

**Rock Bottom: Addiction & Teens**

**Booktalk Script**

by Michele D. Lefler

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Good afternoon. My name is Michele Lefler, and I'm the Media Coordinator here at Brunswick County Academy. Today I'm going to booktalk several books with you. A booktalk is a great way to become acquainted with a book or variety of books so you will know if it is something you want to read. There are three main types of booktalks, and I'll be doing all three styles today. The excerpt is just what it sounds like. The presenter reads an interesting and catchy excerpt from the book. It is used as a quick means to grab the audience's attention and leave them wanting more. The first person booktalk is similar in that it quickly grabs the audience's attention. In this one, the presenter becomes the character and discusses his or her life with the audience. It takes good script writing and acting skills, but can be rather fun if the presenter enjoys drama. The descriptive booktalk is a bit different and requires more work on the part of both the presenter and the audience. In this style the presenter talks a little bit about the book, characters and story, and then brings the audience into a very brief discussion.

Today I will be booktalking six books that center around a common theme: addiction. There are many forms of addiction and they all have negative effects on the lives of everyone involved. Specifically, I will be talking about alcohol and drug addiction, what it is, and how it affects lives. The title of the booktalk is: **Rock Bottom: Addiction & Teens**. I have recently read each of these books and think that you will find them interesting and relative to the topic. Let's get started.

**Clean by Amy Reed- Excerpt**

**Transition:** When you've hit rock bottom there is no where to go but up. To get there you go to rehab to get clean. In Amy Reed's novel, **Clean**, five teens find themselves in rehab. Listen to them talk about their experiences that brought them to rehab.

**Booktalk:** Let's start with Olivia- The thing you need to know about me is that my family's perfect. My grandfather had a high position in the State Department, and my father is following in his footsteps. There's been talk lately about him running for Senate, but I try not to pay attention. His world is not my world. I live in the kids' world, where we're supposed to be perfect and not make any noise. My older brother is a junior at Princeton, fourth generation, bound for Harvard Law, etc. My younger brother is a violin prodigy. Me, I'm my own brand of perfect, I guess. The kind that has to work a little harder than everyone else. (p. 33)

Then there's Eva- The girl was halfway between a child and a woman. Summer left her broken and without a mother. Ninth grade arrived in another part of town, where there was no boyfriend, where there were no friends, where there was nothing at all familiar, and she had no idea there were so many different kinds of lonely. But she does not want your pity. She just wants you to understand what can happen when you're a million kinds of lonely all at once, when you find yourself among identical strangers you do not want to get to know. Do you realize how easy it is to decide to try something new, how easy it is to close your eyes and spin around and start walking toward the first thing you see? She saw people across the street from school that did not look like the others. They were smoking and they were laughing and they had something new to show her. (p. 43)

Next comes Jason- When I was six, I fell off my bike and broke my arm. Dad laughed at me. Told me to be a man and take the pain. When I was seven, we moved to Seattle from Kentucky. The kids in my class made fun of my southern accent. So I beat them up. I got sent home and my mom apologized to the principal. But my dad was proud. He looked me in the eye and smiled, like I'd finally done something right for once. When I was eight, my mom got rushed to the hospital in the middle of her birthday party because of "dehydration." They gave her an IV and everything. But I knew it was because she drank too much. Nobody talked about it. Funny how her "fainting" looks the same as when I pass out. Funny how the nice nurses gave her fluids and a room with a view, but the drunks in the gutter have to wake up with puke all over themselves. (p. 69-70)

