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*John Meyer (Editor) , Emily Sperber , Heather Alexander , Stephanie H. Meyer*

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WORDS ARE POWERFUL- they can inflict damage and they can heal. In this anthology of first-person accounts written by teenagers for both their peers and adults, words transform pain into hope and the possibility for change.

"Bullying" "Under Attack "is an eye-opening anthology of all three players in the bullying cycle. These conversational essays on life as the bullied, the bully, and the bystander provide insight and inspiration for change. Rather than offer a cumbersome psychological breakdown, this graceful and hard-hitting book places the reader firmly in the shoes of all involved.

The stories written by The Bullied explain the subtleties and agony of harassment, helping readers understand that there is more to unkind words and behavior than "just joking around." Although many of these teens have suffered through harassment by their peers, their essays are both empowering and inspiring. By exploring the essays by The Bullies, readers will discover that the bullies are often times incorrectly labeled as bad kids, but many are simply trying to fit in, despite their own insecurities and fears. While these bullies may still have their own seemingly insurmountable obstacles at home, they share their experiences and insights hoping to manage and reforming other bullies. The section voiced by The Bystander shares tales of those who have regrettably watched and those who have stepped up to help others. Here, readers will find the inspiration to speak out rather than just standing by while others are emotionally harmed.

Whether due to race, weight, or jealousy, there are a myriad of reasons "WHY." Included in this startling compendium of personal stories that convey the complexity and nuances of what it means to be bullied, are stories of regret, promises, and encouragement that will help readers find solace during their teen years and show them how as adults their words and actions can provide strength and reassurance to others experiencing all aspects of bullying. Ultimately, they will learn to find their voices in order to break the cycle for good.

## **Bullying Under Attack: True Stories Written by Teen Victims, Bullies + Bystanders Details**

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## **From Reader Review **Bullying Under Attack: True Stories** Written by Teen Victims, Bullies + Bystanders for online ebook**

### **Dianne says**

Bullying is a deep-rooted and complex problem that has saturated the halls of our learning institutions like venom. It isn't new, but it is finally being addressed as a true problem, as opposed to being a "nuisance problem" and part of growing up. **Bullying Under Attack** is the a compilation of the "success" or "survivors" stories of teens living through the torment and pain.

My deepest congratulations to these survivors, I know what they went through and how difficult it is to come out the other side, reasonably intact. My biggest concern is that it took the loss of someone close to bring this book together and give these kids a chance to purge their demons, voice their thoughts, which they have done concisely and with obvious emotional investment. Well Done!

**Bullying Under Attack** is beyond eye-opening, beyond painful to read. It never should have been necessary. PERIOD. That said, this book should become part of the school required reading, followed by discussion and the opportunity for bystanders, victims and the bullies to put pen to paper as an assignment, the results cut be a revelation for many!

I received this ARC edition in exchange for my honest review from NetGalley and HCI Books.

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### **Jason says**

net galley!

*Almost a third of teens, in fact, either are bullies or are bullied, a new study of 16,000 students found.*

*Bully victims are between 2 to 9 times more likely to consider suicide than non-victims, according to studies by Yale University*

*A study in Britain found that at least half of suicides among young people are related to bullying*

Adults try so hard to make kids' lives better. They really do.

Adults, going full throttle, with intentions of compassion, empathy, and a fervid attempt to always comfort, have stressed kids' social emotional and social toolbox. For one, parents and caretakers alike have proclaimed that bullies only hurt others because they themselves are hurting inside. This is a type of blame displacement that is insidious to those who are bullied. It represents the notion that people are not in control of their own behaviors, and to a certain extent implies that the behaviors are ingrained, lessening the prospect that the bullying will abate. Another aspect posited by one of the authors in this collection, is that "[by suggesting this to a victim] we're hoping to raise the victim up by bringing the bully down"; she then proceeds to call this hypocritical. Excuses for bullying, displacement of behavior, and rationalizations are part of the recursive cycle that perpetrates and sustains bullying. How are we supporting those who are bullied if we attempt to rationalize the behaviors of those who torment? Children pull from the words of their older counterparts for strength and guidance, and when left with ill-conceived notions and philosophical statements, flounder. What is a 10 year old suppose to do with the idea that a bully hurts others as a direct result of their own hurt? Are we so detached as adults that we don't recognize the potential for this to induce further injustices and unfavorable results? Is it not completely rational, as 'Emma' wisely stated above, that these words could birth more bullying?

