



Edge

Diane Tullson

(April 2002)

Unknown \$9.95 (212pp)

978-0-7737-6230-5

“What’s the stink?’ The girl’s voice behind me in the crowded school hall raises the hair on my arms. Loren Miller. And one of her hordes. The smell of Wednesday’s special at the school cafeteria is wafting in the corridor, but I know that’s not what she means. ‘Oh, it’s just MARLENA. I thought it was something dead.’” Even Marlie’s ex-best friend Keely has snubbed her to prove Keely’s new loyalty to Loren. So fourteen-year-old Marlie slips once again into the safe harbor of the school library, where she has been the librarian’s “slave” for the few weeks she’s been in the high school.

It isn’t long before the outcasts at school include Marlie, who, at first, is thrilled to have friends. She no longer had to face the Loren Millers alone; she, too, belonged to a group. Shortly, though, she begins to see that these friends are planning to include her in some evil revenge and that others are going to be hurt or even killed. Because her mom is emotionally preoccupied with her ex-husband’s abduction of seven-year-old son Elliot, Marlie is alone with her dilemma.

The story ends as expected, with Marlie making the right decision. The edge softens and high school doesn’t seem so daunting. Marlie realizes, too, that there are adults—the school librarian and counselor, and her mom’s friend Chuck—who are reliable mentors in the growing-up process. The message to teens is obvious and the plot hums along rapidly filled with plenty of dialogue.

The author, who lives in British Columbia and writes for Canadian Living magazine, has recently published one other young adult novel. With Marlie’s story, she has touched the nerve of teen acceptance. Tullson carefully balances the serious situations and themes with bits of humor and wisdom to make the story appealing to teens. Young adults will overlook the undeveloped characterization and formulaic plot to extract the message that shouts “do what you know is right.”

(May / June 2003)

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