat bullying if they are exposed to this. Much of this novel could be used as discussion points for students experiencing bullying at home or online.

Each diary entry is short with most being only 1 - 2 pages long and is written in an engaging and easily accessible form. The handwritten letters rather than typeface seem to be a more personal approach to the readers. I would recommend this novel for young teenage girls and their parents. It is a novel which should be found in every school library."

Jenette Graham, Former Teacher/Librarian June 2017