



A Danger to Herself and Others

Alyssa B. Sheinmel

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Only when she's locked away does the truth begin to escape...

Four walls. One window. No way to escape. Hannah knows there's been a mistake. She didn't need to be institutionalized. What happened to her roommate at her summer program was an accident. As soon as the doctors and judge figure out that she isn't a danger to herself or others, she can go home to start her senior year. In the meantime, she is going to use her persuasive skills to get the staff on her side.

Then Lucy arrives. Lucy has her own baggage. And she may be the only person who can get Hannah to confront the dangerous games and secrets that landed her in confinement in the first place.

A Danger to Herself and Others Details

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From Reader Review A Danger to Herself and Others for online ebook

Diana says

Well, wasn't this book unputdownable (is that even a word?!). I began reading it and I just couldn't put it down until I had finished it around two in the morning. It is THAT good.

We find Hannah, our main character, a girl who finds herself in a mental institution against her will, labelled "a danger to herself and others" as a result of a game played with a friend which has ended with said friend in a comma. Hannah firmly believes it has been some error, and when they find out, she is gonna walk out. Only it seems they aren't finding out it was an error... So, what happened to Hannah's friend? What did she do, if she did do anything?

I don't want to give anything up plot wise, because I think the less you know, the better. Just now the narrative is top notch, the characters are really fleshed out, and when we began discovering what's inside Hannah's mind we are gonna be left astonished, scared sometimes, and wanting to know more. And all the while Hannah keeps being a character we want to know more of, with a story to tell us, a character that is gonna show her layers until we get to her core.

I have to say that I read this book more as a thriller kind of book than a mental health one, it felt better this way. What I mean is, this is not a book to raise mental health awareness -even if it dwells a bit there-, but a book where something terrible happened and as we are reading we are getting insight into what, how and the consequences of that. Probably there are artistic licenses taken in order to provide us with this alluring masterpiece, but this is a book I enjoyed a lot (as you can see from the top notch rating I gave it). In fact, I enjoyed this book so much, that already I am looking through the other books she has written :)

Amy says

"Hannah Gold doesn't belong in a place like this. Hannah Gold wouldn't hurt a fly."

Okay, I have to say it, if you're going to describe a book as **Girl, Interrupted** meets **We Were Liars**... You really need to bring it. Those are both very dark stories and to be a combination of the two, you really need to take a chance and just *go for it*. Mess with our heads a little. And I just feel like this story is far too safe for that description. And that's not to say I didn't like it. I did. I just thought there could be more.

THE PLOT

After a tragic accident this summer leaves her roommate critically injured, Hannah finds herself institutionalized. As soon as the doctors and judge figure out that she isn't a danger to herself or others, she can go home to start her senior year.

Then Lucy arrives. Lucy has her own baggage. And she may be the only person who can get Hannah to confront the dangerous games and secrets that landed her in confinement in the first place.

THE CHARACTERS:

"I smile again, this time for real. It was so easy when I was five, to manipulate my parents' friends into being ashamed of their own children, into thinking I was so much better."

Hannah is DIABOLICAL. I found her to be very interesting and as someone who really enjoys dialogue

WAY more than inner monologues, I still found her POV to be very engaging. I loved how Hannah seems like your ordinary overachiever, but you can sense something is not quite right.

“Luckily, I know how to become someone’s best friend. It’s a skill I’ve honed since kindergarten.”

Her parents are garbage. Honestly, THAT was one of the more tragic parts.

WHAT I LIKED:

I really liked the beginning. It is so strong and so well paced. The beginning is a beautiful slow burn, with little crumbs of the truth peppered throughout, just enough detail to know something is not quite right, but not enough to really guess what’s going on. It was so truly amazing.

WHAT I DIDN’T LIKE:

The second half felt way too rushed. The beginning is so wonderful, but then it felt like trying to fit a lot of story into not enough pages.

Overall, I liked this story. I liked the characters and the plot. I liked the way the author was able to slowly show something just isn’t quite right without being too apparent, just seeds of doubt...

I thought the ending was too rushed but with an extra 50 – 100 pages (there is that much that could have been really delved into), the story could have gone from a 3 star to a 4 star for me.

Thank you to NetGalley and SOURCEBOOKS Fire for providing me a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Amanda says

You can also read my review here: <https://devouringbooks2017.wordpress....>

I have read a lot of books that are set in mental hospitals and so many of them feel the same that I almost didn’t want to read this one. But something really drew me to this title, probably the title itself. Rather than reading about someone who is merely mentally ill, the title tells me that the main character is also dangerous, which I found to be different than most other novels written about mental hospitals. Sure, most of the characters that I read about were dangerous themselves, but others? No. This book seem to offer something more than I was used to.