Adults have exacted further pains and anguishes onto children with misguided approaches to bullying that shadow the present trauma endured by children, in light of the prospect of 'a better future'. The 'It Gets Better Campaign'—a program that is greatly explored throughout this collection—is a prime example of such efforts. Yes, this platform openly discusses bullying using the unique medium of video recording. Yes, it has the capacity to pull together the shattered remnants of a bullied child's self esteem; at least enough to get him/her through a few more days of torture. But is it really the message we want to give to children? 'Hey, I know you are hurting but when you leave middle school high school will be better' What do we say if it continues? 'John I know I told you it would get better in high school, but believe me it does get better.... college will be a whole new world'.

I won't argue against the utility of these videos. I will argue that it is a limited phenomenon. It is exclusive to situations where the culture and social structure, either at home, school or both, provide support. I will argue that all too often situations where mental health is not emphasized, teachers and parents are not coach in empirically evidenced anti-bully strategies, or various social constraints—lack of funding in schools that decreases teacher populations and increases student numbers, situations where pluralistic thinking pervades social attitudes, a lack of cultural diversity, among other factors—have a deleterious effect on resolving these issues and on levels of resiliency. Conversely, there are social and cultural structures that are completely opposite to the one illustrated above, and thus these efforts do serve some populations. I will argue that these situations are rare compared to the bulk of children bullied in schools. I once new of a kid in my high school that was tortured— yes I did nothing. Me = (past tense) bystander— to the extent that he took a Ping-Pong paddle to his abusers forehead; he was punished, even though he reported time and time again of his pains and sorrows. Why are we preaching narratives of hope naked of key elements such as survival, resilience, courage, and a deep, complex understanding of each? Stories like this are threaded throughout this collection, as are discussions expressing many of the ideas explored above.

“Behind many of these accounts are themes of overcoming homophobia or transphobia by fleeing towards new people or places. Yet this possibility of movement is also a privilege. What about those who cannot escape their bullying”?

In the end the message is, as Sarah Hamel noted, “sticks and stones many break my bones, but words will eventually stop hurting me after I get used to them”. This counters the adult world, a world we take for

granted compared to the world we pretend teenagers live in. “If someone were to call a coworker a “fat whale”, they would be fired or at least face serious discipline. Why isn’t this true for our schools?”, Elizabeth Ditty wisely questions.

Unfortunately these stories are plagued with these narratives; sometimes overtly sometimes with just subtle undercurrents. Story after story indicate apathy and disrupted resiliency as a direct result of what we, as adults, have engrained in them.

Many of these accounts demonstrate the consequences of enduring sustained physical assaults and verbal abuse. The psychological punch depicted by Gwen:

“[...] but nothing changed. So I intentionally failed two classes that I had excelled in, [...] and stopped doing homework”

Countless stories cited instances of first hand accounts and those mentioned in the media, of youth pushed to their breaking point and as a result committing suicide.

I think the real message of this book represents concrete cultural and social shift instigated by the wise wisdom of youth. They are witnesses. They are bystanders. They are victims. And they are bullies. We need to respect these first-hand accounts, and as one writer points out, embrace the notion that outsiders only get a glimpse of what really occurs in these situations. Within these stories are noble and honorable attempts to curb bullying. In one story an outcast—I hate this word as it suggests permanency—was assaulted by spitballs. A popular peer turned to the bullies and said “Guys [...] that’s not cool. Stop it”. Another teen on a lower level of the social ranks raised her voice, knowing full well of the implications of her opposition, saying “It’s kind of jerky”. We really have to applaud these teenagers, teens like ‘Sharon’ and the unnamed male. They consciously disregard the negative implications of their statements, pull back from social rules, and denounce the ignorance of their older counterparts.

These stories establish their credibility of the subject of bullying and their subjective awareness of their lives; this demands adults’ acknowledgement and respect. I reject the promise of a better future absent of a better now, and the apathy it bequeaths onto youth, as do many of the authors of these stories. I vehemently object to the notion that the trauma one endures is a source of strength, and that it has the capacity to make the victims advocates for victims. They will embody the same lessons if we nourish children with empathy, respect, understanding, and a belief system that radically changes the concept of it WILL get better, to it WILL get better NOW. These stories literally scream these views.

The cultural and social shifts represented in these stories don’t have to remain exclusive to youth. There is full potential for global, systematic change, as long as we stop preaching and start listening; really listening.

Pledge to listen...

NEA’s Bully Free: It Starts With YOU the parent/educator/coach/ally/sister/brother etc

then listen...

Resources:

What about using technology to disrupt bullying?

An amazing site of love and hope. Writing letters of encouragement to strangers as a therapeutic tool, and/or requesting a bundle of letters were someone you nominate gets letters of encouragement, strength, and hope from strangers!

