

1
Why does Melinda isolate herself from her friends? Given her situation can you relate to this or would you handle it differently? How?

2
Do you think Heather and Melinda were ever really friends? Have you ever been friends with somebody purely because of a situation you were in and not because you really liked them or shared similar interests?

3
What finally allows Melinda to speak?

4
Despite her inward sense of humor, to the outside world Melinda seems seriously depressed. In what ways does she show her depression? How do the people around her react to these behaviors? Do you think they respond appropriately? How would you respond to someone acting like Melinda does?

1
Kate wishes to attend MIT like her mother before her. In what other ways do you see Kate taking on the role of mother in her own life and in the lives of others?

2
An avid runner, Kate seems to be constantly on the move both literally and figuratively. Psychologically, what do you think she is running away from?

3
Both Teri and Kate experience loss in this novel (the loss of a child; the loss of a dream). Although radically different in nature, in what ways are their experiences similar?

4
There are two sides to Kate's personality: Good Kate and Bad Kate. Teri certainly shows her bad side to the world, but what glimpses do you see of her good side?

1
Unlike her best friend Natalie, Ashley starts out being not much of a prom girl, but in the end she does all that she can to make sure this year's prom is the best it can be. Why do you think she changes her mind? Is it just in the spirit of helping her prom-obsessed friend save her dream or is there more to it than that?

2
On the surface Ashley seems like a very unmotivated person: she skips classes, receives detentions, only does her homework occasionally. Is there more to her than meets the eye? Is she the same person at the end of the story as she was at the beginning?

3
Do you think Ashley had the right to attend the prom? In order to go, she has to break the rules. Is she justified in doing so or would staying at home prove she learned her lesson to accept responsibility? What would you have done in her shoes?

4
For lots of people, prom is one of the pinnacle experiences of high school. Why do you think Ashley just isn't into it at first? Despite everything, she manages to have a great time at the prom. Do you think you would be able to enjoy the type of prom that Ashley and her friends put together? Or would you be disappointed?

1
When discussing *Faustus*, Tyler's teacher explains, "God is speaking to him, dropping a giant hint that he should take off, follow the light if you will; do something positive instead of sealing the deal with the devil." In what ways has Tyler come close to the idea of making a deal with the devil? Are there any people in his life who encourage him to "follow the light"?

2
When Tyler goes to find his father's gun he describes it as being wrapped in his grandfather's sweater. Is there any significance to this seemingly small detail?

3
At the beginning of the book Tyler introduces the reader to the video game Tophet where you must "survive through 66 Levels of Torment." By the end of the novel, Tyler has mastered the game and must choose between continuing on as the Lord of Darkness or moving on into the light. "I chose wisely" are the last words of the book. What was his decision and how does it mirror his own life?

Think it would be hard to start your own reading group? All you need is a little bit of organization and some friends who are as excited about the books they read as you are. Here are a few tips to get you started:

The best way to find people to be in your reading group is to ask your friends. Think of all the people you know who like to read, and ask them to join. If you still don't feel like you have enough people, ask each of your friends to bring someone else. You can usually get a good discussion going with 6–8 people, but any number that is comfortable for you will work. If you're having trouble finding enough cool people to form your reading group, check with your local library or bookstore to see if there's a group that you can join.

Figure out when and where you want to meet. Some groups meet once a month, some meet every other month. You could get together at someone's house, in a park, or on the beach. If it sounds too official and overwhelming to decide all the "wheres" and "whens" right now, don't worry! It's YOUR group and so YOU get to make all the decisions. All you have to do is get together once, and you can work out the rest of the details later.

Decide how you will choose books, and how the discussions will be run. This is another one that sounds a little scary but totally isn't. Maybe you have a favorite author that you and your friends would like to focus on. Or maybe you want to take turns picking your favorite book. Maybe one person likes to talk and would like to lead the discussion, or maybe you would rather just get together and talk about the books you are reading. If you get stuck, you can often find discussion questions online (try the publisher's website) or at your local library or bookstore.

But the most important thing to remember is that there's no right or wrong way to have a reading group. Do what you're comfortable with and always have fun, and your group will be a success!



"Laurie Halse Anderson is at the top of her storytelling game . . . This one comes with a guarantee."
—Chris Crutcher, author of *The Sledding Hill*

Laurie Halse Anderson

GET TO KNOW



Laurie Halse Anderson was born in Potsdam, a cold place in northern New York State where as a little girl, she pounded away at her father's old typewriter for hours, writing newspaper columns,

stories, and letters. She never intended to be an author. At Georgetown University, she majored in foreign languages and linguistics. Laurie hit the real world with no idea of what kind of work she wanted to do. She tried everything, including cleaning banks, milking cows, and working as a stockbroker. Being a reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* was a slight improvement, but she eventually quit to write books. Her first novel, *Speak*, was a National Book Award Finalist, a Michael L. Printz Honor Book, a *New York Times* Bestseller, and an American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults. Laurie currently lives with her family in Mexico, New York. To find out more about Laurie, visit her website at www.writerlady.com.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

TWISTED

Tyler's landscaping job develops his muscles, but also allows him to use his skills at digging holes: "I was good at digging holes. It was the rest of life I sucked at" (p. 39). What figurative holes has Tyler dug for himself in his life? Is it really true that he isn't good at anything else?

Although he doesn't seem like a depressed person, Tyler admits to being preoccupied with death. "Thinking about death relaxed me" (p. 44). Why? In what ways has he died and been reborn again throughout the story?

