



## Marionette

*T.B. Markinson*

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Paige Alexander is seventeen and has her whole life in front of her. One day her girlfriend comes home to discover that Paige has slit her wrists. Paige isn't insane, but she acts like she is. Why?

After the incident, Paige agrees to go to therapy to appease her girlfriend, Jess. However, Paige doesn't believe that therapy will help her. She believes she's beyond help. Paige doesn't want to find herself and she doesn't want to relive her painful past in order to come to terms with it. What Paige wants is control over her life, which she hasn't had since her birth.

During her childhood, Paige is blamed for a family tragedy, when in fact, her twin sister, Abbie was responsible. Abbie doesn't come forward and Paige becomes the pariah of the family.

To add to Paige's woes, while attending a college in a small town in Colorado, the residents are in the midst of debating whether or not gays and lesbians should have equal rights. Tension is high and there's a threat of violence. She isn't out of the closet and pretends to be straight at school since she fears what will happen if her parents find out she's a lesbian. Will she end up dead like her best friend, Alex?

## Marionette Details

Date : Published October 11th 2015 by CreateSpace (first published November 7th 2013)

ISBN : 9781517764968

Author : T.B. Markinson

Format : Paperback 326 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Lgbt, Glbt, Lesbian, Contemporary, Queer

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## From Reader Review Marionette for online ebook

### Medeia Sharif says

Paige is a college student keeping many things inside. She attempted suicide, her best friend died, and her mother has treated her horribly for many years over something someone else did. Also, she's in the closet, afraid to come out as a lesbian.

There are many interesting psychological elements in this novel, and another nice touch is the family intrigue, which involves some dark secrets bubbling to the surface. I immensely enjoyed the author's other books, but this one might be my favorite.

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### Beth Ann says

The second novel by T.B. Markinson starts out with a plan. The "plan" is not one that is easy to read but I was drawn into this novel from the very first sentence. With that first sentence the stage is set for the rest of this excellently written and often suspenseful novel as the reader is transported into the world of the main character, Paige, a young woman with more secrets than she is admitting to.

The plan involves a failed suicide attempt and while those details were so difficult to read I can only imagine the emotions and feelings that swirl around in the mind of someone like Paige who not only has current life issues to deal with but also carries with her secrets and baggage from her past.

T.B. Markinson skillfully weaves a tale of real and raw emotions that the reader feels a part of while at the same time addressing social issues such as gay/lesbian acceptance in society today as well as stigmas attached to seeking professional psychiatric care. There is a lot packed into this book!

A bit of romance, a bit of suspense with a touch of social issues injected make this such a wonderful book to read that I have already gifted it to one friend and plan to give more as gifts in the future. The book is written in first person but all of the characters are so interesting that you feel you are a part of each and every person that is described on the pages.

I have had the privilege to read "A Woman Lost", T.B. Markinson's debut novel and loved it and just have to say that the second novel, "Marionette" is even better. Please keep the books coming, T.B. Markinson!!! We can't wait to see what you come up with next!

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### Kimberly says

Marionette is about college girl, Paige, who is battling some heavy issues, most of which she is trying to keep secret and that's part of her struggle. At times she seems resentful (which is totally expected and reasonable under her circumstances - no spoilers) but she's got a huge heart although she tries to hide that fact. I connected with Paige on so many levels. She is a true to life character with hardships, a sense of humor, and compassion. She's a character you can't help rooting for. I loved that there was a little bit of a

mystery intertwined with this novel as well. I enjoyed reading Paige's story and I'm looking forward to reading Markinson's next book.

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### **Jonel Boyko says**

Markinson's in your face writing style really brings this story to life. You can't help but become wholly immersed in the storyline. As a reader you have a front seat to the action as you are completely in the main character's head becoming part of the story yourself. The author melds reality with fiction so seamlessly that you can't help but be awed. She also brings a great deal of harsh & tough topics to the forefront, building her story around them and showing what can and will be. That said, it left me with a smile on my face at the end.

The cast of characters in this tale were vivid without ever becoming larger than life. Markinson plays up both the best and the worst in her characters, leaving you with a clear picture that gives you a look in to the deepest part of them. She also doesn't just develop her characters as individuals but as part of a whole, both with the relationships that they are intimate parts of and those that they stand on the fringes of. It lends an extra air of intimacy to the story.

Overall this was quite the intriguing and captivating read. It was my introduction to the author and would definitely spark me to read more of her work. I'd also recommend it to those who want a novel that will make you think and fell.

Please note that I received this novel free of charge from the author in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Heather says**

Seventeen year old Paige is found by her girlfriend, with wrists slit, in a failed suicide attempt. She wants to control her life, not rehash it through therapy - a key source of pain being blamed for a family tragedy as a child, when it was her twin sister Abbie, who kept quiet and let her take the blame. Her small town in Colorado are debating the rights of gays and lesbians, and - still being in the closet - she wonders what will happen if her secret is found out - will she end up dead like her best friend, Alex?

T.B. Markinson doesn't shy away from difficult subject matter - suicide, family history, college, sexuality - and does so in a way that doesn't sound preachy, it just is what it is. More so, she gives them proper attention in doing them justice, and giving them the appropriate gravitas.

Even Paige's relationship doesn't fall foul to that typical cliché of focussing on the physical sides of a lesbian couple, almost as if the physicality needs to be described to reinforce it as a literary relationship.

It's not all as dark and serious as it might seem, though, as Markinson manages to douse some real humour throughout. It's a gradual build up that sucks you in, and Paige - bit by bit - lets her defences down and others in. Marionette is something different - something difficult - but it's presented brilliantly.

