



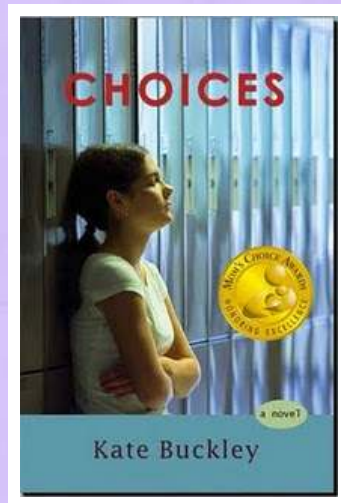
Christi the Teen Librarian

A blog about all things YA.

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Thursday, August 25, 2011

Choices by Kate Buckley



Choices by Kate Buckley
Book Publishers Network, July 2009

Summary from [Goodreads](#):

Binge drinking, date rape, family secrets, and teen pregnancy collide in *Choices*, a compelling and bumpy coming-of-age journey that hurtles fifteen-year-old Kara MacNeill into a state of panic, fear, and confusion.

A sophomore at an all-girls Catholic academy in Colorado, Kara finds herself crossing the line into womanhood after an arrogant high school basketball star rapes her, then urges her to get an abortion when she tells him she is pregnant. Facing life-changing decisions and a major confrontation with her conservative Catholic parents, Kara discovers the allies who will help her to deal with her crisis and recover from her mistakes.

Choices is the powerful story of a teenage girl who learns to think for herself, take responsibility for her choices, and discover a solid sense of self along the way.

Kate Buckley contacted me after she read [my review](#) of *In Trouble* by Ellen Levine to ask if I'd like to read and review her book, also about teen pregnancy. Of course I said yes--I love me some dark

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Playing Hurt Blog Tour thank you from Holly Schindler (I'm mentioned at about minute 8)

contemporary fiction, after all.

I enjoyed *Choices*. I don't think it's fair to compare it with *In Trouble*, because, as I mentioned, I read an eGalley of *In Trouble* and it had a lot of technical and grammatical errors. In addition, *In Trouble* takes place during the 1950's while *Choices* is a modern-day read. Both books did have an element of politics in them, though, but I think it's hard to write a book about teen pregnancy and abortion and NOT include politics.

Our narrator is Kara, is 15 and a sophomore at an all-girls Catholic school. She is so overprotected by her parents that it's not even funny. No dating until she's at least 17. She *might* be able to get her driver's license when she turns 18. She's barely allowed to leave the house after dark, ever. Everyone knows what happens when you confine teens that way--all hell breaks loose. Now, I'm not saying that you should go out and buy beer for your teen, but they need a little freedom--something Kara certainly doesn't have. So it's easy to understand how she could fall under the spell of handsome Jake, and easier still to understand why she takes to sneaking out at night to be with him. One night of bad decisions leads to an event that will change Kara's life forever.

What really surprised me about this novel was the reaction of Kara's parents. Kara's mom has spent a lot of time volunteering and campaigning for a staunchly pro-life politician, and Dad is just unreasonably strict with no explanation. When this family of three finally opens up, however, everyone's behavior starts to make a lot more sense. The ending might surprise you, as it did me--not so much with what happened, but *how* it happened. *Choices* is a powerful story about mistakes, bad decisions, faith, family, and friendship that I think fans of contemporary fiction will enjoy.

Review copy provided by author. I received no compensation for this review.

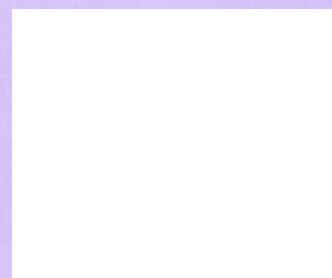
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