



# Lies We Tell Ourselves

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[Melissa Hyder](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

It's 1959, and Sarah is one of a handful of black students who are the first to attend a previously all-white school in Virginia. Modern high-school hell has nothing on the torrents of verbal, physical and mental abuse they endure at the hands of fellow classmates and teachers, as they try to lead the front line of integration ? and the boundlessness of it, pervasiveness and endorsement by adults is truly staggering.

Linda is the popular girl at school, daughter of a newspaper editor known for his segregationist views that she has swallowed all her life. The inevitable change of feelings that are triggered in Linda is portrayed very naturally ? even while her racist views linger, she feels strongly about the unequal way the new kids are treated at school, especially the girls. She discovers that Sarah is really as intelligent and outspoken as she is (despite having been put in remedial classes and never speaking out of turn at school), and recognises a kindred spirit, another put-upon girl having to act one way while feeling another. Despite this, Linda's hard-pressed to show anything publically, when sympathisers also suffer abuse, and even privately, when they both find it hard to accept the truth about their deepening feelings for each other.

Challenged beliefs concerning a range of diversity issues are at the heart of this book, with the added intrigue and drama of the historical setting making them all the more powerfully related. This talented author is completely empathetic to the utter bravery and home truths of front-liners on both sides of change, with captivating characters revealing the multi-faceted pressures of colour, gender, class and sexuality. That said, the story is never dull, didactic or overly worthy, but feels fresh and still very relevant for modern readers. A brilliant teen read for courage and figuring out truths for yourself, as well as classroom help for exploring issues of racism and modern history.

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