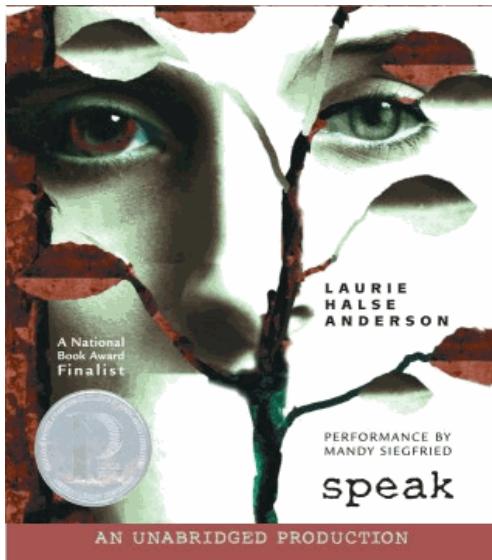


# SPEAK



*Young Adult*

**By Laurie Halse Anderson**

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## CONTENT WARNING

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**Minor Restricted**  
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| 3    | The school board has decided that "Merryweather High—Home of the Trojans" didn't send a strong abstinence message, so they have transformed us into the Blue Devils. Better the Devil you know than the Trojan you don't, I guess.  |
| 16   | I hear Dad turn on the television. Clink, clink, clink—he drops ice cubes in a heavy-bottomed glass and pours in some booze.  |
| 25   | I cut through the lunch line, loop around a couple making out by the door, and start down a hall. Mr. Neck stops to break up the PDA.   |
| 29   | My parents didn't raise me to be religious. The closest we come to worship is the Trinity of Visa, MasterCard, and American Express. I think the Merryweather cheerleaders confuse me because I missed out on Sunday School. It has to be a miracle. There is no other explanation. How else could they sleep with the football team on Saturday night and be reincarnated as virginal goddesses on Monday? |
|      | ...They are the Pride of the Trojans. Oops—I mean Pride of the Blue Devils.   |
|      | In Universe #2, they throw parties wild enough to attract college students. They worship the stink of Eau de Jocque. They rent beach houses in Cancún during Spring Break and get group-rate abortions before the prom.   |
| 49   | We can't be the Buccaneers because pirates supported violence and discrimination against women. The kid who suggests the Shoemakers in honor of the old moccasin factory is laughed out of the auditorium. Warriors insults Native Americans. I think Overbearing Eurocentric Patriarchs would be perfect, but I don't suggest it.  |
| 54   | His son wanted to be a firefighter, but didn't get the job. Mr. Neck is convinced that this is some kind of reverse discrimination. He says we should close our borders so that real Americans can get the jobs they deserve.<br>...Mr. Neck writes on the board again: "DEBATE: America should have closed her borders in 1900."   |
| 56   | David: "The Constitution does not recognize different classes of citizenship based on time spent living in the country. I am a citizen, with the same rights as your son, or you. As a citizen, and as a student, I am protesting the tone of this lesson as racist, intolerant, and xenophobic."   |
| 87   | I open up a paper clip and scratch it across the inside of my left wrist. Pitiful. If a suicide attempt is a cry for help, then what is this? A whimper, a peep? I draw little windowcracks of blood, etching line after line until it stops hurting. It looks like I arm-wrestled a rosebush.<br>...She says suicide is for cowards. This is an ugly nasty Momside.  |
| 118  | Picasso sure had a thing for naked women. Why not draw them with their clothes on? Who sits around without a shirt on, plucking a mandolin? Why not draw naked guys, just to be fair? Naked women is art, naked guys a no-no, I bet. Probably because most painters are men.  |
| 135  | He tilted my face up to his. He kissed me, man kiss, hard sweet and deep. Nearly knocked me off my feet, that kiss.<br>...He kissed me again. His teeth ground hard against my lips. It was hard to breathe.<br>...“Do you want to?” he asked.  |
|      | What did he say? I didn't answer. I didn't know. I didn't speak.  |
|      | We were on the ground. When did that happen? “No.” No I did not like this. I was on the ground and he was on top of me. My lips mumble something about leaving, about a friend who needs me, about my parents worrying. I can hear myself—I'm mumbling like a deranged  |