Hannah was an interesting character to read about. She was manipulative and a bit cocky, believing that she was smarter than everyone around her. She was a very imperfect character, which made her so much fun to read about. *A Danger to Herself and Others* is written in first-person, which is crucial for understanding Hannah’s character arc because you see the story and events from her point of view.

The writing feels deeply personal. The amount of details given make the story come to life and feel tangible. The setting is typically one that may become boring, but it didn’t because of the way that it was written. Any novel set in a mental institution has the possibility of becoming monotonous, as the same thing happens every day. There is so much more to the story than that though. There is an interesting plot and a very important character arc.

A Danger to Herself and Others represents mental illness and shows that they can affect anyone. Hannah is a brilliant wealthy girl from the Upper East Side. She isn't poor or dumb. She isn't living under a bridge. It is also showed what it is like to come to terms with a diagnosis from the patient's point of view. It showed the fear that the diagnosis might change how people looked at her and treated her. This representation is important because mental illness isn't always understood.

This novel manages to stand out among the many other books with similar settings. The writing feels so personal and Hannah is a character that is fleshed out so well that the novel grabs you. After reading I feel as if I know Hannah and have walked this journey with her. The writing really takes this novel to a whole other level. With this book being my first read by Alyssa Sheinmel, I want to check out her other books. I believe that her writing could bring any story to life.

Alana • thebookishchick says

If you love unreliable narrators **PICK THIS UP.**

You can thank me later.

RTC.

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Inge says

There aren't enough mental health books out there that put psychosis in a sympathetic light. Characters with this illness are usually portrayed as dangerous, maniacal, and sure, this book does come with some thriller elements. The words "a danger to herself and others" are repeated ad nauseum. Hannah Gold's best friend is in the hospital, and Hannah may or may not have put her there. Things are not how they seem.

But *A Danger to Herself and Others* is also very much about Hannah's road to recovery, finding a treatment that fits her, finding the right diagnosis - and then what? It shows how important therapy and medication can be. I can't say how accurate this was, but I appreciated reading the story from Hannah's point of view and how *she* saw things, how things made *her* feel.

Overall, it's a quick and engaging read, I think especially for readers who don't know much about psychosis.

Thank you to NetGalley and Sourcebooks Fire for providing me with a copy

Gaby (lookingatbooks) says

I can't wait to start this one. It sounds so intriguing...

Elizabeth says

Tl;dr: A Danger to Herself and Others is a first rate and gorgeously written contemporary young adult novel.

The description of A Danger to Herself and Others makes it seem like your typical girl in institution (aka unreliable narrator) deals with her issues and her roommate.

Go into it like that.

Because it is so much better than that. So so much better.

Hannah is a brilliant, egocentric, soon to be high school senior staying in California for an intensive summer study program who finds herself in a mental hospital after her roommate, Agnes, falls out of their doom window and is severely injured.

Hannah is annoyed by the whole situation--she and Agnes were friends, best friends even, and locking her up for no reason other than to satisfy Agnes's parents is totally unfair. But her parents' attorney, who has no experience in anything except maybe wills, seems to think it's okay and her parents are off to Europe so she decides to get through it and get home to school.

The doctor "treating" her, Dr. Lightfoot, is an idiot who doesn't even use proper grammar and is forever dragging an orderly in during her visits because Hannah has been deemed a danger to herself and others because of what happened with Agnes and it's so stupid because she liked Agnes a lot. Except that she also really likes Josh, who she met first but who ended up with Agnes even as he and Hannah kept hooking up. Still, it's not like she didn't know that Josh really liked her too. (Yes, Hannah is an obviously unreliable narrator. Stick it out.)

Dr. Lightfoot won't talk about when she can leave, and Hannah knows the first day of school is coming and she can't afford to miss it. She likes school, she has plans for college, and her parents are so proud of how smart and mature she is--plus, she's used to being independent and not being stuck in a grimy room wearing paper clothes.

So, when she's finally assigned a roommate, Lucy, Hannah decides she'll make friends with her, showing Dr. Lightfoot she's fine and not a danger to herself or anyone and then she can go home and back to school.