Public allies (sports)

Athlete Ally

Stand Up Foundation

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## **Nicole says**

Combining personal essays, poems, and artwork, *Bullying Under Attack* delves into the causes of and reasons behind bullying, presenting the issues from the side of the bullies and the bullied.

I have read a few books about bullying, but none have ever made me so glad to have come of age in a time that preceded cyberbullying as *Bullying Under Attack* did. I was the token fat kid and teased mercilessly for it. I had few real friends and hated going to school, but at least I still had a sanctuary at home. The taunts and jabs couldn't reach me there. There was no internet, no cellphone, no IMing or texting. While reading this book, I found myself wondering if I had come of age with today's technology, would I have ended up like Ryan Halligan and so many other kids who simply couldn't face another day of being ostracized and humiliated.

As I read, I found myself relating to so much of what was said.

“Even though he [the bully] affected my life in so many ways, I often wonder if I had any impact on his. It's strange to think that I, who feared him every day, was probably a very miniscule part of his life. To him I was truly invisible.”

I've wondered this so many times about the bullies who teased me. I can still remember every word they said, but I doubt that they do. Katherine Dolgenos sums it up very truthfully:

“Bullying affects victims for years afterwards. I will remember these events for the rest of my life.”

And therein lies the greatest strength of this book – its writers. Teenagers who have been the victims and the bullies and the bystanders who did nothing because they were too afraid of becoming victims themselves. This book is effective because it is written by people who have experienced some aspect of bullying, seen

firsthand the damage it causes, the lives it destroys.

If I had to recommend only one contribution to this tremendous book, I think it would be *I Want My Brother Back* by Ellis Juhlin. This heartbreaking poem illustrates how bullies take something that is beautiful and alive and flourishing and smother until it wilts like a flower denied water and sunlight. The poem uses few words, but says so, so much. It's terrible in its tragedy and devastating in its honesty.

*Bullying Under Attack* should be required reading in schools everywhere. And not just for the students. I was furious when I read the numerous accounts of bullying victims who reached out to teachers, principals, and even law enforcement only to be told to get over it. This should be the book discussed in English class, read during assemblies, carried in every backpack, and available on library shelves. We can't learn from our mistakes if we don't know what they are and how they affect others. Perhaps the more who read this book, the more they will take a stand against bullies, stop bullying others, or just reach out to a victim in need. This is an excellent book with the power to influence its readers and maybe, just maybe erase some of the hatred from this world.

Check out this review and others on my blog at <http://ggddizzy07.wordpress.com>

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## **Bonnie says**

This review was originally published to Bookish Ardour

The stories in *Bullying Under Attack* feature real experiences from victims, bullies, and bystanders. It's true bullying isn't a product of any one reason. Bullying is complicated, from all sides, regardless of what position you are in. The experiences expressed within *Bullying Under Attack* cover mental, verbal, emotional, physical, and cyber abuse. From age-old bullying techniques of spreading gossip, tripping and shoving, socially freezing out, to threatening emails, creating slandering Facebook pages and groups, and coming to people's houses, nothing gets left out.

It's quite confronting and overwhelming, especially when you read the collection continuously, to have so many varieties of bullying placed one after the other. The stories are heartbreaking. At the same time, there are inspirational experiences within. It inspires me when reading about someone who has been victimised, survived it, and been stronger after the fact.

Reading from a bully's perspective, as well as a bystander's, and knowing they've been able to learn from what they've done gives me hope. It is horrible in order to have grown they needed to participate in diminishing another human being. Of course it is. This still gives me hope. Maybe they'll pass on what they've learnt and educate the following generation. If ignorance and negative attitude can be overcome one person at a time, what more can we ask for?

I'm well aware nothing is clearcut and we all do things for differing reasons. It is difficult to be able to consider these things when you are in the midst of bullying, from any perspective, but I loved that there were teens willing to share what happened to them. I have so much respect for these teens being able to express their feelings and thoughts during a traumatic time of their lives.

For someone who has had their fair share, plus some, with being victimised by my peers, I wasn't expecting to be struck by *Bullying Under Attack*. The stories within are confronting, harrowing, and inspiring. I highly recommend grabbing a copy, regardless of if you've been involved in bullying or not.

## **Kristin says**

Every book has it's purpose. Whether it's to entertain, distract, teach, or serve as drink coaster. Sometimes it's not until you're halfway through a book that you realize what purpose the book you're holding will serve. It was in the "Foreward" section of the *Bullying Under Attack*, contributed by John Halligan, that I realized the true purpose of this non-fiction book.

