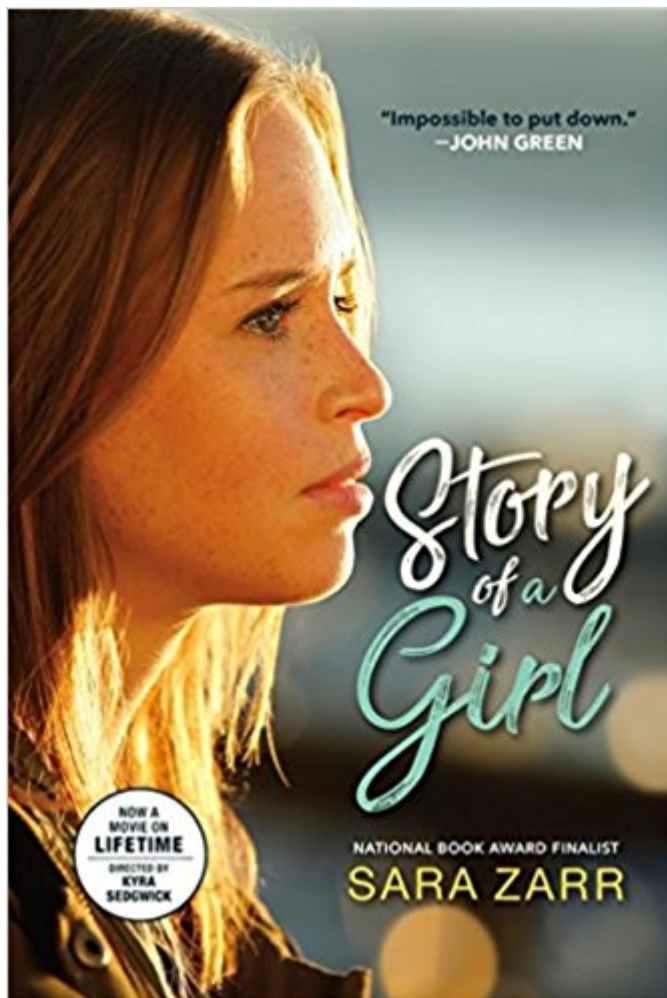


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Story Of A Girl



Synopsis

Now a movie on Lifetime! I was thirteen when my dad caught me with Tommy Webber in the back of Tommy's Buick, parked next to the old Chart House down in Montara at eleven o'clock on a Tuesday night. Tommy was seventeen and the supposed friend of my brother, Darren. I didn't love him. I'm not sure I even liked him. In a moment, Deanna Lambert's teenage life is changed forever. Struggling to overcome the lasting repercussions and the stifling role of "school slut," Deanna longs to escape a life defined by her past. With subtle grace, complicated wisdom, and striking emotion, *Story of a Girl* reminds us of our human capacity for resilience, epiphany, and redemption.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 9 Up
•When Deanna's father catches her having sex in a car when she is 13, her life is drastically changed. Two years later, he still can't look her in the eye, and though Tommy is the only boy she's been with, she is branded the school slut. Her entire family watches her as though she is likely to sleep with anyone she sees, and Tommy still smirks at and torments her when she sees him. Her two best friends have recently begun dating, and Deanna feels like an intruder. She tries to maintain a close relationship with her older brother, but Darren and his girlfriend are struggling as teenage parents. Deanna learns to protect herself by becoming outwardly tough, but feels her isolation acutely. Her only outlet is her journal in which she writes the story of an anonymous girl who has the same experiences and feelings that she does. Through this, readers see the potential that Deanna cannot identify in herself. This is a heartbreaking look at how

