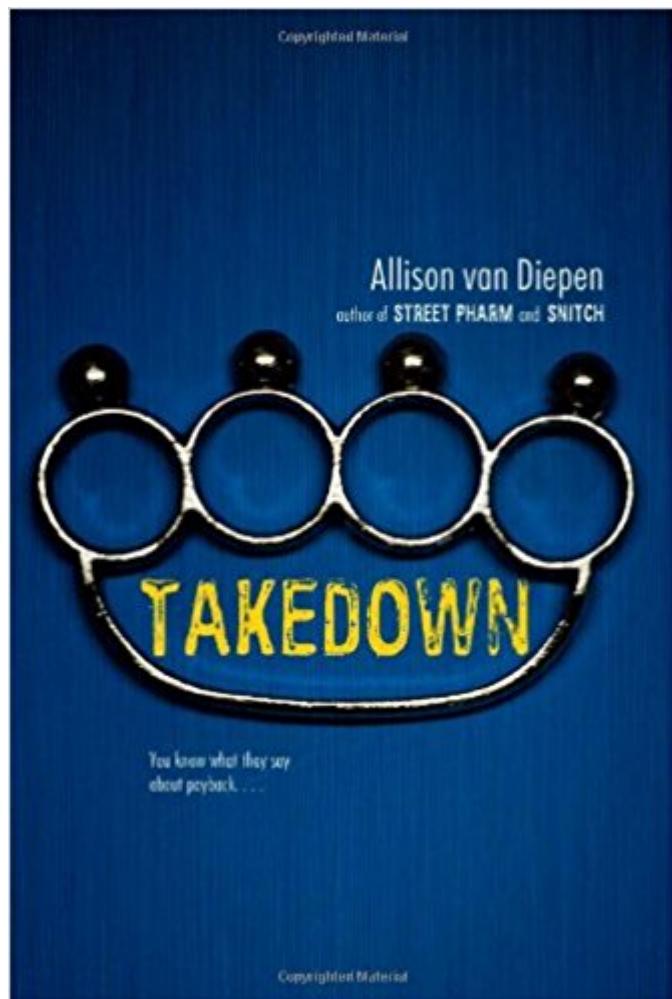


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Takedown



Synopsis

A teen infiltrates a drug ring to settle a vendetta in this fast-paced novel from the author of Street Pharm and Snitch. Darren took the fall for Diamond Tony, the notorious head of the city's drug cartel. Two years later, Darren's finally out of juvie and determined to get even. Working as an informant for the police, Darren infiltrates Diamond Tony's operation. But falling for sweet, innocent Jessica was not part of that plan. She's a distraction and a liability. She's also everything Darren dreamed about while he was locked up, and with her, he has the promise of a fresh start. When a deadly turf war breaks out between Diamond Tony and the Bloods, Darren gets caught in the crossfire. The cops think he's playing both sides, and any mistake could be his last. Darren has to stay on his game if he's going to protect Jessica and if he's going to stay alive.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up-When he was 15, Darren was locked up for his involvement with Toronto's most notorious drug cartel, despite the fact that he was only working as a lookout at the time. He knew that talking was suicide, so he kept his mouth shut and served his time. But during his two years in juvie, Darren quietly plotted his revenge. Now, he's a confidential informant for the police, working to take down the cartel's kingpin, a powerful drug lord named Diamond Tony. Darren finds himself in dangerous territory, however, when Tony's men gun down his supervising police officer for getting in their way. Darren is terrified that it's only a matter of time before his secret is out. Left on his own, caught in the

middle of a turf war between Diamond Tony's operation and the Bloods, he has a decision to make. Should he continue with his plan to take down Diamond Tony, or should he get out while he can, before his family or his girlfriend is caught in the crossfire? Van Diepen has created a gritty, suspenseful, character-driven story that reveals the complexity of life in the projects in a major city without coming across as preachy. Drugs and violence are never glorified or presented in an overly graphic manner, and sexuality is also downplayed. This is a strong choice for reluctant readers. Purchase where urban fiction is popular.-Liz Overberg, Darlington School, Rome, GA (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Darren is a whole teen living a half life. He would rather be writing lyrics and dropping beats with his best friend, White Chris, or hanging with his little brother, Kiki, and girlfriend, Jessica. Instead, he becomes wrapped up in Diamond Tony's turf war. Fresh from juvie, where he took the rap as one of Diamond Tony's lookouts, now Darren is one of DT's foot soldiers, slinging drugs on street corners. But now Darren is only getting close to DT in order to exact revenge on him. Darren has flipped and become an informant, but he is in too deep, and Darren knows the stakes have gotten too high. The tight plotting and pacing are the strengths here. Every scene builds nail-biting tension, and the bit players reveal themselves to be critical threads in a tangled, menacing web. Darren's motivations are wholly believable, and the setting—cold, snowy, and desolate Toronto—keeps readers shivering on the streets with him, as if you have taken a hit of Diamond Tony's signature product yourself. This will win van Diepen new and dedicated fans. Grades 9-12. --Erin Downey Howerton --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Thanks to Allison Van Diepen's no-nonsense writing style and the main character, Darren's, spot-on voice, I slipped easily into his fast-paced story about doing two years in juvie, becoming an informant for the police (to get revenge on the kingpin who put him there, Diamond Tony), and climbing his way up Diamond Tony's ranks--all while going to high school, supporting his family and striving to be a good influence for his two year-old half brother, Kiki. In some stories, the truth will set you free, but in Darren's, it will get you killed. He has to keep his true reason for being back in the game secret, and this isn't easy for Darren, especially when he becomes involved with his beautiful classmate, Jessica. The safest thing would be to push her away from him and his dangerous lifestyle, but he's beginning to really fall for her. Just thinking about being with Jessica the next time

