

[PDF] When Jeff Comes Home

Catherine Atkins - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: When Jeff Comes Home

Author: Catherine Atkins

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Kidnapped from a roadside rest stop by a man named Ray, 16-year-old Jeff has spent the past two and a half years locked in a dark basement. He was whipped, mentally abused and forced to have sex with his captor if he wanted to eat. Now his kidnapper has brought Jeff home. The first half of this tautly written debut reads like a thriller: Jeff, the narrator, relates his gruesome history in bits and pieces; initially, he's wrapped up in twisted loyalty to Ray, who begins to stalk his family. The author builds the tension to an almost unbearable peak in scene after scene, such as when Ray leaves the clothes in which the teen was kidnapped on Jeff's front steps or when Ray still anonymous chats with Jeff's father in public while the threatened teen chooses not to identify him. Jeff is in deep denial about his repeated rape; looking at mug shots and rap sheets for the FBI, he cries out, "Why is every man in there some kind of sick rapist pervert?... I told you Ray isn't like that." About halfway through the novel, Ray is caught, and the breakdown of Jeff's denial makes up the rest of the book. Jeff's recovery is sensitively and dramatically handled, but the tension eases up

as he no longer seems threatened and as the mystery of what really happened to him is revealed to match everyone's initial assumptions. Although it doesn't quite deliver on its promise of suspense the whole way through, this chilling story will put readers through an emotional wringer. Ages 12-up. (Sept.)

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From School Library Journal Grade 10 Up-Abducted from a California rest stop and abused-physically, emotionally, and sexually-by his kidnapper for 2 U years, Jeff, now 16, is finally released and allowed to return home. Once a star athlete and quintessential "good kid," he is reunited with a family and friends who have become strangers and is caught in a maelstrom of emotions he tries desperately to suppress and deny. Once the apple of his father's eye, Jeff now has a strained relationship with him. His siblings are eager to reconnect, but treat him with a mandated fragility. Consumed with self-loathing, feeling ashamed and unclean, Jeff refuses to cooperate with investigators and name his abductor. The denial comes to haunt him when his kidnapper asserts that their relations were consensual, thus destroying the tentative trust Jeff had rebuilt with an old friend and making his return to school a nightmare of persecution. This is a strong, uncompromising first novel. Jeff's awkwardness and raw pain at having his outlook on life forever altered are drawn with a remarkable sensitivity and honesty. Supporting characters are equally well realized, with each individual differently, yet relatedly affected by the teen's abduction. There can be no instant resolution, ironically no return "home," and there is none. Jeff's emotional scars run deeper than the physical ones scored on his back. There is, however, positive motion toward healing. At last, the boy begins to talk, breaking through his denial and expressing his anger. A powerful, difficult, yet cathartic read.

Jennifer A. Fakolt, Denver Public Library

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