First, let me share with you a little about this book. I requested this book on NetGalley because bullying is a subject that I have always and will always be on the lookout for. Being the mother of a high-functioning autistic child, I know he's got a tough road ahead of him. I've worked in an elementary school lunchroom and I work often in the children's room at our library. I've seen how cruel young children can be without even knowing they are doing it. My son is no exception and I hope to educate him to treat everyone how he himself would want to be treated. I just imagine what life for my son will be like when he gets older.

And that brings me to why this book is so unique. It contains stories not just from the side of the person being bullied. It also contains stories and perspectives told by those watching on the sidelines and from the bullies themselves.

In the Introduction of the book, the editor(s) explains how this book came to be. In brief, there was a contest held by Nicholas Kristof, a columnist at the New York Times. He had written an article about bullying and then ran a national contest, looking for submissions from teens about their experiences with bullying. Together with Teen Ink (a magazine and website completely devoted to teen writing, art, and forums) they compiled the best works to put into a book.

This anthology is organized brilliantly. There are eight chapters, each dealing with one aspect of bullying, whether it's surviving bullying, cyber bullying, or diversity. It's all organized well. Within those chapters, there are multiple works ranging from essays, poems, and even works of art and photography (truly amazing!). Each of these individual works could be written from the point of view of the victim, the bystander, or the bully themselves. Some are written in the moment. Some are looking back in time.

I was just blown away by the voices I read in these pieces. Both heart breaking and inspirational.

Not to leave it just at that, this anthology ends with a great summary written by Dr. Ramani Durvasula. In it, she summarizes the state of bullying today and ways (or clues) that parents/families/teachers can seek to identify early problems in a child's life.

There's also a fabulous section with tons of links for online resources for help with bullying.

Not to be too obvious but to bring it all back around to the purpose of this book... it's certainly not to be the drink coaster under a can of soda.

I truly believe this book should be available in every library, whether it's a school library or public library. To have a book like this that a teen can go to, open up, and read stories written by fellow teens, **IN THEIR OWN WORDS**, I believe is a huge comfort to those kids wondering what to do when they are dealing with a bully in their life. They could show the book to their parents. They could use the online resources in the back. As the bystander, they could just hand it to a victim. The uses are endless.

Review appears on

## **Josie M. says**

I RECEIVED THIS EBOOK FROM NETGALLEY IN EXCHANGED FOR A HONEST REVIEW.

Bullying is everywhere. It is hard to find a place immune to the cycle that invades so many lives. This book helped open my eyes to the scale at which bullying occurs in our society.

This book is an anthology, which I consider to be both a positive and negative point of this book. It helps open your eyes to the scale at which bullying occurs. It also gave you multiple perspectives at which to examine the epidemic. This book explores different types of bullying from cyber to silent. It is also hard to dig deep into the stories that were told, I felt like all of the stories were incomplete and only scratched the surface of each situation that was described.

You will not remember every single poem or story shared in this book, there are just too many to remember. There will be certain stories that will stick with you, stories that will leave your heart beating faster and your mind racing to find a solution to the pain and despair endured by the teens whose stories have been bravely laid before us. You realize the bravery needed by the contributing teens to share their stories. You may not remember every story, but the message and effect of the entire book will no doubt stick with you long after you put this book down.

What I enjoyed most about this book was that we didn't just hear from the victim but the bystander and bully as well. We often only hear from the victim so hearing the other sides was a breath of fresh air. Hearing from the bystander taught me to speak up when you see someone being bullied because you never know the impact you can have on the situation. Hearing from the bully really made me understand what is going on inside the bully's head.

I recommend while reading this book to take it slow. Don't try to read it in one sitting, read a few stories a day and let it digest. Reading it in large parts only seemed to desensitize me from the bullying and the stories being told. As a society we tend to get desensitized to bullying, so take it slow and really think about the stories being told. Don't ignore the messages being sent by these very brave teens. Help be the solution to a problem that is taking society by storm.

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## **Sandra says**

I have been reading this book for the past few days now and I personally think this is a fantastic initiative. I think all teenagers, adults and teachers must read this book. Just to get to know about bullying, why teenagers bully, what is going on in the victim's mind, and just to drop the rising suicide rates.

In the book, we follow teenagers that have written a small story or poem about bullying – they were either victims, bystanders or the bullies themselves. We learn about what triggered bullies to hurt the people, we learn why some victims committed suicide and why some started thinking the way they thought, and we learn why bystanders didn't do anything when they saw it happening.

I must say, I got slightly sentimental at some parts in the book. I had a couple of stories where I thought, this was exactly how I felt back in the days I was bullied, or this is how I feel now. Also some of the poems were quite emotional. I had my favorite little stories in the book.