Next is Kelly- It was Friday. Saturday morning, actually. I had been drinking and doing coke all night, which was pretty normal. I guess I had a gram of coke that night- really good stuff- and God, I don't even know how many drinks. At some point we started drinking straight from the bottle, so I lost track. ...I guess I blacked out. I don't remember much about that night. I don't remember much about most Friday nights. ...It was just a regular Friday night. That's the weird thing. I drove home drunk and high all the time. But this time, I don't know, maybe I'd had a little too much. Maybe I hadn't eaten enough. Maybe it was just really bad luck. ...When I woke up, the cops were in my living room and my mom was crying and my dad was pacing back and forth, and the first thing I thought was, *My sisters. Oh my God, something happened to my sisters.* ...The cops said I drove my car onto the neighbors' front lawn. I crushed their front porch and destroyed their prized rosebushes. I remember the nausea I felt when I looked next door, like the ground had suddenly disappeared and taken my stomach with it. I remember

holding my breath, asking myself, *How can I not remember doing that?* I remember thinking, *What if those rosebushes had been people? What if that porch had been some little kid's bedroom?* ...I pretty much hid in my room the whole time I was waiting to go to court. My parents didn't even have to punish me, because I did it myself. I stopped going out. I stopped talking to my friends. Suddenly none of it seemed like that much fun anymore. But I thought my friends were going to at least make it hard for me, at least call and beg for me to come out. But they didn't. Not once. Everyone at school found out what had happened and tried to make it a joke, but when I didn't laugh with them, they were just like, "Bummer," and then they went off to have fun without me. No "Are you okay?" No "Do you need anything?" Not even good-bye. ...The judge let me off easy. One look at my sad sweet family and I had his sympathy. Instead of juvie and a criminal record, I was ordered to go to rehab. So here I am. I guess I'm lucky. (p. 83-93)

Christopher is last.- The thing about secrets is that God knows the truth even if you don't tell anyone. You can try to hide all you want, but there's no use. You can do all your schoolwork and act all normal at church, you can hide in your room and not bother anyone, but He's watching you and reading all your thoughts. So the only thing to do is confess, to admit your sins to God and ask His forgiveness. Be honest and trust God. That's what they've always told me. And I always believed them. ...What I'm realizing is that sin is not as simple as I always thought. You can admit wrong actions and vow to change. You can say, "God, I've had a problem with drugs and now I'm going to stop." Then you get sober and He forgives you and you live happily ever after. But there's another kind of sin that goes deeper than action. What if your sin is not something you *do* but something you *are*? Something you can't change no matter how hard you

try, no matter how much you pray, no matter how many times you ask God to change you? What if you don't change? What if you can't? What then? (p. 197-198)

Like these teens, you have to face your demons in order to come **Clean**.

### **Inexcusable by Chris Lynch- First Person**

**Transition:** While the five teens in *Clean* find it hard to come to terms with their past, sometimes it's downright impossible. So it is for Keir in Chris Lynch's novel, **Inexcusable**.

**Booktalk:** My name is Keir Sarafian but most people call me Killer. I'm a good guy. Sure, you might not know it by my nickname, but people only call me that because of an accident at a football game. You see, I'm a jock. But I'm a good guy. It was an accident. I didn't mean to hurt the guy. He got over it even though he will never walk again. I got over it. See, that's the way it is with good guys. I just graduated from high school and I've been accepted to the same college that my two sisters go to. Some people say I only got in because of that football game, but that's not true. I got in because I'm a good guy and that's the way it is. Some people might not understand me, but I understand two things about me. I'm a good guy and I love Gigi Boudakian. Gigi is my friend and has been forever. She has a boyfriend, but it doesn't matter. I'm a good guy and I've been her friend longer than she's known Carl. I know deep down Gigi loves me just as much as I love her. One day she'll realize that. But first I have to get her to stop saying I did that awful thing. Gigi said I did something awful, that I hurt her. But that's not possible. Good guys don't do that. I'm a good guy. I would never hurt Gigi. I love her. All that happened was we went out after graduation. I had some drinks and popped a few pills. Big deal. That doesn't mean anything. I'm still a good guy. Why does she keep saying I hurt her? I would never hurt Gigi. I

love her. I'm a good guy and good guys don't do that. I'm not letting her leave this room until she says I didn't do it. She has to say that. Gigi has to understand that I'm a good guy and good guys don't do that. Do they? No. I'm a good guy and good guys don't do things that are **Inexcusable.**