And A Danger to Herself and Others is exactly this story but also more. And because of spoilers I won't say anything else except two things:

1. I had to take a short break from reading this about halfway through because I felt as restless as Hannah did because the writing is that good and then because I felt like I'd been dropped on my head (and in the best way, the "Oh--wait?! \$#x=!" kind of way).
2. The last chapter is so amazing. It's beautiful and horrible and perfect. I'm still thinking about it. I will be thinking about it for quite a while.

I did receive an ARC of this, but preordered it at the halfway mark because yes, it is that damn good and kudos to Ms. Sheinmel for writing this gorgeous and unflinching book. It releases in February 2019, and is already on my best of the year list. Very highly recommended.

Mari Yeung says

Alyssa B. Sheinmel's latest book, *A Danger to Herself and Others*, is a **young adult dark contemporary book about mental health, about people's prejudices, but also about gradually learning to accept yourself as you are.**

Hannah Gold has been wrongly accused of hurting her best friend from summer camp and sent to a mental health institute to be diagnosed, even if she's sure she shouldn't be there with real patients.

Of course, the other patients are here because there's actually something wrong with them. I'm only here because of a misunderstanding, so there's no need for me to panic.

However the reader knows something's up from the first chapters of this novel. **Hannah is in fact an unreliable narrator**, and the book is told exclusively from her perspective. That's why reading *A Danger to Herself and Others* was interesting, entertaining, and a challenge in itself.

I gaze out the window. [...] There are redwood trees as far as I can see, and when the fog gets thick, it condenses on the needlelike leaves and drips onto the roof. It sounds like rain, but it isn't.

It's not true that I can only see a few plants from here. We're actually in the middle of a forest. I was lying before.

This book has an excellent mental health representation. The main character spends almost all her days inside a single room and has daily meetings with her therapist. This way the reader gets to really understand how Hannah's head works and why she has certain goals in her life. At the beginning she can even come out as a creepy character, for example when she seems determined to make new best friends with every girl who has something in common with her.

She is also calculative, determined to obtain what she wants, and she is not scared to use other people in the process. **This is why the institute assigning her a roommate, Lucy, seems like a bad decision. However, her friendship with Lucy is going to end up influencing Hannah's recovery in unexpected ways.**

The represented mental illness is finally seen with different eyes in this book. ***A Danger to Herself and Others: there's a reason behind the title and you'll be reminded about it quite a lot (maybe too many times)***, but in the end it's there to explain you that people with mental illnesses are not "crazy" or "not normal". Their brains just work in different ways, and it's not because of that that we should treat them differently and have prejudices against them.

Ignorant people are scared of what people with mental illnesses could do to them, but it turns out they are more a danger to themselves and they are confused about what they should feel. As a result, they should be loved more than ever.

*But can you really call it sanity when it isn't real, it isn't natural, it's chemically induced?
When it doesn't technically belong to me because I wouldn't have it without the pills they keep giving me?
Maybe I'll never know for certain what's real, what's madness, what's the medication.*

All the characters shine in this book. All of them have their round personality and goals. I particularly found Hannah's closeminded parents to be very unlikeable and vexing, but that's why they stood out so much.

I also enjoyed the writing style a lot, as it was quick and simple, but not too much. It really showed Hannah's personality.

The plot was the weakest part of this novel, instead. While the mental illness representation and the acceptance process were really well done, the rest wasn't as exciting. The reader is left with Hannah's thoughts for the entirety of the book, and only a few major plot points happen. Sometimes she wanders a bit too much with her thoughts when there's no reason to be given that information. This can lead the reader to feel bored, even if the writing style never lets you put the book down. **The “mystery” also wasn’t exactly a mystery as it was advertised.**

In conclusion, **this book is highly recommended to people who are tired of seeing mental illnesses romanticized and want to see good YA representation instead.**

*That's just my imagination, not a hallucination.
That's okay.*

Thank you to The Nerd Daily, Sourcebooks Fire and Netgalley for this ARC.

Holly says

A Danger to Herself and Others is a YA novel that deals with mental illness and coming to terms with a diagnosis. The book is part mystery, part thriller and is a compelling and fast read. I recommend it and I plan to read Sheinmel's previous books. A Danger to Herself and Others grabbed me with the very first sentence:

When I first got here - when they brought me here - a man with blue pants and a matching shirt, both of which looked like they were made out of paper, asked me questions.

We soon learn that our protagonist is Hannah Gold, a 17 year old high school student is in a mental institution after her roommate Agnes is in a terrible accident and she is a suspect. Hannah keeps reminding herself and the reader that it is exactly that — an accident. She wholeheartedly believes that her “imprisonment” is a huge mistake and is determined to correct it and get back to school.