It must have taken a lot of courage, honesty and trust to being able to share their stories with the rest of the world. I am proud of them. They have done something that I would not really dare to do, although I really want to.

What I didn't really like about the book, that it was all around America, and not worldwide, of course, TeenInk is an American foundation, but I do hope they will broaden their range, by coming to Europe, Africa, Oceania and Asia. It is a good initiative for all teenagers, because I think almost everyone has got something to do with bullying. Everyone has once witnessed bullying, gone through it or done it.

Bullying under Attack is beyond eye-opening and very painful to read. This book should be part of the required reading material. I recommend this book to everyone, young and old.

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## **Paula Robinson says**

I enjoyed reading this book, because it is told from so many perspectives. Reading the words of a young man who was once bullied, and why he in turn became one moved me to tears. His anguish and pain can be felt through the words on the page. Looking at the artwork, which really grab you from within, sucking you into the dark world of their emotions, cause you to live and breathe their fear. The poetry is what moved me the most; I got goosebumps reading them. Being a poet, who wrote through some of the most turbulent times of my life, it resonated with me. I could feel the pain and anguish, some of these children. Hearing the voice of someone who stood up for another being bullied, and how they found strength in that, made me smile at her courage. Reading the words of a girl on the verge of taking the ultimate act, but got a phone call from someone asking three simple words, "how are you" that changed her life, gave me a sense of hope. Something as simple as a smile can change the palette of someone's dark day, and *Bullying Under Attack* is a great reminder of that.

I woke up this morning with a feeling that I was lost. My dreams last night were a bit disturbing, and that is thanks to reading this book. The thing is, it wasn't me that was having these feelings, but I took on the personae of one or more of the children in the book, and that is what disturbs me. It's been a very long time since I've read a book that completely caused me to lose myself. I felt helpless and scared, which are two powerful emotions this book elicited from me. This book is very real, telling the stories of those who have been bullied, those who are bullies, and those who were bystanders when bullying occurred. The stories of their journey through this dark period of their lives was done through moving poetry, prose, and artwork. This lost feeling, still lingers with me now, but I am finding my way back to myself. I just had to think and let things settle in my mind.

For a more a more in depth review, stop by my blog here <http://peacenlovepaula.blogspot.com/2...>

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## **Grrlscientist says**

*"Sticks and stones will break my bones  
But words will never harm me."*

Despite the assurances of this old schoolyard verse, the truth is that words do cause harm; terrible, lasting harm. Words can also be precursors to physical assaults or to rape and?—?as we've seen reported in the news far too often?—?words can also lead to retaliatory shootings or to suicide.

Bullying is not a new phenomenon. That rhyme has been popular since the nineteenth century, and probably earlier; a rather obvious indicator that bullying is a prominent feature of childhood, even in the most civilised

of societies. Tragically, until someone dies, bullying is rarely discussed openly; not by our teachers who observe it every day; not by parents who tend to remain blissfully ignorant of their childrens' daily torments, not even by our young people whose lives are changed forever by bullying.

But an eye-opening anthology, *Bullying Under Attack: True Stories Written by Teen Victims, Bullies & Bystanders* [HCI Teens; 2013] takes an important first step: it raises public awareness of bullying whilst sharing the viewpoints of bullying's main players; individuals who are bullied, their bullies and the many (often overlooked) bystanders watching passively from the sidelines.

Each chapter in this collection explores bullying from a particular perspective and examines some of the methods employed, such as social isolation, verbal assaults, cyberbullying and physical harassment, and the excuses used for selecting specific individuals as targets, such as race, gender and sexual orientation.

But this is not a scholarly investigation that is emotionally removed from this sensitive subject. Instead, this book goes straight to the source: through the voices of its teen-aged authors, this book explores how bullying feels to those who experience it. The essays, poetry, open letters, photography and drawings present raw and unvarnished accounts that captivate the reader, so we too are enveloped by social isolation, we too hear verbal assaults echoing inside our heads and we too endure the physical harassment alongside those who are bullied. Each voice adds to the painful chorus of those whose inner selves have been dismantled by their peers.

I'm the smallest  
Star in the night's sky.  
My only reason  
For being is  
To make the  
Brighter stars look better.

[“The Smallest Star” by Summer Davis, from *Bullying Under Attack*, p. 101]

We experience first-hand the insidious and abiding psychological damage inflicted since many individuals internalise their bullies, as contributor Shefain Islam observes: “Maybe, we think, if we find our faults first, it won't hurt us as much if someone laughs at us or insults us. We become our own worst bullies, even if no one is actually mocking us.” [p. 214]

We feel, as exemplified in the compellingly evocative essay, “King Worm”, how lack of trust and self esteem work in tandem as some bullied children emulate their persecutors, seeking acceptance from their peers by heaping abuse upon vulnerable others.

