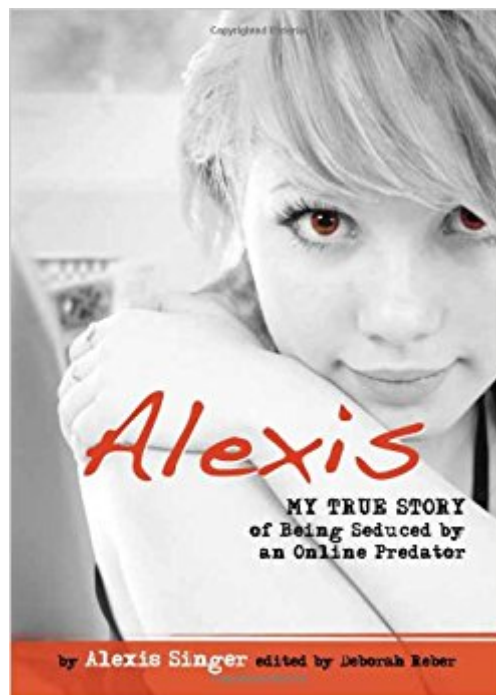




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Alexis: My True Story Of Being Seduced By An Online Predator (Louder Than Words)



Synopsis

In six words, an instant message changed Alexis forever. After a rocky junior year of high school, Alexis Singer was lonely, stressed out, and vulnerable--the ideal target for an older man with bad intentions. When a message popped up on her computer screen one night from a message board acquaintance, she could never have known that by responding she was making a choice that would change her forever. By posing as a friend and confidant, the man gave Alexis the attention she desperately craved and weaseled his way into her life in an unimaginable way. Within weeks, Alexis was sucked into an emotionally dependent relationship, engaging in cybersex and sending him explicit photos of herself. Somewhere along the way, she lost who she was and put her dreams for the future, relationships with friends and family, and psychological well-being on the line. 'Not much about that first online conversation we had sticks out in my head except for his surprising interest in me. I probably would have forgotten about it if it weren't for that. I would have dismissed him as just another creep.' Because Truth Is More Fascinating Than Fiction www.louderthanwordsbooks.com

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Customer Reviews

Alexis Singer attended the Pittsburgh High School for the Creative and Performing Arts as a writer and is currently a sophomore at Chatham University in Pittsburgh, PA, studying political science and women's studies. She is nineteen years old.

I WISH I HAD KNOWN THE FUTURE when an instant message (IM) popped up in the top right corner of my laptop screen on June 29, 2007. In that moment, I wish I had been able to foresee all the consequences of one minor exchange and closed down that window. If I could go back now and see that message and predict the two and a half years of trauma it would cause, the relationships it would ruin, and the lives it would change, I would have ignored it, shut off my computer, and cracked open a book. Maybe I would have doused my seventeen-inch PowerBook with lighter fluid and set it ablaze. If I had known what would happen because of one seemingly inconsequential conversation, I would have quit the Internet for good, forgotten technology existed, and started writing all of my papers on stone tablets by candlelight. But on June 29, 2007, I didn't close my computer when a little six-word message popped up in the corner of my screen. I was in no position to ignore human contact, no matter how distant and shady it was. I was fresh off my junior year of high school, by far the most stressful year of my life. All of the friends I'd had for years had outgrown me, leaving me to flail helplessly in the already choppy sea of high school. I had broken up with my first and only boyfriend six months earlier, ending an on-and-off relationship that had lasted over three years, and I had been hopelessly single ever since. All in all, I had suffered through the last six months trying to balance the SAT, the never-easy process of making new friends, AP courses, a father who was divorcing my stepmother, and a part-time job that I dreaded even more than everything else in my life. And through it all, I found myself sitting on my bed every night staring at my computer screen, riding the waves of each daily crisis completely and totally alone. That may have been an attitude rather than a circumstance, but in high school we're all loners, at least from our own perspectives. That's the way it works. I didn't have a single friend in high school who didn't spend several hours a day with their eyes glued to a monitor. It's escapism in its most luring form, especially for people who have a hard time being themselves in person. We all find our niche. For me, it was a message board I discovered my sophomore year—a section of a theater message board pushed off to the side for those of us who wanted to talk about real life, politics, and entertainment. Despite some harassment from a particularly mean and sarcastic user (every message board has at least one), I fell in pretty quickly there. In no time I made a few 'friends,' in the loose way you can call people you've never seen face-to-face and whose last names you do not know, friends. I found a rhythm there. It was a place to go and escape the difficulty of everyday life. When I didn't feel like talking to my parents about my English essay on Death of a Salesman, I could go onto The Board (as it became known in my head) and talk about how badly I thought George W. Bush was screwing up or how last week's episode of The Office wasn't as funny as the rest of the season. And there were even people there who cared about what I had to say from time

