



## Sketches

*Eric Walters*

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Dana met Brent and Ashley when she first arrived in town, a scared runaway with nowhere to go. The three of them are like family: they take care of each other; they share the money they beg, borrow, and steal; and they protect each other from the more ruthless street people they come upon. Still, life is lived day-to-day. It's hard to think about tomorrow when you've got no money, no food, and no place to live. And as for the past ... well, that's what they ran away from. It's what all of them—and especially Dana—are trying hard to forget.

Eric Walters's new novel is a gritty, gripping tale of street kids, an unblinking portrait of what it means to live on the streets and, more importantly, what it takes to find the way off.

## Sketches Details

Date : Published 2007 by Puffin Canada

ISBN : 9780143053347

Author : Eric Walters

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Genre : Young Adult, Realistic Fiction, Childrens, Contemporary, Teen, Cultural, Canada, Academic, Read For School, Fiction, Sociology, Abuse, School

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## From Reader Review Sketches for online ebook

### **Sarah says**

I absolutely adored this book!

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### **Sofia says**

Dana is a runaway, and were it not for Brent and Ashley, she wouldn't have been a very good one. As it is, they're doing okay. They protect each other. They beg for enough money to buy coffee and doughnuts. Dana sometimes saves enough food to feed a stray orange cat. Usually, they have a place to sleep at night. It's hard, but they're surviving. One day, Dana is using some discarded spray paint to make an art piece on the underside of a bridge. A man notices her art, and compliments it, and requests to take a photograph of it. Rightfully wary, Dana asks why. The man explains he's a representative for Sketches, a group center for homeless and disadvantaged kids who need a place to do art. He invites Dana to come by some time, if only for the muffins. Dana agrees, and Sketches is indeed a haven where she feels safe not only to express herself, but to be herself. She experiments with oils, chalk, clay, and even metal, and convinces Brent and Ashley to come with her to experience the joy Sketches gives her. A honest, gritty tale about the hard issue of teenage homelessness, Sketches also tells the story of how art can literally change your life.

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### **Veeda says**

This was a very good book. It really gave insight to the lives of homeless youth and the troubles they endure. I sort of wish that the ending was more in depth and we got to meet the stepfather because I think it wouldve really emphasized the message.

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### **Ailis McCleary says**

Eye-opening, gritty, realistic.

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### **JoAnne Richards says**

I didn't know this book was out there until I recently attended a presentation by Eric. I'm sorry I hadn't read it before. It is a story of how and (more importantly) why, 3 kids end up living on the streets. A must read for all adults!

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### **Naomi Martin says**

Choice book #1 Quarter 2

Sketches written by Eric Walters is a Fiction book which takes place in downtown Toronto. The main

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characters in Sketches is Ashley, Brent, and Dana. The problem in the book is that Dana, Brent, and Ashley are stuck in the streets with hardly any food. Sketches is about a girl called Dana who ran away from her home because of her stepfather and is stuck on the streets with Brent and Ashley when she is only about 12. I wouldn't have done anything different if I was the author because at the end, she got foster parents and wasn't living on the street and she even got to see her mother again. I really enjoyed the book because it showed how if you worked hard enough, you could bring happiness to your life. My favorite part of the book was at the end when the mother and Dana met for the first time in almost 2 months. The book brought sadness at the beginning because it showed how hard it was to be living on the streets/being homeless but at the end it brought HAPPINESS.

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## **Louise says**

### Story Description:

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Dana met Brent and Ashley when she first arrived in town, a scared runaway with nowhere to go. The three of them are like family: they take care of each other; they share the money they beg, borrow, and steal; and they protect each other from the more ruthless street people they come upon. Still, life is lived day-to-day. It's hard to think about tomorrow when you've got no money, no food, and no place to live. And as for the past...well, that's what they ran away from. It's what all of them – and especially Dana – are trying hard to forget.

Eric Walter's new novel is a gritty, gripping tale of street kids, an unblinking portrait of what it means to live on the streets and, more importantly, what it takes to find the way off.

### My Review:

Dana, Ashley, and Brent were panhandling for money near the subway station. So far, Dana had \$11.00; Ashley had \$5.00; and Brent had less than \$2.00. The three of them were street kids and homeless. Dana had only been on the streets for three weeks after running away from home. Home for Dana was 30 miles away and she wouldn't return there as long as her stepfather lived in the home. Dana had gone to the bank machine to get \$40.00 to buy some breakfast but when she returned later she couldn't access her account. Her stepfather had her card cut-off which ticked her to no end because she had \$600.00 in babysitting money in her account and she couldn't get at it. She admitted that she didn't see her stepfather pulling that stunt but then thought that was his way of gaining control.