A Danger to Herself and Others keeps the reader guessing and it's not clear what's real and what's not. Is Hannah a reliable narrator? I was intrigued by Hannah's description of the hospital's setting the end of chapter 1 and the end of chapter 2, which led me to suspect that she is an unreliable narrator:

I stand on my tiptoes to look out my small window and wait for the few plants and trees I can see to dry out and die. (end of ch.1)

It's not true that I can only see a few plants from here. We're actually in the middle of a forest. I was lying before. (end of ch. 2)

One gets to know Hannah well through her internal thought process. Some of her thinking is pure stream of consciousness which I enjoyed reading, like at the beginning of chapter 5 when she looks at and contemplates the sky, then the ceiling, then the walls, and then the ceiling lights. From there she imagines what would happen if the bulbs stopped working. Would they let a maintenance worker come in her room to fix them, considering that they have labelled her “a danger to herself and others?” Would they send her outside? There is a lot more detail to these thoughts in Hannah's mind.

Sheinmel writes Hannah as witty and clever, which makes A Danger to Herself and Others a more entertaining read. For example, she nicknames her psychiatrist Dr. Lightfoot because she wears ballet slippers and taps the floor as she walks. Also, Hannah doles out interesting tidbits to ponder along the way.

I suppose your name is the first thing that ever really belongs to you, but when you think about it, it's not yours at all. Your parents chose it.

They needed someone to blame, and I was the only available scapegoat. Their daughter was my best friend. Playing the scapegoat was the least I could do under the circumstances.

Being locked up is absurdly boring. The monotony is enough to drive a sane person crazy.

Some of Hannah's thinking is amusing, which endears herself to the reader. She is a likable protagonist and I found myself rooting for her.

I know a bedpan is supposed to be humiliating, but I have to disagree. There's something oddly luxurious about not having to leave the bed to pee. And about the fact that someone else has to take your waste away. You don't even have to flush it yourself.

I don't feel like talking. I don't feel like thinking, either. Thinking means doubting, and doubting means Lightfoot has gotten under my skin like a rash that won't stop spreading. Doubt means I'm beginning to believe what she says about me. I wish there were an antidoubt drug I could take instead of whatever Lightfoot gave me.

Hannah alludes to a classic psychology experiment in the early 1970s in which a psychologist and others easily get themselves admitted to a mental hospital after claiming they heard voices saying empty, hollow and thud. Once they are diagnosed and admitted, these pseudo patients explain that they are not insane and

act normally. However, now that they have been labelled, all their subsequent behavior is viewed thru the mentally ill filter. For example, they take copious notes since this is a research experiment but such behavior is considered obsessive-compulsive by the hospital staff. The conclusion was essentially that one cannot differentiate between the sane and insane within the confines of a mental hospital.

"Whoa there," he says, reaching out to catch me. I want to shrug off his touch, but I don't. He might report it to Dr. Lightfoot. I imagine her noting the incident in my file. Hannah Gold doesn't like to be touched by nameless strangers. Out in the real world, that's good common sense. In here, it's a symptom.

Well, I understand everything. I understand that Dr. Lightfoot is lying to me, playing some kind of game, enjoying a sick power trip. Maybe she's still mad at me for getting locked out of my room the other day. Maybe she wants to remind me that she's the one in control, that as long as I'm in this room, the truth is whatever she decides it is.

But that is Hannah's mission, as she sees it, to prove to them that she is completely fine, this has all been a terrible mistake and what happened to Agnes was an accident. But does she know what she is really up against? Is her thinking in fact faulty and is she irrational?

Thank you to Sourcebooks Fire and NetGalley for an advanced reader copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Jordan (Rashell Reads) says

I received an ARC of A Danger to Herself and Others from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. I love a book with an unreliable narrator, and A Danger to Herself and Others gave me that. From the very beginning of the book, you don't really know what happened, because Hannah doesn't really know what happened. As soon as you think you figured out what the heck is going on, you're thrown down another rabbit hole that leaves you with more questions than answers. The only thing I didn't enjoy was the ending. I'm glad that Hannah is coming to terms with her diagnosis, but I really wished she would have stayed in the institute, where she was actually getting the care she needed, rather than going with her parents who didn't actually want anything to do with her. A Danger to Herself and Others is set to be released February 5, 2019, so I urge you to pick up a copy.

Rae says

A Danger to Herself and Others by Alyssa Sheinmel was an absolute whirlwind of a book. Featuring great representation of mental illnesses, this book kept me guessing the whole way through!