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|      | <p>drunk. His lips lock on mine and I can't say anything. I twist my head away. He is so heavy. There is a boulder on me. I open my mouth to breathe, to scream, and his hand covers it. In my head, my voice is as clear as a bell: "NO I DON'T WANT TO!" But I can't spit it out. I'm trying to remember how we got on the ground and where the moon went and wham! shirt up, shorts down, and the ground smells wet and dark and NO!—I'm not really here, I'm definitely back at Rachel's, crimping my hair and gluing on fake nails, and he smells like beer and mean and he hurts me hurts me hurts me and gets up and zips his jeans and smiles.</p> <p>The next thing I saw was the telephone. I stood in the middle of a drunken crowd and I called 911 because I needed help.</p> |
| 164  | <p>If it were an After-School Special, I would speak in front of an auditorium of my peers on How Not to Lose Your Virginity. Or, Why Seniors Should Be Locked Up. Or, My Summer Vacation: A Drunken Party, Lies, and Rape.</p> <p>Was I raped?</p> <p>Oprah: "Let's explore that. You said no. He covered your mouth with his hand. You were thirteen years old. It doesn't matter that you were drunk. Honey, you were raped. What a horrible, horrible thing for you to live through. Didn't you ever think of telling anyone? You can't keep this inside forever. Can someone get her a tissue?"</p>   |
| 174  | <p>"According to this, she has pissed off a whole bunch of people. One person wrote in huge letters that she's a whore, and all these others added on little details. She slept with this guy, she slept with that guy, she slept with those guys all at the same time. For a tenth-grader, she sure gets around."</p>   |
| 176  | <p>The climax of mating season is nearly upon us—the Senior Prom.</p> <p>..The only things we're learning are who is going with who (whom? must ask Hairwoman), who bought a dress in Manhattan, which limo company won't tell if you drink, the most expensive tux place, and on and on and on.</p>   |
| 183  | <p>I didn't call the cops to break up the party, I write. I called—I put the pencil down. I pick it up again—them because some guy raped me. Under the trees. I didn't know what to do. She watches as I carve out the words. She leans closer to me. I write more. I was stupid and drunk and I didn't know what was happening and then he hurt—I scribble that out—raped me. When the police came, everyone was screaming, and I was just too scared, so I cut through some back yards and walked home.</p>  |
| 186  | <p>What's the name of that drug they give perverts so they can't get it up?<br/>   Diprosomething.</p> <p>He should get it every morning in his orange juice. I went out with him to the movies—he tried to get his hands down my pants during the PREVIEWS!!</p>  |
| 191  | <p>They say she and Andy argued during a slow song. They say he was all over her with his hands and his mouth. While they danced, he was grinding against her and she backed off.</p> <p>...He got wicked drunk at a party and passed out in a bowl of bean dip.</p>   |
| 193  | <p>Andy Beast: "You have a big mouth, you know it? Rachel blew me off at the prom, giving me some bullshit story about how I raped you. You know that's a lie. I never raped anybody. I don't have to. You wanted it just as bad as I did. But your feelings got hurt, so you started spreading lies, and now every girl in school is talking about me like I'm some kind of pervert. You've been spreading that bullshit story for weeks. What's wrong, ugly, you jealous? Can't</p>  |

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|      | <p>get a date?"</p> <p>...Beast: "You're not going to scream. You didn't scream before. You liked it. You're jealous that I took out your friend and not you. I think I know what you want."</p> <p>His mouth is on my face. I twist my head. His lips are wet, his teeth knock against my cheekbone. I pull my arms again and he slams his body against mine. I have no legs. My heart wobbles. His teeth are on my neck. The only sound I can make is a whimper. He fumbles to hold both my wrists in one hand. He wants a free hand. I remember I remember. Metal hands, hot knife hands.</p> <p>...He curses and turns, his fist coming, coming. An explosion in my head and blood in my mouth. He hit me.</p> <p>...He grabs me, pulls me away from the door, one hand over my mouth, one hand around my throat. He leans me against the sink. My fists mean nothing to him, little rabbit paws thumping harmlessly. His body crushes me.</p> |
| 198  | Andy Evans raped me in August when I was drunk and too young to know what was happening.   |
| 199  | <p>You: I was raped, too sexually assaulted in seventh grade, tenth grade, the summer after graduation, at a party i was 16 i was 14 i was 5 and he did it for three years i loved him i didn't even know him. He was my best friend's brother, my grandfather, father, mommy's boyfriend, my date my cousin my coach i met him for the first time that night and—four guys took turns, and—i'm a boy and this happened to me, and—</p> <p>...You: i wasn't raped, but my dad drinks, but i hate talking, but</p>  |

| Profanity | Count |
|-----------|-------|
| Ass       | 1     |
| Bitch     | 5     |
| Piss      | 7     |
| Shit      | 2     |