a teenager can be defined by one mistake, and how it shapes her sense of self-worth. This is realistic fiction at its best. Zarr's storytelling is excellent; Deanna's reactions to the painful things said to her will resonate with any reader who has felt like an outsider. It is an emotionally charged story, with language appropriate to the intensity of the feelings. *Story of a Girl* is recommended for both teens and the adults who live and work with them. —Stephanie L. Petruso, Anne Arundel County Public Library, Odenton, MD Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review Deanna was 13 when her father caught her and 17-year-old Tommy having sex. Three years later, she is still struggling with the repercussions: how Tommy jokingly made her into the school slut; how the story became legend in her small town; how her father looked at her then--and now doesn't look at her at all. Her brother, Darren, has mistakes to handle, too: he lives with his girlfriend and their baby in his parents' basement. And while Deanna's mother seems numb, her father is perpetually angry and depressed. Meanwhile, in a misguided search for love brought on by the confusion of seeing Tommy again, Deanna intentionally hurts her two closest friends. Although she's more aware than most how a single event can define a person, Deanna still struggles to gain insight into herself, her family, and her friends. When she finally does, she's able to create small but positive changes in her relationships with them all. Characters are well drawn, especially Deanna, whose complicated, deeply felt emotions turn the story. There are plenty of heartbreaking moments, too, including a poignant confrontation with Tommy. Though nothing is miraculously fixed by the close, everyone's perspective has changed for the better. This is a thoughtful, well-executed debut from an author who understands how to write for teens. Krista Hutley Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I had high hopes for this book, but I have to admit when I started reading it my first impression was that it was a bit slow. This took me longer to read than most books, because every so often I would get bored with it. I think for me, I like books that are plot-driven, and this really is not. It's very introspective, and it's nice to really get into Deanna's head, but in my opinion it makes for kind of a slow read. Although I felt like a lot of the relationships depicted in the book were raw and really realistic, I kept feeling like the relationship between Deanna and her father was a little too over the top to be believable. I felt like they should have made more progress in their relationship in three years, especially since Deanna seems not to have put a foot wrong in those three years. Since they

were so close before the incident when Deanna was thirteen, it felt a little off to me that their relationship would break down so completely and just stay broken for years. In contrast, I thought Deanna's relationship with her brother was very authentic, and I loved the book's portrayals of her friendships with Lee and Jason. Zarr does a wonderful job in portraying the ups and downs of friendships - especially the difficulties of trios - and I liked the way the relationships between Deanna, Lee and Jason grow and change throughout the book. Zarr definitely has a great understanding of how teenage relationships work, and it was nice to see such a real depiction of that. I did like the messages that *Story of a Girl* communicated, about how stifling life in a small town can be, and the injustice of how one poor choice in your past can completely change how you are perceived by your peers. *Story of a Girl* makes the reader really think about the importance of reputation, and examines just how misleading a person's reputation can be. *Story of a Girl* was, for the most part, an interesting read and an honest, gritty depiction of small town life. It's not a light read and it's not meant to be. It definitely carries an important message to teens, in a way that might actually reach them. It wasn't a personal favorite of mine, but it's a book that has value and I can see why it has so many good reviews.

Deanna's the girl everyone loves to talk about. Unfortunately they aren't saying good things about her, and those nasty rumors that everyone has heard aren't entirely true. Sure she was caught (by her father) having sex with her brother's friend. Sure she was only 13 and he was 17 at the time, but no one has ever bothered to ask her what happened. While she has yet to do anything even remotely "bad" since the incident, no one can seem to forget her past. Unfortunately we see this situation far too often in our society, where girls are punished for having sex while the guys go off and brag about it. I downloaded this one for a quick read after scanning over some of the reviews. I wasn't sure if I would get to into it, but oh man, I was wrong. Sara Zarr has a great way of telling you the story from Deanna's point of view, but also letting you into the glimpses of what others are saying/thinking too. My heart just broke for Deanna the entire book. I cried (several times) from feeling her pain, confusion, and loneliness. At one part she even writes in her journal "I, Deanna Lambert, belong to no one, and no one belongs to me. I don't know what to do." I just wanted to wrap her in my arms and tell her it would be ok. I also wanted to smack her parents up side the head for the way they have dealt with the situation. She's such a real and relatable character (from the things she says to the way she thinks) that you can't help but love her. While Deanna struggles to rebuild her life, sure she makes some more mistakes in the process (just like we all do in life), but you just can't help rooting for her to find some closure and be able to move on. I think many girls

could benefit from reading this book.

Sara Zarr's *Story of a Girl* is a tale of the outsider. Deanna's father catches her having sex at the age of thirteen, and from then on he can't trust her. He has a very distant relationship with his daughter. The boy Deanna was having sex with, Tommy, spreads the news and everyone labels her a slut. People taunt her, even though two years later Tommy has been the only boy she's been with. Deanna wants to move out with her brother and his girlfriend, but she's a third wheel in regards to them. Deanna's two best friends, Lee and Jason, are a couple and Deanna feels left out with them as well. She is painfully alone, but at the same time she moves forward by getting her first job. The goal she has in mind is to leave her parents' house and her small town, and all the heartache that she attributes to those settings. I felt for the main character and rooted for her. This novel is a short read, but there's a big story and plenty of emotion in it.

I bought this book because I saw there was going to be a movie about it and I thought the movie looked good. The book kept my interest but I could see this being a book for teens and not necessarily an adult like myself. It wasn't a bad book but the ending was extremely disappointing. I literally thought I had missed something because I expected so much more. Because of the ending I would give this book a 3.

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