### **Frequently Asked Questions About Alcohol Abuse and Binge Drinking by Henrietta M.**

#### **Lily and Daniel E. Harmon- Description**

**Transition:** Keir doesn't seem to know what any of the signs of alcohol and drug abuse are or how either destroy the body. He really could use the information in the next book, **Frequently Asked Questions About Alcohol Abuse and Binge Drinking.**

**Booktalk:** Do you think teens should be able to drink? Do you think the legal drinking age should be lowered? A person who can drink a lot is able to handle their alcohol and are cool. Drunk people can just sleep off the alcohol. Did you know these two statements are actually just myths? This book explains what alcohol is and how it's made. You'll also find out what binge drinking is and how it affects your body. Read this to find out how much alcohol is too much and when to seek professional help for your drinking.

#### **DopeSick by Walter Dean Myers- Excerpt**

**Transition:** What about drugs? What do you do when you know you need to get help? Lil J knows what he's doing is wrong in Walter Dean Myers' **DopeSick.** What he doesn't know how to do is change it.

**Booktalk:** "Why you keep the cop's gun?"

“How you know...? I was scared to have it on me and scared to throw it away. I was in, like a panic. You know what I mean? I knew if the cop was dead, it was going to be all over if they got us. You can't kill a cop and look for mercy. We could have got away clean if Rico hadn't gone back for the cop's wallet. He probably didn't even have no wallet on him.

“I circled around and went uptown to Harlem Hospital and got some coffee in that little restaurant right off the lobby. The guy had the news on, but there wasn't nothing about the deal, and for a while I thought maybe the guy wasn't a cop and maybe Rico hadn't really shot him anyway.”

“You believed that?”

“Naw, but I wanted to believe it. I really didn't know what to believe. All the time I was thinking about what had happened and steady hoping for the best. At home I told my mother that they had run out of her medicine and I would get it in the morning. She asked me if I had got the job and I said no. I had the baggie from Dusty's loads, and I cooked that in the bathroom and popped it so I could relax.”

“Why you say you weren't using?” Kelly asked.

“It ain't really your business,” I said.

“What? What you say?”

“Nothing, man. I know I was using. I ain't happy with it or nothing like that,” I said. “You don't be getting off scraping the streets looking for no dope and you don't be getting off being half sick all the time.”

“You nodded out?”

“No, I was too uptight. I lay across my bed in the dark feeling bad. Rico called me and said he had taken the money over to Dusty and he had some cash and a taste for me. I wanted to ask him if he had killed the cop, but I guess I didn’t want to know. He sounded like nothing had went down, like it was some cowboy movie and we could just move on. Then Skeeter called me, real late, and told me that the cops had picked up Rico. He asked me if I knew what Rico had done. I said no.”

“So what you did you want to change?” Kelly asked.

“I want to change going with Rico in the first place,” I said.

“Just get you out this mess and you be straight?”

“Not really,” I said. “But I won’t be facing no cop-shooting charge. They got Rico, and I know he’s going to rat me out. Then I got twenty-five years to life if the cop lives. If he don’t live I’m going to be facing...you know...”

“The rest of you life in jail?”

“Yeah.”

“So you want to be back looking at the line at Home Depot and thinking how you so lucky you ain’t in jail?” Kelly asked. “What you call it- broke sick? That’s where you want to be?”

“I’m not saying that’s what I want altogether,” I said. “But what I’m saying is, if I could get out this mess, maybe I could do something good with my life.”

“Like what?”

“I don’t know *like what!*”

“Okay, like how?”

“Look, Kelly, you might be okay, or you might be some kind of nut,” I said. “I don’t know, I know I’m tired of talking to your ass. I know I’m tired of thinking about what I should have done yesterday. I know I’m just tired. If I knew what to do with my life, how to fix it up, I would have done it a long time ago. You can’t dig that? You think I want to live like I’m somebody’s throwaway? I want the same thing as you want- no, not like you want, because I don’t want to live in no abandoned building watching television and being spooky. You know what I would like to be doing?”

“What?”