When she first met Ashley, Dana was a little afraid but once they chatted for a while she realized she was cool. Then, Ashley introduced, Dana to, Brent and they became a family. Protecting each other against everything on the rough and tumble streets. Dana was pretty nervous at first wondering if she could trust them, but really what choice did she have. It was more scary to be alone than to trust those two, so she swallowed her fear.

The three of them ended up with enough money to rent a cheap motel for the night for \$25.00 and still had \$32.00 for breakfast and cigarettes. Dana was so looking forward to sleeping in a bed and being able to have a shower so she could wash her hair it had been two weeks since she'd last washed it.

While, Dana was showering she thought about her 10-year-old sister, Candice. She missed her a lot. She knew she would be confused by Dana's running away and wishes she could have explained everything to

her, but she couldn't and she wouldn't. She couldn't tell anyone. Next thing she knew she was crying and the crying turned to sobbing. Dana slid down the wall of the shower and sat on the wet bottom thinking about her sister, her mother, her friends, her school, and her room. She missed every one of them. Then she thought about her stepfather and the sobbing stopped and was replaced instead by rage and anger.

Dana was under an over-pass spray painting some art on the grey concrete wall when a man in his 30's approached her and told her he liked her artwork. He had seen it from the train he was riding in across the way. Dana was leery of this guy but after a conversation about Picasso and his art she let her guard down a bit. The guy asked her how long it was going to take her to complete the piece she was working on as he wanted to return later to take some pictures of it. Dana was stunned. Before leaving, the man gave her his business card and told her his name was, Robert Erickson and he worked at a drop-in centre where they made art supplies available to street kids. Robert told her it was a place where she could get things like paint and canvas, or clay and a potter's wheel, so she could use her talent. He told her to ask around on the street and she'd quickly learn that the place was legit. With that said, Robert walked away. The name of the drop-in centre was 'Sketches.'

Sketches is where Dana eventually ends up and finds a lot more than she ever dreamed possible. It became a home away from home and the people who worked there were incredibly helpful. Who knows, maybe it was possible to get off the streets.

Sketches is a wonderfully written novel and shows the hardships that kids go through when living on the streets. There is always something to worry about; money, clean clothing; a place to sleep; and finding food. Eric Walter's will open a few eyes with this one and will hopefully prevent a few kids from leaving home for the streets and hopefully decided to go another route like through a guidance counsellor at school or a clergyperson for help. Well-done!

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## Luca says

This is one of those books that makes you question your worldview. Its one of those books that gets you thinking about one others life style, their choices, there luck, and their tenacity to live. Sketches follows the life of a group of teens through their journey of accomplishing goals, braking down obstacles, and most of all getting of the streets. Even though it gets hard for them at times you can always expect it to get better. I would recommend this book for kids to adults anywhere from 12+.

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## Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Sally Kruger aka "Readingjunky" for TeensReadToo.com

SKETCHES is about three teens living on the streets. Dana, Brent, and Ashley each have their own personal demons. Those demons drove them away from their families and onto the city streets.

Sexual abuse at the hands of her mother's second husband caused Dana to begin acting out in school and at home. When her mother didn't pick up on the clues, Dana decided the only answer was to leave. Fortunately, Brent and Ashley, experienced street kids, were there to pick up the pieces. Brent has issues that forced him to leave home hoping to find some answers, and Ashley's mother, an exotic dancer, acted more like a sister

than a mother. Together these three panhandle and squeegee car windows, hoping to earn enough money to eat and occasionally sleep somewhere with shower facilities.

Things begin to look up when Dana stumbles across a place called Sketches. It is an organization with the goal of providing a creative outlet for street kids. Dana's artistic talents shine through some random graffiti work, and she is noticed by one of the counselors at Sketches. The place offers food and good, solid advice, as well as art supplies and a safe place to create. Once Dana and her two friends get involved at Sketches, they see the possibility of improving their lives.

Rich with details about life on the streets, SKETCHES is an emotional story of desperate kids taking action to regain control of their shattered lives. Eric Walters includes both the harsh reality of homeless living and just the right amount of hope to make SKETCHES a book that will speak to teens everywhere.