to time. No matter what kind of day I was having, I could usually count on someone posting an approving response to my hilarious comment about Britney Spears. I had found The Board the previous summer while spending most of my days barricaded in my room. My father, who got married in 2004 and split with his now-ex-wife in late 2005, was unavailable most of the time and my friends, the few who hadn't stopped liking me in the past year, were off doing fun things with their families or each other and leaving me out. So, I sat in my room and surfed the Web. At the time I was into theater and stumbled onto prominent websites that covered the theater world. When I found The Board, I attached myself to it like a parasite, trying my best to fit in with the ragtag users of the site and making fast friends with several of the regulars, exchanging occasional e-mails or instant messages. While all my real-life friends were separating themselves from me, I was able to talk to people I had never met about the complicated sorrows of my day-to-day life, from the deteriorating relationship with the guy who was my boyfriend at the time to my concerns about my father. None of them asked anything inappropriate of me. They would talk to me about their relationship problems, they would read my writing and critique it, they would joke with me. Their interest in my life was a comfort. My junior year had left me feeling devastated, not to mention with a lower GPA and minus one rocky relationship that had at least been something to fall back on, on the worst of days. I had walked out of school on the last day that year in a daze. I went home dreading the next two months of solitude. I sat on my bed and watched movies every day. I spent more hours of the day asleep than awake. I actually looked forward to the ten hours every weekend I spent at my job cleaning out coffeepots and sweeping floors. For the first two weeks of the summer, I was totally lost in my own little world. I spent hours upon hours every day on The Board, refreshing every few seconds, hoping someone else would be as bored as I was and reply to my posts. By the end of June, I would have been happy to hear from Satan himself if he could have given me an hour of stimulating conversation. I was desperate. So to say that I actually hesitated for a moment when that instant message popped up on my screen is giving me a lot of credit. If it had been from anyone else, I probably would have typed a response so fast it would have been indecipherable from all the typos. But it was from one person in particular. I knew the screen name—it was the same username he used on The Board. It was a screen name I was so familiar with that I had begun purposely avoiding it over the past few months. My fingertips paused over the keys for a moment while I read and pondered the message. When I said earlier that I had gotten into the rhythm of The Board with relatively no trouble except for one user, I was talking about this guy. He was sarcastic. He was vindictive. He never wrote in capital letters. He was the gimmicky sort who prided himself on two things: his status as the indisputable King of The Board and his

political views, which were so far to the right they would make Ann Coulter blush. We had cultivated a casual loathing of each other, though I was mostly intimidated by him. He hated my political beliefs and tended to make fun of my age. Basically, he took everything I said terribly seriously and enjoyed mocking me way too much. He had insulted me so viciously at one point I was almost certain it made me cry. Â Â©2010. Alexis Singer. All rights reserved. Reprinted from Alexis. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the written permission of the publisher. Publisher: Health Communications, Inc., 3201 SW 15th Street, Deerfield Beach, FL 33442 Â

As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for children and adolescents, I am dismayed by some of the comments made by the other reviewers. It is exceedingly upsetting to me that there continues to be a mindset of, "She should've known better" or to somehow insinuate that an adolescent of any age would be responsible for having been targeted, groomed, broken down and then victimized for someones personal pleasure by a much older and world-savvy adult who CLEARLY knew better. Unless, of course, he is severely mentally deficient but more than likely he's just one of the many random predators that prey on the naivete of youth. I'm saddened that our society continues to place the responsibility of an assault (whether that be on mind, body or spirit) on the victim. :(I regularly recommend or lend this book to my client's and their parents. I have many client's who have found themselves in very similar situations and EVERY SINGLE TIME, they were convinced they could handle the situation and that they wouldn't let it go too far....until it got too far. I think this book is important because of the type of student Alexis represents: Intelligent, socially and politically active and seemingly mature beyond her years. Her 'regular-ness' is exactly why I use this book in therapy sessions. Basically, no one is immune to these kinds of predators. That's what makes them amazingly good at what they do and what makes them seem harmless right up until they spring their trap. I feel really passionately about this topic as more and more teenage clients are coming in for counseling following their experiences with an online predator or bully. The whole Louder Than Words series is sooo beneficial because of it's honest and brave disclosure of some of the most difficult issues young people face. Alexis is a brave young woman who has made it much easier for me to talk to my clients about online predators. For that, I am thankful.

This book helped my daughter slip out of her darkest days as a teenager who trusted an online stranger. She was groomed for months before we knew what was happening. After reading this she began changing back and talking to us. She is doing great now.

this was boring put it down after a few pages

Alexis tells her story in such a way that it is nearly impossible to put the book down once you begin reading. She is a fabulous writer that brings you into her thoughts and feelings as she goes through this heartbreaking experience. This young woman is incredibly brave to tell her story, and I believe both parents and teenagers alike should read this book.

Cannot stop reading this true story

Great book! Recommend all young girls to read

Very interesting and informative! Great lessons for teenagers! My 15 year old daughter is very inspired by what these girls went thru!

The writing was very poor and vague. I was surprised because she claims to be interested in writing and poetry, yet it was not descriptive or in depth. I also feel like she made the "relationship" a bigger deal than it was when she could have easily walked away. He didn't even 'groom' her really until she sent naked photos. I was shocked that she did it because he didn't spend hours And hours trying to make her feel special like most pedophiles do.

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