At Tyler's high school there is a clear distinction between the popular crowd and everyone else. Where do you fit in the social scale at your school? In what ways has the status you hold in your social sphere defined you? In what ways is this role true to who you are? In what ways is it not?

Why does Tyler like Bethany? Were there any signs early on that she might not really like him the same way he liked her? What do you think is her real attraction to him? Is it true when his sister Hannah says that it could never have worked out? In your own life, are there any examples of two very different people who manage to be together despite their apparent differences?

What do you think of Tyler's reaction to Bethany's behavior at the party? How would you react? Would you be sad? Angry?

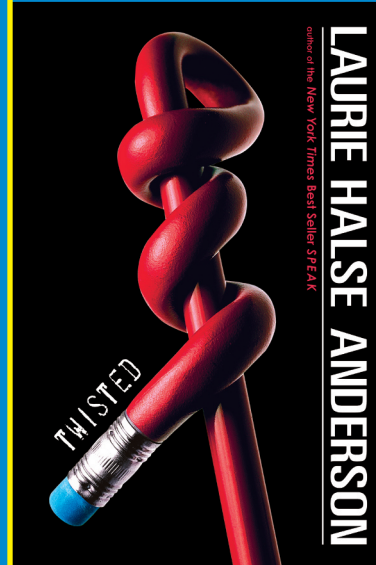
Why do you think Laurie Halse Anderson chose "Twisted" as the title of this novel? What does it mean in relation to the story?

On the surface Tyler seems to disrespect the janitors that he is made to work with as part of his probation. Yet they act as a sort of conscience and offer support later in the story. Have you ever gotten help from an unexpected source?

Who has Tyler been trying to be? His father? A loser? A cool guy? Which of these identities is closest to his true self?

* For more discussion questions see attached bookmark

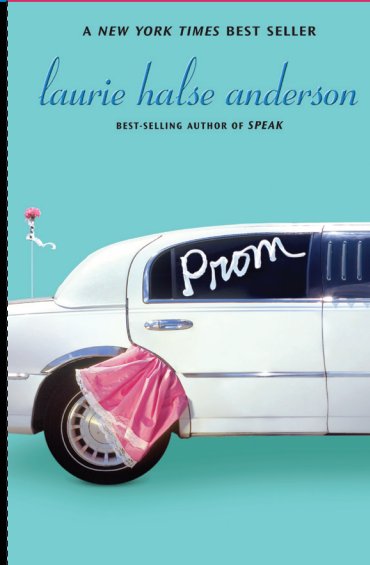
TWISTED



High-school senior Tyler Miller used to be the kind of guy who faded into the background—average student, average looks, average dysfunctional family. Then he was busted for vandalizing school property, and the hard body he gets from doing hard labor over the summer gets him noticed big-time and changes his life for the better—sort of, at least for a while . . .

Hardcover
978-0-670-06101-3
\$16.99 (\$21.00 CAN)

PROM

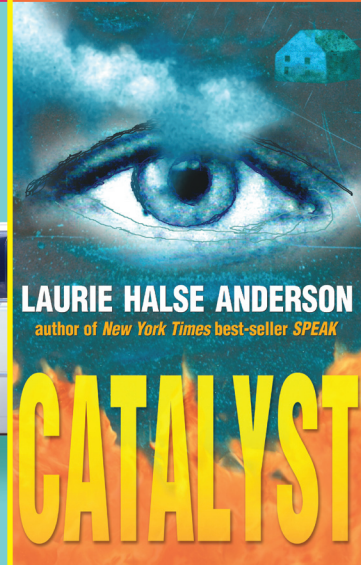


Ashley Hannigan is an eighteen-year-old girl who could not care less about the prom. But when the new math teacher steals all of the prom committee money, Ashley reluctantly pitches in and helps her prom-obsessed friends pull together some semblance of spectacularness—albeit homemade—to fulfill their dreams of one night of high school perfection.

Paperback
978-0-14-240570-3
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Hardcover
978-0-670-05974-4
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CATALYST



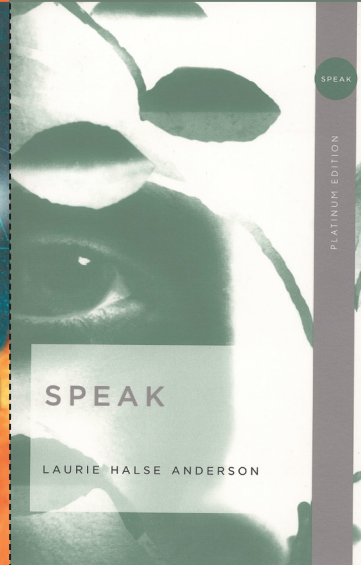
Meet Kate Malone: straight-A science and math geek, minister's daughter, ace long-distance runner, unwilling family caretaker, and emotional avoidance champion. Her one goal in life: to get into MIT, the only college she applied to. But with each passing day, Kate's life is less and less under control—and then something happens that truly blows it all apart.

Catalyst is a story of life, loss, and the power to go on after all that you have been living for is gone.

Paperback
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SPEAK



Laurie Halse Anderson's first novel is as stunning as it is impossible to put down. Funny and, at times, painful, *Speak* is the story of Melinda, a girl who becomes the town outcast literally overnight. The scary part is that what happened to Melinda could happen to anybody. Just when everything seems so promising, one bad thing can take it all away. . . .

Paperback
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