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## **Aaron says**

Dana is new on the streets. She ran away from home because of troubles with her stepfather. Thanks to the help of her new friends Brent and Ashley, she is learning to survive without a home. Things are not easy, but a chance encounter helps her find a little bit of happiness among the grim realities of her new life.

Brent and Ashley teach her all the skills of panhandling, squeegee-ing, and other unique skills needed to bring in some money so they can afford to eat, get smokes, and sometimes even sleep in a hotel room. Sometimes they find themselves sleeping in abandoned buildings, a tent town, or even just under the cover of overhangs.

One afternoon she is using some garbage-recovered spray paint to create a mural when a man is walking by. Robert is impressed by her work and tells her she has real talent. As a result, he encourages her to come by the drop-in center that he works at. It is call Sketches, and it specializes in providing homeless and poor youth have access to art materials so they can express themselves and learn some skills in the process.

With a past history of art lessons, Dana is more than happy to go down, and finds a wonderful outlet for her and some much needed opportunities.

Dana is an interesting character to tell the story. Because she is new to street life, she presents the environment with naive eyes, something most readers will likely have. As a result the harsh realities, though seemingly shielded on the true grimmery, will have the full effect on the reader.

Dana is not alone in having a fully developed background and reasons to be on the street. Both Brent and Ashley have their stories told as well, allowing the reader to better understand why a teen might run away and choose to struggle on the streets rather than in the assumed safety and security of their homes.

I really found myself quickly drawn into the tale of these three kids. I do have to admit that I thought things went a little smoother than they probably do for homeless teens, but that didn't make me want to stop reading. It seems that Dana and her friends are among the lucky ones, but throughout the story, we do get glimpses of how things can go even worse as they run into various other homeless folks of all ages.

This is not a book that is well-marketed, but it is one that is thoroughly interesting. I wish that it was getting more coverage by review sources and other media because it is really worth picking up.

## Robyn says

I recently finished a book called "Sketches" by Eric Walters. The genre of this book is realistic-fiction. I really liked the topic about teenagers trying to make a living living on the streets. I give this book a rating of 4 stars because it was a really good book, but I didn't like the ending all that much because it happened faster than the rest of the book and I didn't expect it to end the way that it did. "Sketches" point of view is told from first person, and the person the perspective is told from is the main character, Dana.

This book is about three teenagers between the ages of fourteen to seventeen and they are living on the streets. Their names are Brent, Ashley, and Dana. Dana is a runaway that needs to learn how to live on her own. Everyday all they do is beg for money to have enough to eat a meal or two, and every night they need to find a place to sleep. Then one day Dana is doing graffiti on the side of a bridge and a person who works with art sees her 'painting' and gives her a card to a place called 'Sketches'. Sketches is a place for homeless people that are interested in different kinds of art. Dana goes to Sketches almost everyday, and when they come up with a way to do art outside, Dana soon gets an idea on how to earn money for food by not panhandling. Things quickly get better for Brent, Ashley, and Dana when she introduces her idea.

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## Aila says

The book Sketches By Eric Walter is moving. This book is about the way children and some adults live on the streets. This books is moving because it shows what it is like to live on the streets and to not have any money. This book shows what you have to do to survive on the mean streets.

This book shows the life of a girl, Dana, on the streets who is desperate to escape her father which has happened in real life. Eric Walters does a terrific job of showing her learning how to fend for herself and learning how to know who to trust. He also shows how life is uncertain when you are on the run and that you don't know where your next meal is coming from or where you are sleeping ; "'But still... it's a clothing drop box,"I said emphasizing each word.' pg 90. This book has so many plot twist and like things that pop up that you wouldn't normally think that could happened to a kid that age but it does.

I would recommended this book to people who like reading things based on stuff that really happens. This book is written to beautifully. Outlining what happens when you need to escape from something you like you can't handle.

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## Skye L says

the book was really captivating. the only thing I didn't enjoy is how it ended so abruptly. it felt incomplete, but overall it was a nice read

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## Donna says

Do we really know why teens end up living on the streets? Walters once again has the reader questioning their beliefs. He also leaves his readers believing in humanity - very realistic - not cheesy.

## Ale says

I really like this type of books, so sadly i finished it way too fast. I wish the book had a sequel or something. Anyway the book has made a great start for 2012!

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