“I’d like to be living in a regular house doing something with Lauryn. She’s my son’s mama.” (p. 43-47)

### **You Know Where to Find Me by Rachel Cohn- First Person**

**Transition:** Lil J knows what he wants to do with his life, he just doesn’t know how to get there. But sometimes you have no clue what your purpose is or where your life is going. That’s how it is for Miles in Rachel Cohn’s **You Know Where to Find Me**.

**Booktalk:** My name is Miles, but you can call me 8 Mile. Everyone else does. Probably because I’m 8 miles wide or something. Yeah, I’m fat. I’m the 1% fat at my school. I live with my mom in the guesthouse at my cousin’s father’s home in Georgetown. His name is Jim. Mom and I are his charity case. I don’t call Jim my uncle because he isn’t. You see, Jim’s gay, and his lover, who was my uncle, is dead. Jim wanted to be a father so much that he hired a surrogate and created the perfect baby with my uncle. That baby was Laura, the golden girl. Laura who could do no wrong. Laura, my cousin, my best friend. Anyway, my uncle decided he didn’t want to

take lithium anymore so he stopped. Laura wasn't even a year old yet when he died. Laura's other father, my uncle, had a twin sister named Melanie. It wasn't long before she showed up on Jim's doorstep. She was penniless and had a baby on her hip. I'm Mel's child. Laura and I loved playing her favorite game, Once Upon a Time. In Laura's version Sleeping Beauty never woke up. One day, right after graduation, my friend Jamal came to see me in the bookstore where I work. Mel sent him to tell me that Sleeping Beauty decided to make her story real life. Laura didn't kill herself to escape anything. She simply chose not to live anymore. Now I hate her. I don't know how she could do that to me. I don't know what to do anymore. Laura left me and Jamal is always with his girlfriend. Mom's off in Europe and isn't planning to come back. I expect Jim will evict me after I graduate next year. Jamal said I need to stop getting high, but the pills are the only friend I have left. So, if you need me, **You Know Where to Find Me**. I'll be passed out in bed sleeping away the pain.

### **Fallout by Ellen Hopkins- Description**

**Transition:** 8 Mile felt all alone with no parents or friends who cared about her. She turned to drugs to fill the void. But what if you're not the one who is addicted? What if your parent is the addict? That's what we see in **Fallout** by Ellen Hopkins.

**Booktalk:** What do you think of when you hear the word fallout? Usually the word makes us think of the disaster that results from some tragedy. But what if the fallout is more personal? What if your life is the fallout of someone else's bad decisions? Hunter, Autumn, and Summer are three teens who have nothing in common, except their mother. Kristina is hooked on crank, and the monster has shaped her children's lives without them ever having touched it. All three

have been raised in different environments and have never met. In fact Autumn doesn't even know she has siblings! Is it possible they are more alike than anyone thinks? The teens offer up details of their lives and it certainly speaks to the nature versus nurture debate. When the three come face to face with each other and with Kristina, will the reunion be a happy one or an even bigger **Fallout**?

### **Conclusion-**

Each of these books deals with some aspect of addiction. **Clean** discusses five teens who are in rehab, and was presented with an excerpt. In **Inexcusable** we see a young man who has no grasp of his actions because of his alcohol addiction. This novel was presented through a first person point of view. **Frequently Asked Questions About Alcohol Abuse and Binge Drinking** was presented through description and provides factual information on how alcohol affects the body and how you can recognize alcohol abuse. **Dope Sick** deals with a man who wants to change his life after a drug deal goes bad. It was presented through an excerpt. **You Know Where to Find Me** was presented through a first person viewpoint and discusses a girl who turns to drugs to fill the void after her best friend's suicide. Last but not least, **Fallout** presents the lives of three teens and how their lives have been impacted by their mother's drug addiction. It was presented through descriptive techniques.

I have given you further resources on the handout. You will find similar titles as well as non-book materials. Everything relates to addiction in some way. I hope you have enjoyed this presentation. Please stop by the Media Center to check out these and other titles. Thank you.