But unlike most adults, the book's youthful contributors don't shy away from discussing the tragic consequences of bullying. For example, we sit tensely on the edge of our seats as one young man listens to his bullied friend talk openly about suicide in “The Bullet”. In “90 minutes”, we accompany another student to a school assembly, and sit next to him, listening to a grieving father talk about his son's suicide that resulted from bullying.

The essays reveal some common misconceptions about bullying. For example, some parents may believe that if their child has friends, they are somehow protected from the perils of bullying. But they would be wrong: bullies may in fact pose as a child's closest friends, as we learn in this poem:

The worst thing about  
Bullying  
Wasn't the  
Bad name listing?—?  
The tiny words that  
Worked like piranhas  
Swimming through sound waves  
Straight into  
The worst of my dreams.

[...]

The worst thing about  
Bullying  
Is that they  
Were  
My "Friends."

[“The Worst Thing About Bullying” by Rachel Chevat, from *Bullying Under Attack*, p. 129]

But there's also plenty of hope to be found in this anthology. For example, the poignant essay, “How Are You?”, shows how one person's simple (and probably soon forgotten) act of kindness can make a world of difference to a bullied child. Other essays tell of how a bully and his or her victim befriended each other and through their new-found compassion for the other, found new and lasting strength. Additionally, the short biographies for all of the contributors in the back of the book provide powerful real-life examples that there is a better life waiting after graduation.

In addition to the collected short essays, poetry and open letters, drawings and photographs are interspersed throughout the book's pages. An Afterword shares useful advice for helping young people with parents, educators and others who work with children, particularly those who are being bullied. The book lists numerous resources, such as web sites and organisations, films and books, to assist with bullying. To encourage young people to share their experiences and feelings through writing and art, the editors of this book share information about the not-for-profit Young Authors Foundation, its writing programs, courses and contests, and how to submit works to Teen Ink magazine, which is where these collected works were originally published.

This book is a vital wake-up call to parents, educators and school officials, providing an insider's view of bullying and the issues surrounding this destructive and anti-social behaviour. By reading this powerful book, the reader is alerted to the subtle warning signs that a child close to them may be the victim or observer of bullying?—?or might even be the bully. By identifying the problem, they can follow up and change the lives of these young people before it's too late. For these reasons, this is the most important young adult and children's book I've read in my entire life. Although I hope a day comes when such a book will not be necessary, I think it should be required reading by school officials, parents and students, and included as an essential part of anti-bullying programs in schools. Further, now that a new school term is underway, this book would make an excellent gift for your student and for your local school and public libraries.

**NOTE:** Originally published at *The Guardian* on 23 September 2013.

## **Philip Townsend says**

Really good tips for raising a child but also tips that helped getting around in my daily live.  
Recommendation!

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## **Kayla says**

Bullying is something I think everyone experiences in some form throughout their education and during life in general. Whether you're a victim, bystander, or bully, you're trapped in this system that needs to be rooted out of life. In *Bullying Under Attack* there are essays from all three sides of the situation. It's devastating to hear what these victims went through and how they survived and were changed forever by their experiences. Hearing what bullies have to say about their past can be enlightening as well as troubling. And sometimes it seems like bystanders can really be the worst parts of the equation, never stepping up to give the victim the helping hand they need and deserve.

This collection really touched home and was important to me. I think anyone reading it can gain a better perspective of what it's like to live through this. No matter which aspect of the collection you relate to, I hope that every reader comes out of this book with the conviction that something more needs to be done and bullying needs to be stopped, now.

I really liked how some of these essays addressed cyber bullying as well because I think that aspect of harassment has picked up so much lately and school rules as well as laws have not moved along fast enough to address this tool used by bullies to harm others nearly 24/7. The way that people bully is evolving and people need to evolve alongside it to stay one step ahead, help the kids who need it and encourage those who stand there and ignore what's happening to speak up and make a difference.

I think that anyone can read this collection and gain something from it, whether you think you've never witnessed bullying or you've experienced it yourself. I know this is an important issue and I feel like it can never be addressed enough, not until there are no students afraid to go to school and no bullies looking for their next victim.

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## **Jillyn says**

*Bullying Under Attack: True Stories Written by Teen Victims, Bullies & Bystanders* is a collection of real life stories put together by the publishers of TeenInk magazine. This book approaches a hot button issue, bullying, with a three prong approach, featuring stories from the view points of all three parties- the bully, the victim, and the not so innocent bystanders.

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Four and a half stars.

