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# Hate List



## Synopsis

The powerful and timely contemporary classic by Jennifer Brown -- now including the bonus Hate List novella Say Something! Five months ago, Valerie Leftman's boyfriend, Nick, opened fire on their school cafeteria. Shot trying to stop him, Valerie inadvertently saved the life of a classmate, but was implicated in the shootings because of the list she helped create. A list of people and things she and Nick hated. The list he used to pick his targets. Now, after a summer of seclusion, Val is forced to confront her guilt as she returns to school to complete her senior year. Haunted by the memory of the boyfriend she still loves and navigating rocky relationships with her family, former friends, and the girl whose life she saved, Val must come to grips with the tragedy that took place and her role in it, in order to make amends and move on with her life. Jennifer Brown's critically acclaimed novel now features a brand-new cover and the bonus novella Say Something, another arresting story that digs deeper into the powerful themes of Hate List.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 8 Up "At the end of their junior year, Valerie Leftman's boyfriend pulls a gun in the Commons, leaving six students and a teacher dead and many others wounded. Valerie is hit by a bullet in the leg trying to stop him, just before he ends his own life. Until that point, Valerie had no idea that the "hate list" that she and Nick created would be used to target victims in a vengeful shooting spree. For her, the list of tormentors was a way to ease the pain of being bullied and an outlet against the constant fighting between her parents. Although the police investigation

reveals that Valerie had nothing to do with the actual shootings, many people in her community, including her parents, have a hard time believing that she is not at fault, too. With the help of a patient and insightful therapist, Valerie bravely returns to school after the summer to face the challenges before her. Told by Valerie in then-and-now chapters, with a few "excerpts" from local newspaper articles added for perspective, this is a startling, powerful, and poignant account of the incidents leading up to, immediately following, and continuing through the teen's senior year of realization and recovery. Valerie is stronger than she knowsâ "a beautifully drawn character who has suffered pain, guilt, and incredible stress as she heals from the shooting, the loss of a troubled boyfriend she deeply loved, and difficult family circumstances. Readers drawn to Jay Asher's *Thirteen Reasons Why* (Razorbill, 2007) and Brooke Taylor's *Undone* (Walker, 2008) will snap this novel up as well.â "Diane P. Tuccillo, Poudre River Public Library District, Fort Collins, CO END  
--This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

\* "Startling, powerful, and poignant." â •School Library Journal (starred review)\*  
"Riviting."â •Publishers Weekly (starred review)

Hate list will be a difficult book for some and a refreshing one for others. For me it was a refreshing and easy read. I devoured it in two days and would have been one if I had not made myself take breaks because of my eyes hurting. Valerie and Nick are dating and outcast in their high school. As most people can attest to high school can be rough and hard to get through. There is often bullying, social anxiety, and an array of other problems children often face. Valerie, trying to get rid of some frustrations starts a list of things that she hates, this list also includes names of people she hates. Valerie and Nick relish in this list but Nick takes it one step farther when he starts shooting kids at their high school. Hate List deals with a lot of issues, school shootings, hate, bullying, cliques, family dynamic, and how hard peer-pressure can often be. For that reason I really found this book a great and easy read. There was nothing so graphic that it made it hard to read and would be suitable for any teen to read. I would actually recommend every teen possible read this! A well written book that tells a story that is not talked about enough! Well worth the money and time to read this.

As someone in Colorado at the time of Columbine, and can remember that day and the ones that followed, this was a book I felt very compelled to read. Valerie's boyfriend went on a shooting spree through the school. His victims were ones that he and Valerie had put on a "hate list." It was a way to release steam for her, but for him, it was more. So when the truth comes out after the shooting,

it's hard to not blame Valerie for at least part of it. Even though she was the one that got in the way and stopped Nick from hurting more people. Valerie makes the brave decision to go back to the high school for her senior year. She's faced with the uncertainty of acceptance and having to face all those people that knew they were on the list. The school has been changed and soon, one of the girls that had been on the list reaches out to her, and helps her find some acceptance within the school and with herself. I was moved to tears at the end of this book. It was one of the most emotional ending I have ever read, and I applaud Brown for tackling this subject with grace and respect and writing one of the best books I have ever read.

Grade: A-When Valerie starts a HATE LIST of people who bullied her and treated her unkindly. She doesn't expect her boyfriend Nick to use that list for targets in a school shooting. Now Valerie is headed back to school to face classmates who probably wish she died in the shooting. With the help of a psychologist and an unlikely new friend, Valerie struggles to recover from the guilt and trauma she experienced. Valerie's character was easy for me to get inside her head. She started her HATE LIST as a way of venting her frustrations with her dysfunctional family and the popular kids at school, never knowing it would snowball. How could she have known her boyfriend was capable of such carnage. I empathized with her struggles before and after the shooting. She was a fairly well rounded character. Jennifer Brown did a good job giving all her characters a certain amount of depth. Brown used compelling voice in Valerie's narration. I like how she also included newspaper articles as a way to introduce readers to those who were shot by Nick. Brown researched trauma and recovery and accurately depicted Val's struggle to move on with her life. While HATE LIST had some degree of closure, a lot was left open ended, of which I'm not a fan. THEMES: bullying, violence, high school, family, friendship, mental illness, PTSD. HATE LIST is a realistic story of recovering from a school shooting.

Hate List by Jennifer Brown is a terrific book on many levels. First, there is the main plot where Valerie Leftman struggles to come to terms with the fact that she was the girlfriend of a school shooter, Nick, whom she had unwittingly abetted in the shooting. This fact leaves her with mixed feelings of guilt and anger. She must also work out her feelings of love and compassion for this boy, whom Brown has painted as a real human being rather than a stereotypically bad individual. Brown artfully engages the reader to journey along with Valerie as she explores and comes to terms with her role in, and the consequential suffering from the shooting. Secondly, this is a book about teenage angst and real high school tension that takes place in everyday circumstances.

Additionally, Valerie has parents that have their own issues and shortcomings. Brown weaves a thread of pain through the family dynamics, as well as the high school dynamics that is realistic and insightful. This gives the reader insight into Valerie's anger as she and Nick create the Hate List as almost an inside joke. Thirdly, this book is about a process of moving from mental anguish and mental instability to mental health through a few various factors. It takes a knowledgeable and caring therapist. It takes courage from Valerie to take many baby steps to work through the process. It takes persistence from Valerie to not give up when the process was so difficult that it seemed impossible. It also takes a change in focus from Valerie as she must not read too much into each encounter or conversation. Finally, it just takes time as she matures from adolescence into adulthood. Brown captures these levels by intricately growing the reader's understanding of Valerie by moving easily back and forth in time from before the shooting to the results after the shooting. Readers can easily identify with the mental turmoil because Brown has captured the essence of high school relationships so common in adolescence. I highly recommend this book to young adults, as well as adults of all ages. It especially gives hope to all who are struggling. I predict this will be a best seller.

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