In A Danger to Herself and Others, Hannah finds herself in an institution after her school roommate falls out of a window. Hannah knows it's a mistake though--she didn't mean Agnes any harm! So Hannah bides her time in a small little room, waiting for the truth to come to light. While waiting, she's given a new roommate at the institution. Lucy! Through Lucy, Hannah starts down a slippery slope of self-discovery.

I adored A Danger to Herself and Others! This book exceeded my expectations in nearly every way. Fast-paced and interesting, I could have easily read this book in a single sitting.

A Danger to Herself and Others was told from a unique and interesting perspective. I had no idea what to make of Hannah when I first started reading the book. She seemed so smart and level-headed. As the book went on and Lightfoot, Hannah's therapist, was introduced, I started to question what I was reading and what I was seeing through Hannah's eyes. I loved that the book played with my perceptions and forced me to question Hannah's reality. The events had my mind spinning with so many questions!

The ending was sad. I don't think it was meant to be sad, but I found it sad because I didn't care for Hannah's parents. They didn't seem like they really wanted a child. They wanted a trophy, something worth of bragging about. Hannah's childhood, though painted through the lens of a pamper and spoiled life, felt very austere and cold. Nothing about Hannah's parents seemed warm and fuzzy, and to me, that's sad.

That said, the characters in the book were brilliantly written. Hannah was amazing. Lucy was fun. Lightfoot was intriguing. And Hannah's parents were nicely portrayed, even though they didn't have starring roles in the book. I fell in love with the cast of characters, especially Hannah. Hannah was a puzzle in the book, and I was keen to figure her out.

I enjoyed this book immensely, and hopefully you will too! Do yourself a favor and add this one to your TBR.

Thank you to NetGalley for providing the Kindle version of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Anja says

3.5 MENTAL STARS

My first book about mental illness and set in a mental hospital and I gotta say this was definitely unlike anything I've ever read before.

Hannah was a very unreliable narrator and I loved that. At first you don't realize that there's something *wrong* with her and you start doubting your own (in)sanity because she seems so normal, until about halfway through, things in her story start falling apart and the reasons for her being institutionalized start making sense. We're in Hannah's head the entire time and really go through the process of thinking there's been a mistake, realizing that she is sick, and coming to terms with it (more or less).

Though I did find the topic and the setting very interesting, I was kind of bored reading this. Not a lot happened during the story aside from Hannah going through the days, and I felt like they could've done a lot more with it. I personally expected more intrigue and suspense, but it was nice to have an inside look of Hannah's mind. The title of the book is mentioned a lot, to the point of becoming a bit repetitive.

This would be a good book for you if you're interested in the *mental* aspect of mental illness, or don't know much about it like me.

Received a free copy of this book from the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for my honest review.

Julie Parks says

Very emotional and captivating. Not just a guessing game. Will play mind games with your perception at times.

I received the copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for my honest review. Their blurb said "Girl, Interrupted meets We Were Liars" and I felt both intrigued and puzzled. But then I met Hannah on her own pages...and that attitude, that story she basically lives in.

The plot starts like a random end of a rope that you're somehow compelled to pull until it's pulling you and you're so deep in you're not sure what you believe anymore. You're Hannah and you're also not because you're only reading her thoughts.

Katie says

The ending was really dismal and kind of terrible, definitely not a favourite.

Sha says

Disclaimer: I received this ARC courtesy of Sourcebooks Fire through Netgalley. I am grateful for the opportunity to review an ARC for my readers, but this will not influence my final rating. All opinions expressed in this review are my own and based solely on the book.

This review will contain both a spoiler-free and a with-spoiler section. I do not recommend looking at the latter if you plan on reading *A Danger to Herself and Others* because a major plot point in the book would be ruined.

<><> SPOILER-FREE REVIEW <><>

The beginning of *A Danger to Herself and Others* didn't draw me in right away. The narrator and our main character, Hannah, describes her arrival at the psychiatric hospital from processing to placement in her room. The action happening in front of her (which would help physically situate the reader, things like a man asking her name, or her walking down a hall) was drowned out by her very scattered, seemingly random thoughts. I quickly realized this is how Hannah likes to be, that she processes what is in front of her and thinks deeply about everything before reacting. Getting used to her character took a moment, but once I knew that she was a studious and serious girl, I began to dig deeper into the book.

