

Exit, Pursued by a Bear by E.K. Johnston

Hermione loves cheerleading. She loves being a flyer. She loves being the cheerleading captain with her best friend, Polly. She loves going to cheerleading camp every summer and pushing her team to be their best. But at the end of camp, Hermione is attacked, and the course of her year changes dramatically. Instead of being the queen of her school, she's suddenly "that girl"- the victim of a horrible crime she can't even remember. She's behind on schoolwork, rumors are spreading, and people are afraid to even touch her. How will she ever recover?

I found *Exit, Pursued by a Bear* to be a heart wrenching story about what it truly means to be resilient, a good friend, and an ally when someone needs it most. It dives into and explores the messy world of recovering from a trauma with grace and wisdom, uplifting and empowering the reader but not shying away from harsh realities. It's poignant and strong.

One of the strongest characters in this book is Hermione's best friend, Polly. This book should be read just for that character alone: Polly is fierce, unapologetic, and supportive in ways everyone deserves to have in a best friend. She's not someone to be trifled with, and she lends that strength to both Hermione and the book.

Exit, Pursued by a Bear is E.K. Johnston's first book and 2018 Abe Lincoln Award winner. I'll rate it B-14 for mature themes, but nothing that a high schooler wouldn't be able to handle.