

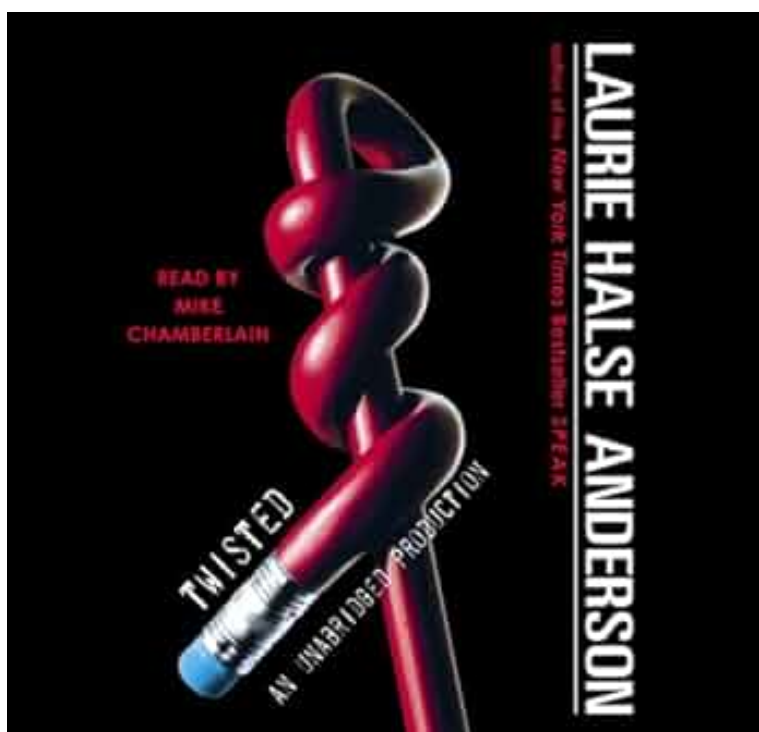
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Professor Warner

English 112B

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Twisted



By Laurie R. King

About the Author



Image Source: <https://alma.se/en/laureates/laurie-halse-anderson/>

Laurie Halse Anderson is a young adult author, whose novels have earned her many awards throughout the years, as well as wide-spread media recognition. Anderson was born in 1961, and attended Onondaga community college where she earned an A.A, and later attended Georgetown University, where she earned a B.S in Language and Linguistics. She has been publishing her works since 1996, and most of her novels discuss uncomfortable and taboo topics, shedding light on the struggles that many youth in contemporary society endure.

Summary

Senior in high school, Tyler Miller, has gone his whole life feeling like a nobody. With an overbearing father, a passive mother, and a preppy little sister, Tyler feels powerless. One night, Tyler decides to rebel, and graffiti the whole school, leading him to months of probation and community service. Despite this, his rebellious deed was successful as his social status skyrocketed, earning him the attention of the popular Bethany Milbury. Tyler had been crushing on Bethany all of highschool, but the only problem was her brother Chip Milbury, who had been bullying Tyler since they were children. Ignoring Chip, Tyler spends time with Bethany, growing her interest in him. However, one night at a party, things take a turn for the worse, as a drunk Bethany tries to get sexual with Tyler, and he refuses out of respect. Days later and photos of a nude Bethany are leaked, and Tyler is falsely accused of spreading them. Tyler spends months proving his innocence, as he is relentlessly bullied and tortured by his students and his father. Eventually he reclaims his life and is proven innocent, as he takes control of his future instead of falling into despair.

Quotes

- 1.) “ I became invisible, your average piece of drywall who spent too much time playing computer games....So at the end of my junior year, I decided to do something bold...I used five cans of spray paint to decorate George Washington High with words that proclaimed the superiority of the junior class and a couple crude remarks about the manhood of Principal Hughes”(Anderson 10). This quote depicts Tyler’s negative perception of himself and his low ranking position in society. It tells the reader that he is

a relatively powerless young man with little control of his own life due to his complicated family dynamics and his social ranking at school. These helpless feelings lead him to committing his “foul deed”, which in turn sets the stage for the novel's main conflict. His desire for just a bit of control spirals into a search for identity.