Hannah accepts her term at the psychiatric hospital with grace: she's not supposed to be there, so of course her time will be short since soon it will be discovered that she was placed by accident. Hannah knows why she was accidentally placed: it's left to the reader to uncover this information and if the decision was truly an accident over the course of the novel. Even though Hannah is calm about being placed, she still shows her dislike of being confined, of being told when to shower, of having someone else choose when and where she

eats. Her bursts of panic washed over me when she walked into her room — eight feet by seven as she had measured by pacing back and forth — to see the small space she inhabited and could not leave.

Hannah's days follow a close routine: meals and talk-therapy with "Dr. Lightfoot." (Hannah nicknamed the doctor based on ballet shoes the woman would wear.) Dr. Lightfoot's portrayal in the book is what truly made this reading both thought-provoking and unforgettable. (Not that Hannah's journey is anything to dismiss.) The doctor does not come to each session ready to crack open Hannah's secrets. She is not a wealth of happiness and joy, promising Hannah everything is going to be sunshine and rainbows. Dr. Lightfoot works steadily to see why Hannah is at the psychiatric hospital, becoming neither a friend nor an enemy. Just a doctor. Which was exactly what Hannah needed.

I don't know what I can say about Lucy other than her friendship with Hannah truly ruined me.

<><> SPOILER-(ish) REVIEW <><>

If you are reading this, I really hope you have either already read *A Danger to Herself and Others* because going into this book already spoiled will ruin a lot of the climax.

I want to touch on one great and grand thing that I find Sheinmel did very well with this book. A hands down reason that I believe this book needs to be shared with friends, with libraries, with teens suffering from mental illness.

Alyssa B. Sheinmel depicted a mental health institution positively. Out of context this does not make sense, so allow me to explain. I have never visited a MHI nor have I researched them. I have no knowledge on how they are run. The most information I do have comes from, surprisingly, YA fiction. And none of those depictions are positive whatsoever. I have read a book where an underage teenager is committed against her will without any medical reasons and immediately force-fed unnamed medication by the staff until she breaks out days later. I read a book where a character recalls a past trip "in the loony bin" where she lived strapped to a table. These representations tie together to create a fear of mental health institutions, places where you will be mistreated, misdiagnosed, and abused.

I do not want to deny these things can happen. But when YA books are written for teenagers who suffer so very often from mental health issues, and then mental health institutions are depicted so terribly when for many, it's actually a life support, well, it's maybe more than disconcerting?

In *A Danger to Herself and Others*, Sheinmel showed Dr. Lightfoot and the mental health institution as a place Hannah needed to be. At the beginning of the book, Hannah is confused but certain she should not be at the facility — in response, Dr. Lightfoot gives her space. Hannah begins to talk more, and Dr. Lightfoot listens. Hannah is given medication when the doctor knows what medication is required. Hannah is informed what the medication is for (though she does not have a choice in taking it, because she is underage).

I am not going to say Sheinmel's representation of a MHI is positive as in "happy", because that is not the case. Hannah suffers. She is uncomfortable with her lack of privacy and she loses rights she had "on the outside." But Sheinmel shows how a MHI can help someone with a mental illness.

This book made me shocked. This book made me sad. This book made me think more on things that I already think about, and didn't think I could think more on.

I do want to throw in Sheinmel's disclaimer that she did not write this book to educate anyone on mental health/illness. As I said before, I myself do not know how accurate her depiction is to the current state of

psychiatric hospitals today. All I do know is I think teenagers need more healthy representations of mental health and this book does that.

I could go on about this book for sooo much longer. I could talk about Hannah's recovery process, and how the way she longs for Jonah and Lucy (particularly in the bathroom scene) really got to me. The way her parents dismissed Hannah's way of viewing the world as "just imaginary friends."

My only true gripe with this book is how rare Hannah's form of mental illness is. Not only is she in the twenty percent for having it, she's in the one percent of the form she has. (*Forgive me if my percentages are off, I forgot to bookmark the page.) But this, of course, just goes to Sheinmel's disclaimer that she is not writing to educate and not once in reading this did I feel like she used mental illness as a plot device or hook. YES, Hannah's discovery is a turning point in the book, but Sheinmel doesn't use this for shock value. Sheinmel instead shows how it can be surprising to learn you have a mental illness, and to see how much it affects your daily life.

I rate this book at 4.5 with a hiiiiigh recommendation rating. On any websites that don't allow .5 expect to see this as a 5. I knocked off a point because I do find that with some of the topics covered in this book, personal experience or intensive research is required. But this is a personal opinion! (And maybe there is/was, it just wasn't mentioned.)

Join me on my book journey!
