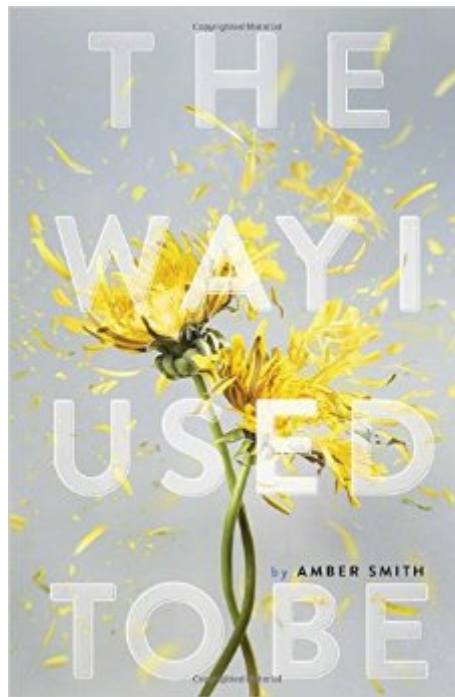


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The Way I Used To Be



Synopsis

A New York Times bestseller! In the tradition of *Speak*, this extraordinary debut novel shares the unforgettable story of a young woman as she struggles to find strength in the aftermath of an assault. Eden was always good at being good. Starting high school didn't change who she was. But the night her brother's best friend rapes her, Eden's world capsizes. What was once simple, is now complex. What Eden once loved—who she once loved—she now hates. What she thought she knew to be true, is now lies. Nothing makes sense anymore, and she knows she's supposed to tell someone what happened but she can't. So she buries it instead. And she buries the way she used to be. Told in four parts—freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior year—this provocative debut reveals the deep cuts of trauma. But it also demonstrates one young woman's strength as she navigates the disappointment and unbearable pains of adolescence, of first love and first heartbreak, of friendships broken and rebuilt, and while learning to embrace a power of survival she never knew she had hidden within her heart.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Way I used To Be is one of those books that really gets to you. It's one that will stick with me for a long time. It's an important book for any woman in their teens to adult to read. It's told in four parts from after Eden was raped her Freshman year to her Senior year. Eden was raped at age 14 by her brother's best friend, Kevin. He's a very close friend of the family. She grew up with him. Her parents love him. She trusted him and even loved him. She has never told anyone

what happened to her; not her parents, brother or her best friend. It eats at her every day. She's afraid of Kevin. She never wants to see him again but he comes home from college with her brother. He's always on her mind. She can't get away from the memory of what he did to her. This horrific crime has changed her, altered her personality. She's angry, broken and empty. She wants to get as far as she can away from the girl she used to be. She uses sex and boys to give herself control over her own body; to try and take back what was taken from her. Her reputation is destroyed. She has hurt everyone she loves. She can't deal with any relationship. She hides her feelings and puts on an "I don't give a crap about anyone" mask. She just doesn't know what to do to fix what's been broken inside of her. Even when she fell in love with the perfect guy, she didn't think she could let herself tell him how she felt about him, to tell him the truth and fully give him her heart. She just didn't know how to love him or be decent. She acted like she didn't care. She thinks she has no chance of a normal relationship with any guy nor does she want one so she just sleeps around to maintain that control over her own body. I just kept thinking why won't she tell someone?

Eden's Edy McCrorey is a typical fourteen-year old girl. She does well in school, adores her older brother Caelin, and plays the clarinet in her school's band. "The Way I Used to Be" details her downward spiral after Kevin Armstrong, Caelin's best friend, sneaks into her bedroom at 2:48 AM and rapes her. Threatening to kill her if she says anything, Kevin exerts the ultimate control over Edy. "The previous fourteen years had merely been dress rehearsal, preparation for knowing how to properly shut up now" • Amber Smith has written a powerful novel that highlights the dangers "both to the victim and to others" of remaining silent and the need for others to notice the personality and behavioral changes in those around them. "The Way I Used to Be" is divided into four major parts "one for each year of high school. The separate parts tell of one specific year in Edy's life and the way she deals with the trauma of rape. The effects of both the rape and silence on her mental health and on her behavior impact Edy's relationships. During her freshman year and at both home and school, Edy becomes defensive and confrontational. "It burns everything inside of me" |Rage" • Her parents are focused on Caelin and his future. "What do I have going on" |that could ever compare to the larger-than-life excitement that is Caelin McCrorey" • They attribute her attitude changes to her age and teen social concerns. "It's hormones" |She's a teenager" |They're all the same" • During her sophomore year, Edy attempts to live life as if nothing happened and to take control - outwardly. "All you have to do is act "normal" and people start treating you that way" •

She begins dating a Josh Miller, a jock and an upperclassman.

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