I have to say, no matter how much I read about bullying, be it cyber, physical, or otherwise, I am always blown away. I'm a logical person. I know that these things go on in the world, unfortunately. But books such

as this one help me realize how much I took a safe learning space for granted. Teens and kids all over the United States, and the world, are dreading going to school on Monday because it's another week of hell. I can't imagine that feeling, since school was always my safe haven. I'm thankful now, in hindsight, that the (shockingly) public schools that I went to never really tolerated bullying. I'm not going to be so bold as to say it didn't happen at all. Sure it did. But we were always relatively vocal, or maybe our bullies were weak. I'm not really sure.

Reading the stories of these teens who are brave enough to share their stories with the public also makes me grateful that my classmates never chose me as a target, since I was a perfect one- an overweight pagan LGBT goth who smoked and was poor. I never let any of those things define me, and no one else tried to make them define me, and it makes the harsh reality of bullying so much more dramatic for me. Have I been called fat or a dyke on occasion? Sure. But nothing to what these kids have faced.

In addition to narratives about bullying, *Bullying Under Attack* also features poetry, photography, and other forms of art. I often found these just as sad as the stories, the pain of those who put it to canvas is evident.

What really broke my heart is how many of these stories center around LGBT kids. It's a fact that LGBT kids are more often bullied than their straight peers, but to hear these stories straight from the victims' mouth is an entirely different experience. I have to take this space to say to anyone being bullied, LGBT or otherwise, that it *does* get better. And if you happen to be a teacher, please take it seriously. The amount of accounts in this collection that have teachers and principals who ignore their suffering is deplorable.

Though this book contains a lot of pain and confession, there is a unified theme of these stories: inspiration. There are victims that stand up for themselves, bystanders who realized how much they were hurting people by staying silent, and bullies that realize how immature and hurtful they were and stop their bullying ways. It carries a message of unity, that if everyone just communicates and works together, bullying can stop and everyone can feel safe.

At the end of this book, there is an extensive list of organizations that readers can turn to if they are being bullied to get help or even just realize that they're not alone. This list also includes books and movies on the topic of bullying. I think this is a very helpful resource to include, and sincerely hope that those who need it will utilize it.

I also found that this book had great variety. In addition to the different "roles" of bullying that were represented, things such as orientation, race, and religion were also well spread throughout the collection, making it a well-rounded book of narratives.

The only thing that I had a hang up with is that some of the submissions included in this collection seemed to be less of stories and more along the lines of just statements of opposing bullying. While I agree wholeheartedly that bullying needs to stop, those bits didn't really add any insight and kind of broke the flow of the other submissions.

Anyone who was every bullied can learn something from this book. Anyone who has bullied can learn something from this book. Anyone thinking that they're innocent while staying quiet can learn something from this book. I especially recommend it for high schoolers, middle schoolers, and teachers of any grade level. Bullying is serious. Words you shoot out without thinking can stay with someone for life. And once you post something on the internet it's there *forever*. Cyberbullying is still bullying. This book contains some serious topics like suicide, self-harm, sexuality, eating disorders, and mild profanity.

Thanks to Netgalley and HCI Books for my copy, and thanks to the contributors of this book. You're all very strong for telling your stories to the nation. This review can also be found on my blog, *Bitches n Prose*.

## **Rose says**

"Bullying Under Attack" is a work compiled by the editors of Teen Ink Magazine, a publication made for teenagers written by teenagers. As such, all of the stories contained in this respective work are written by teens who write personal accounts on the various angles of the bullying spectrum - victims, former bullies, and/or bystanders. I mentioned in my review of Emily Bazelon's "Sticks and Stones" that bullying is a complex problem that has roots in various spectra and those aspects need to be addressed in order for people to understand just how complex of a problem it is and how to address solutions on how to stop it. I'm really glad to see that this compilation addresses the multidimensional notations and effects that it has - not just on one party, but everyone involved.

I was sincerely touched by the stories, poems, and artistic talents of the contributors of this work. It takes a great amount of courage, honesty, and trust to be able to share on this difficult subject that's such an epidemic in our society, and to hear it from the young men and women of a wide variety of backgrounds - whether of a different faith, race, sexual orientation or any spectrum of diversity one could think of - is immensely valuable. I think this is a must read not only for teens, but personally speaking, one of any age group or background could value. I think if more people recognize the various roots that bullying has, as the illustrious and articulate teens in this work have done, we as a society can be one step closer to finding solutions and ways to combat it.

There's one essay in particular that I want to cite to close out this reflection, which I think really hit home at the heart of this. "Enter Girl", an essay by Maggie Brooks had this to say on bullying:

"I believe bullying comes from prejudice, fear, and social pressure. I cannot say there will be a day when people will be impervious to society's expectations. But I do know that we have the capacity to speak out and help others.