is what keeps him going. When friends wind up targets or in the cross-fire, secrets about his dead father come to light, and loyalties are tested and abused, it's all Darren can do to protect those he loves and stay alive. Within its first few pages, *Takedown* had me hooked. The characters are multi-dimensional and believable, the plot is infused with nail-biting turns, and Allison's writing style--including brief chapters peppered with Darren's rhymes--make this a quick yet poignant read.

Miss Van Diepen has a knack for making compelling and believable characters, and once again transports us into the complicated life of gangs and drug lords. The story is pretty straight forward, boy wants revenge, insert himself in a horrible situation, meet a girl, fall in love, twists/trust/snitching/code, wants to end thing soon and get out before it is too late and finally a HEA or as close as it could be. The pace flows exquisitely fast. The only thing missing here was a corrupt cop. If you enjoyed *Snitch* and *Street Pharm*, you can't go wrong with this book.

The central subjects of this book are gangs and drug trade, but the shocking part as you read, is that this book could be taking place anywhere. The battles that include deaths, poverty, webs of lies make for an exciting page turner that had me transfixed and I read it in one sitting, yet they're also so realistic, that they make you pause and consider the world around you. Going in my classroom library!

The second best book I've ever read that was about street life. The second is *Snitch* written by her. This makes me want to become a writer. The fact that you can read this book and never put it down is amazing. I was on the edge of my seat the entire time. Great job!

Great Book, lots of action in it.

My students love this book.

Very good quick read.

This book! I like it! ANOTHER! I've had this one on my TBR for sooo long, I forgot why I wanted it. But am I glad I didn't send it back to the library! I adored it! It felt like a more polished version of *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. (And, gosh, do I adore anything by S.E. Hinton!!) Characters? The narrator is Darren. Who is awesome. Oh, gosh! He's complex and intense and adorable. (Ahem.) Okay, so

he is dealing drugs, but he's a snitch (an informant for the police) and he wants to stop the psycho gang-leader, Diamond Tony. He has depth. He has reasons. He's such a well written character! I particularly liked how he related to other people. He was adorably sweet with his 2-year-old brother, Kiki. He was respectful to his girlfriend (an odd phenomenon in the gang world). He respected his mother, even though she was useless (sorry, but she was). And he was (almost) always polite to his snarky sister. But he's tough! And he's a criminal! I know this screams "bad boy", and Darren is in a way. He's bad. It doesn't get much more dangerous then running drugs WHILE being a snitch. But, while he has the bad boy aura, he's good boy 97%. Jessica, his girlfriend, is too sweet to be true. Actually, she is. I liked her, and I thought she was a very well-written character...buuut, she did seem too-good-to-be true the whole time. (view spoiler)Writing? I adore this style! It's very crisp and clean. No flowery language. No nonsense. And it's very boyish. I had no trouble being inside Darren's head. He's very mature for his age, but heck, he was in prison. That does that to a guy, I guess. He's very smart, too, and it comes out in the writing. I really like how the author went for the simplistic style. My FAVOURITE Plot? Okay, this is where I come a little unstuck. I loved this book. It was a 5-star all the way...except for the plot. It was awesome right up until the end. Then I felt it just folded into the bag. It was gritty and bloody, yes. But it worked out so FAST. A few chapters peaked the book, cleaned up the action, and BOOM, we're done. I was kind of confused. It felt easy. And the book was all hard work! Darren spent the whole time nearly killing himself and then it ends so neatly? Mm. It's definitely gritty. It's gang stuff! It's not a pretty walk in the park. By the way, I love that. I feel like I've experienced different lives, different cultures. It's awesome when a book sucks you in so well you feel like you're THERE. Gosh, this is why it has 5-stars. I loved the bits of verses and songs Darren wrote too. It added an extra dimension to the story as well as his character. It's another favourite! I will now go read EVERYTHING ELSE by Allison van Diepan. This author rocks.

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