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Our Little Secret

Allayne Webster

YA fiction
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13+
\$17.99
Paperback
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- The story that every young girl needs to read.
- Strong storytelling about adolescent sexuality and the confusion of sexual abuse.
- Compelling first novel by a new Australian YA author.

Nothing much ever happens in Wattleton until the day that Anne-Marie is raped on her way home from school. The gossips have a field day, and the verdict is that Anne-Marie must have been asking for it. Ed doesn't see it that way, but she has her own problems – a distant father, annoying younger brothers, and Attila the Hun for a mother. But then Tom Atkinson comes along. Tom's good-looking, and he notices her, even though she's only fourteen. Trouble is, he wants their relationship to be a secret – maybe because he's a friend of the family. Soon Ed is way out of her depth, and it seems that no one is looking after her.

Allayne Webster grew up in country towns before settling in Adelaide. She was inspired by the books of Judy Blume when she was growing up and felt they ‘carried her through’ adolescence. This is her first novel.

TRY IT! READ AN EXTRACT!

‘Hi Ed – is your mum home?’

‘No, just me. She went out.’

Tom was wearing a blue and white check flannelette shirt over a white singlet with jeans and sandals. His levis were discoloured and ripped from working in the vineyard. He ran his large calloused hands through his hair, scratched his head and then looked over his shoulder and down the road. Then he looked back at me inquisitively, with a slightly amused smile.

‘What are you doing at home? Aren’t you meant to be at school?’

‘Um, yeah ... Well, I’m sick.’

‘You don’t look sick,’ he said.

I didn’t respond.

‘What’s with the make-up?’

Think quick, think quick ...

‘There’s a school play coming up, and I’m trying on my costume.’ My creative ability under pressure astounded me.

‘Oh, cool – can I see?’ And with that, Tom put his foot in the door and forced it open with the strength of one muscular arm. I let go, unable to stop him.

I stood there in my pink satin night slip while he looked me up and down, shaking his head slowly. Cupping his chin with his hand, he stroked his bristly stubble. My cheeks filled with the burning heat of humiliation. I fidgeted, folding my arms across my chest trying

pointlessly to cover myself up, and then unfolding them again, clenching and unclenching my hands at my sides.

I couldn't speak. What was I supposed to say? He obviously thought I looked like the biggest idiot on the face of the planet. It amazed me that he wasn't already doubled over with laughter. In fact, he wasn't saying or doing anything. He was just looking at me. 'I like it, Edwina. You look ... very sexy.'