



# Underwater

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Morgan Grant is an American seventeen year old. She used to be active in school and social events. But now Morgan is a recluse. She stays in her apartment wearing pyjamas. She does her school work remotely on line. She has not left the apartment in four months. Apart from her mother and six year old brother, Ben, the only person Morgan sees is Brenda, a counsellor who visits her twice weekly. At this stage the reader knows nothing of Morgan's father, save that he is absent.

Morgan is obsessive about food, taking specific meals at specific times.

The puzzling question posed for the reader is why and how Morgan reached this isolated condition. The answer to this question emerges from the text very slowly. The realisation moves as slowly and inexorably as the pain which it describes.

This critic will not reveal the underlying cause of Morgan's malaise. But when it emerges into the daylight it deals a savage blow to contemporary American society.

I find it necessary to voice one reservation about this impressive and compulsively readable book. From what I know of counsellor/client relations (knowledge gleaned admittedly in the UK) I find the relationship between Morgan and Brenda possibly unrealistic and ethically dubious. They become friends, walking together and taking coffee together. Counsellors are supposed to maintain an arm's length, objective and restrained relationship. Brenda seems not only to allow the client/counsellor transference but even to engineer it.

Apart from this concern, Reichardt's book engages with an issue which strikes at the very foundations of American society and with which young people not only in the USA but everywhere are mercilessly confronted. This book should be added to the General Studies curriculum for A-Level.

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