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Booklist's Guide to Graphic Novels in Libraries: 2023

Diary of a Dying Girl: Adapted from Salt in My Soul

By Mallory Smith.



May 2024. 384p. Random, \$19.99 (9780593647479). Grades 9-12. 616.372. [REVIEW](#). First published April 15, 2024 ([Booklist](#)).

This moving, heartfelt YA adaptation of Smith's adult memoir, *Salt in My Soul: An Unfinished Life*, is based on diary entries Smith kept from age 16 until her death at 25 from cystic fibrosis, an often invisible disease. In middle school, she contracted Burkholderia cenocepacia (B. cepacia), a deadly bacteria known to infect those with cystic fibrosis. Despite this, she led a very active life, including playing three high school varsity sports while maintaining a strenuous academic schedule. Between classes at Stanford, she endured IV treatments, suffered situational depression, and missed classes, but still enjoyed life as a typical college student. Diary entries recount her sex life, insecurities, moments of doubt, and heartbreaking naivete in dreaming of marriage and a family she would never have. Not until after college, when she's so sick she needs a double lung transplant, does she acknowledge she might not live a full life. Despite receiving that transplant, her lungs were recolonized by B. cepacia and the experimental treatment she received to combat it came too late to save her. Her hope was to help the world in some way, and this book does that. Readers will mourn her death, empathize with her and others living with cystic fibrosis, and admire her for her courage in living life to the fullest.

— Sharon Rawlins

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