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Under age Frances Atkinson



OUR LITTLE SECRET

Allayne Webster
Scholastic, \$17.95

The chilling first paragraph of this book gives you a good idea about the kind of territory you are about to explore. Small-town brutality, a stifling air of repression, guilt, misplaced shame and sexual violence. *Our Little Secret* is a straight-talking novel about a 14-year-old girl who is assaulted by an older man. Edwina — young, vulnerable and confused — keeps asking herself, “Is this love?”. Allayne Webster’s searing look at sexual abuse in a country town and its complicated and heart-breaking repercussions will resonate with many readers. Webster’s characters, major and minor, are entirely believable and the town of Wattleton could be anywhere in Victoria. Confronting and sometimes graphic, *Our Little Secret* is for older readers, 15 plus. The final message is one of hope, but also that the culture of silence around sexual abuse can have tragic consequences.