- 2.) “Ever smell the milk jug when you open it and you don’t think you smell anything funky, so you pour a big glass and you take a giant gulp and as soon as it hits your mouth you know it has gone bad and you spit it in the sink and race upstairs to gargle? And when you finally stop needing to heave, you realize that you did smell something funny at first, but you didn’t know what to call it? That’s what I thought of when I looked at my father”(Anderson 101). This quote summarizes Tyler’s relationship with his father, and is a turning point in the novel where the reader realizes the controlling and toxic behaviors his father exhibits. At first his relationship with his father seems simple, but as time passes, we realize the negative effects Tyler’s father has had on his life, including his mental health, social life, and self esteem. Tyler’s father is a major cause for many of his poor decisions.
- 3.) “ He hawked and spit into the dark. ‘No offense, Miller, but your father is a grade-A asshole And no offense again, but so what? You gonna spend the rest of your days whining because your dads a jerk? I hate people like that. Don’t be a baby-live your own life” (Anderson 197). This quote occurs when the school janitor catches Tyler attempting to jump off the roof and kill himself. Tyler admits his self-deprecating thoughts, seeing no way out of his current situation. The janitor offers some blunt, but much necessary words of encouragement to Tyler. By the end of the novel, we see how the janitor had a

positive effect on Tyler's decision, as instead of ending his life, he chooses to take control and create his own identity.

Classroom Instruction

Due to the novel's difficult topics and mature content, I would use the novel Twisted in a classroom setting of junior/senior level high school students. The novel touches on issues surrounding family dynamics, peer pressure, bullying, and identity crisis, which are all problems that today's teens struggle with. By seeing Tyler's life take a positive turn at the end despite his struggles, students may find comfort with their own lives and understand that despite their own struggles, they will also persevere.

To teach this novel to youth I would utilize activities such as discussions, journal writings, and character mapping. I would have students privately journal their thoughts on the novel, and whether or not they have experiences, or seen people experience similar issues. I would then have a class discussion to introduce themes and ideas, and see where students stand with the book itself, including their general understanding of it. I would then require them to map different characters throughout the novel, discussing their emotions, personality, struggles, and moments of transformation in the book.

Application to Ch 4-8 of *Adolescents in the Search for Meaning*:

Tapping the Powerful Resource of Story

Chapter 4.) This novel fits into chapter 4 which is "Books about real life experiences: Making life choices, Facing violence or abuse, and living through family and relationship issues." Tyler

himself struggles with all these issues throughout the entirety of the book. His life choices have a detrimental effect on him in the book, he faces a controlling and toxic father, and struggles with his relationship with Bethany and the effects she has on his reputation.

Chapter 5.) This novel fits into chapter 5 which is “Books about Facing Death and Loss” because Tyler himself struggles with feelings of isolation and thoughts of suicide. He thinks about death multiple times throughout the book, and thinks about how his family would react to his death.

Chapter 6.) This novel fits into chapter 6 “Books about Identity, Discrimination, and Struggles with Decisions” as the novel is based on Tyler’s struggle to form his own identity, and the discrimination he faces from his family, as well as his peers and the school staff, due to the poor decision he made at the beginning of the book.

Chapter 7.) This book fits into chapter 7 “Books about Courage and Survival” as despite his misfortunes and the poor situations he’s faced with, Tyler builds his courage, and does not end his life. Successfully surviving an extremely dark and difficult period of life.

Chapter 8.) This book fits chapter 8 “Books on Allegory, Fantasy, Myth, and Parable” as characters such as the janitors, Mr.Salvatore, and Mr.Pirelli inspire Tyler despite his situation, to keep persevering. Through their metaphors and encouragement, Tyler is able to turn his life around for the better.

Text Complexity

Quantitative:

Page Count: 250

Word Count:60,917

-Lexile: Age Range=12-16, 680L

-Atos: Book level=6.51, Interest Level=9-12 grade

Qualitative:

Language- Contains relatively simple language that is easy for most to understand. There are some uses of metaphors and similes, as well as foreshadowing,

Structure- The novel contains 78 chapters, all very short in length, only a few pages each. It is in first person narrative format, from Tyler's point of view. Told in mostly chronological order.

Knowledge- No prior knowledge is necessary to the understanding of the novel. The novel simply tells a realistic story of a contemporary teenager.