

Good Reads

SARAH DESSEN

★ We asked one of the most famous Young Adult writers (of this century) to tell us about herself...

Hi. I'm Sarah. Writing a bio is always a little weird, if only because it seems completely self-absorbed. But for this, I'm supposed to do something more, give a sense of who I really am. So here goes.

In high school, I was lucky enough to have a big group of girlfriends that have really inspired a lot of the stories in my books. I'm still close with my friends from that time, so it's never very hard to put myself back into that place, that voice. Also it doesn't hurt to still be living in my hometown, where it's a given that I'll bump into people I had homeroom with, or guys I had big crushes on, while I'm pumping gas or buying stamps. It makes it hard to leave high school behind entirely, which is a good or bad thing depending on what day you ask me. I attended college at UNC, where I studied creative writing and graduated with a degree in English. (Which means I can quote small parts of many Great Works. Comes in handy occasionally, like at cocktail parties.)

I'd been on the five-and-a-half year college plan, and when I graduated my parents were hoping I'd settle down and get a Real Job so they could stop worrying about me. But instead of doing the whole resume/pantyhose thing, I decided to stick to my job waiting tables at the world famous Flying Burrito



One on One
with Sarah Dessen

restaurant and try to publish a novel. At the time, I had only one very bad book I'd written my senior year of college and the beginnings of another one. Luckily, my family was supportive and I spent a few years living in a ramshackle little house where I wrote during the day and did the restaurant thing at night.

My senior quote was from Pink Floyd (okay, I was a bit of a burnout--I spent a lot of time in the parking lot, whatever, let's move on) and it pretty much summed up my future, although I didn't know it at the time. It was: "The time is gone, the song is over, thought I'd something more to say." It turns out that I did.

The books I read when I was teenager, the good ones anyway, have stuck more in my mind than anything since. I still love books, but while I couldn't tell you complete plots of novels I read even six months ago, I do remember even the smallest descriptive details from

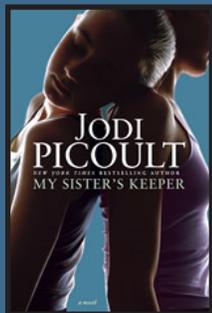
Top Sellers

Most Recommended

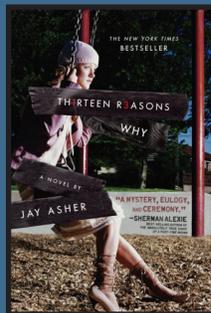
Book covers for Sarah Dessen's novels: 'This Lullaby', 'Just Listen', 'Lock and Key', and 'Along for the Ride'.

Lois Lowry's *A Summer to Die* or Judy Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*. I think it was because back then books were still somewhat new to me, and when I found an author who seemed to say just what I was feeling, it really struck me and resonated. I hope that my books do that for the people who read them: I think it's the best thing to which any writer can aspire. I've also been lucky enough to teach writing and see my students find their own voice. Teaching was great for me, because I got to show people how writing can really change the way you see not only yourself but the world. I've found in my own life that if my writing isn't going well, not much else will. It is the one constant, the key to everything else. Now that I'm writing full time, I have my good days and bad days. But I'd rather be doing this, than anything. else.

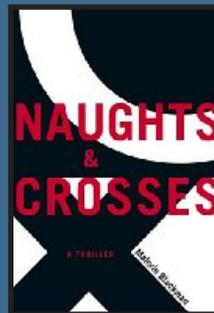
Other Novels You Might Enjoy



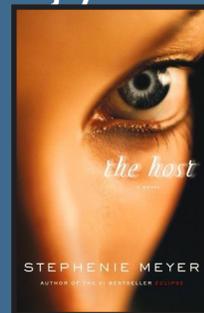
My Sisters Keeper
Jodi Picoult



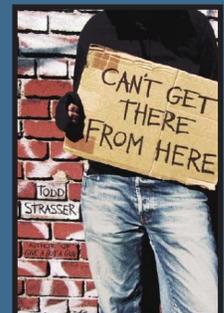
Thirteen Reasons Why
Jay Asher



Naughts & Crosses
Malorie Blackman



The Host
Stephenie Meyer



Can't Go From Here
Todd Strasser