...Bullying can't be fixed piecemeal. If you only help the victim, the bully will have nowhere to go, no one to turn to. And if you focus on stopping the bully, you leave behind a person who has been broken and needs support to put them back together. These characters' arcs are intertwined, what happens to one affects the other."

Excellent compilation, and I'm really happy I had the chance to read it. I highly recommend it.

Overall score: 5/5

Note: I received this as an ARC from NetGalley, from the publisher HCI.

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## **Eustacia Tan says**

Bullying Under Attack is an anthology written by teenagers about teenagers. They're bullied or they bully. Or they watch. Either way, they write about their experiences (or sometimes express it in verse).

In this book, there are active bullies, passive bullies and victims. Passive bullies are bystanders who see what's going on but don't intervene.

Personally, I found this book to be a little repetitive. After a while, I could see that all the victims fit a mold, all the bullies fit a mold, and all the bystanders fit a mold. I'd actually like to hear the account of an unrepentant bully - it would be really eye opening for me. And since I'm not very good at appreciating poetry (Robert Frost and Wilfred Owen is as much as I can handle), I found the poetry to be overwrought and too emotional at times (to be even more blunt, it feels like angst from a teenage blog). But, I'm admittedly challenged when it comes to appreciating poetry, so don't take my word for it.

And while it may sound strange, I have no idea which category I fit into. I went to an all girls school for ten years and I didn't see anything. For example, I only realised we had cliques about two years after we graduated, and I just realised that we had popular and non-popular girls. Up till now, I always thought we were all friends (so I had some close friends and some not so close friends).

So to me, school is a place where you close ranks around one another. Now that I think about it, if a girl was disliked, she was disliked by the whole cohort (but we would still invite her to class events and such. At least, from what I saw, the dislike was only manifested in complaining - we were, at the very least, civil (if not friendly) in person.

I would say that for just getting me to realise this, *Bullying Under Attack* has already evoked some change in me. And me criticising the book aside, doesn't that mean that it's already achieved its aim?

Disclaimer: I got this book free from the publishers via NetGalley in exchange for a free and honest review.

This review was first posted at [Inside the mind of a Bibliophile](#)

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## **Daniel says**

This is a book that every high school sociology or health class should have as required reading.

Written by teens, this anthology explores the lives of those who are bullied; those who have sat passively by while others are bullied; those who've intervened to defend/stop bullying; and the lives of bullies themselves. While I'm a bit past the days of being a bullied student, the remembrance of those days are still with me. Though admittedly, I don't think anything I experienced compares with much of what was written here.

It should not surprise anyone that bullying in schools continues to be a problem. It has become a major issue and often reported on local and national news services. As a school board member, I've been aware that it is definitely a hot topic that is being addressed (at least in our small school). None of the stories of being bullied in this collection surprises me. I was a little aghast at the vehemence and violence perpetrated by some (I'm sure I would never have been strong enough to deal with some of what I encountered here). Some of the stories by bullies (generally 'reformed') struck me as a little less than worthy of printing, though I understand the desire to get all points of view. Unfortunately, although none came out and said, "Feel sorry for the bullies because they have problems, which is what brings out the bully in them," (in fact, some said just the opposite), the under-current was there ... that bullies are dealing with issues (generally self-esteem) which bring out the worst in them.

I recognize that teens need over-sight, particularly in school, to prevent bullying. I think what enraged me the most in some of the articles were the stories of adults (typically teachers and administrators) who did nothing to stop or prevent the bullying. Particularly in cases where they were made aware of the issue! It is this, more than any bullying itself, that needs to be changed. It must not be tolerated. I recognize that there are many reasons this might happen, but there are no legitimate excuses.

One story struck me with it's brilliant deduction. The writer (I wish I could remember who this was...I may have highlighted it on my Kindle) commented that adults told her that she needed to stand up and be strong and ignore the bullying. That she needed to learn how to deal with the 'real' world. But as she points out, in the 'real' world, ther A) likely wouldn't be any teasing/taunting of a fellow employee and B) sexual harassment would likely result in firing. And yet when kids do it to other kids, it's somehow just an experience they have to learn to deal with. The young author makes a most brilliant point.

Sadly, there is bullying in the adult work place as well, but likely not at the same level that our teenagers face. This book is a great wake-up to adults and a resource that every teen should have available.

Looking for a good book? This book, written by teens, for teens, about bullying, is fantastic reading for everyone.

This review originally published in blog [Looking For a Good Book](#).

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