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## **Heidi says**

Marionette

Suicide is such a difficult topic to write about, I wasn't sure I could get through this book. However, the book isn't depressing or full of despair. The story had twists and turns throughout and after a few chapters I forgot it was in first person. I never really connected with the characters, but I was invested in how things would work out or not work out for the characters. I would recommend this book, especially if you are looking for something different than your typical romance.

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## **Bonnie says**

4.5 stars- loved it!

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## **Lesbian Reader says**

I read T.B. Markinson's first Book A Woman Lost and loved it. Marionette did not disappoint as a second novel. The characters are very likeable, yet slightly flawed. Although it is enjoyable to read about those perfect women that we all dream about sweeping us off our feet, it is much more satisfying to me to read about slightly flawed people because that is reality. What makes them so endearing is that you really like them and can root for them because their flaws are endearing. They are the classic underdog that you desperately want to come out on top. Paige the main character is sarcastic, witty, funny and completely likeable. You not only want her to prevail, you need her to, and she does in the end. The book has humor, mystery and a whole lot of heart. There is sadness, but not over the top melodrama. A great story that unfolds as the hints throughout keep you turning that next page until the wee hours. The book is priced way too low. Worth every penny and more.

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## **Hilary Grossman says**

Curiosity pretty much sums up the emotion you feel as you read Marionette. The book is a true page turner!

Paige Alexander is seventeen and although she has her whole life in front of her, she doesn't want to live it. Her older girlfriend, Jess, comes home to find that Paige has slit her wrists.

When Paige leaves for college she promises Jess that she will go to therapy, which she instantly regrets doing. Paige doesn't believe there is help for her, nor does she want to relieve her painful past....

But what is that painful past?

And why is Paige afraid of ending up murdered like her best friend, Alex?

If all this wasn't bad enough, Paige is afraid to let anyone know that she is a lesbian. Tensions are already high at her small college, as the students debate if gays are entitled to equal rights. As the debates turn violent, Paige begins to worry about a new person in Jess's life.

I love the way that TB told this story. It was incredibly realistic. Little by little Paige allowed her therapist and her college roommates in. But as the reader you couldn't help wonder if Paige was always being honest. Was she telling the therapist the truth or was she just making stuff up to appease her? Many times while reading I had my doubts. These doubts made me read faster. I had to find out what made Paige tick.

All the characters were well developed. Paige had a wicked / sarcastic sense of humor that often had me laughing out loud. And I loved the "cast of characters" that made up Paige's college life. They were all so relatable!

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### **Joannes Rhino says**

I actually don't like reading. It's funny though, as an author, reading should be part of writing. But that's not the case here in Marionette. At the very first page, I know it's about suicide, which one of the topics that always interest me as I'm also writing about psychological-drama.

Once I started reading I honestly couldn't stop as I was sucked in by how realistic everything was. From beginning to end I felt like I was right there with the main character, feeling what she felt, seeing what she saw because everything is so realistic. I am drawn in by the prologue, thinking I might know what's going on, but I actually knew nothing.

The author weaves a brilliant storyline that leads us to believe that there is a desperate soul lies inside each one of us; there is always another face hidden behind a mask that even the wearer does not know anything about.

This novel also has lots and lots of humor in it. I still remember at one part of the conversation I really laughed out loud cause I hit me in real life. Overall, this reading was pretty psychological and taught me a lot of things I didn't know. It gave me the feeling of wanting to read more and more, until I realized that I've reached the end of the book.

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### **Cassandra Larsen says**

Marionette pulls you in from the very first page. I couldn't read it fast enough! Paige, a seventeen-year-old girl, tries to commit suicide, but is rescued by her girlfriend, Jess, before she succeeds. Starting her freshman year of college, Paige makes a promise to Jess to see a therapist for the next year. Throughout these sessions and Paige's flashbacks, her difficult childhood is revealed, along with dark family secrets.

Paige is easy to identify with, and though she isn't the friendliest girl, her witty inner dialogue is funny and endearing. I formed an instant connection with her and had a vested interest in her story. T.B. Markinson's writing is phenomenal and the story addicting! I absolutely love this book!

\*I was given a free copy in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Val says**

4.5 rounded to 5. I downloaded this book after reading a series by the author. I then proceeded to avoid reading it for a few months because I thought it'd be all dark and depressing and I hate that. The main character has been through a shit-ton (that's a literary term don't you know ;-D) of heart ache and strife so she's cynical and bitter; she's also funny as hell. She thinks things in her head that are so true but probably shouldn't be said out loud.

It was so interesting to me to see how someone so bitter can start to heal and her character becomes softer as the book proceeds. She starts to forgive herself and seems to learn how to be a friend.

The ending is completely unexpected but in hindsight it's not that surprising considering her family is completely whacked. I have some childhood baggage (don't we all?) but these parents made me grateful for my imperfect family.

I feel like I'm rambling so I'll end by saying this is a great story. Like, really good. Y'all should check it out. Yep.

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### **Jo says**

I recently got my hands on a copy of MARIONETTE.

I was a bit hesitant about reading a book from someone I know...ye Gods...what if I hate it ?? Especially when you are dealing with subject matter such as this book does...attempted suicide, homosexuality, hiding who you are and dysfunctional family bonds.

Suicide has touched my life...and in every case...every single one...those left behind are broken and shattered and struggle to find their way past the moment that the person who took their life passed the burden on to them.

I grew up trying to be the perfect daughter, wife, mother...never trusting that the real me was good enough. I hid behind a veneer of what I perceived was acceptable.

As for dysfunctional family bonds...I am writing a book on those. From experience.

Thus...when I started reading Marionette...I was like...oh no !!! Because the beginning of the book starts with a failed suicide attempt.

Then...wham bam thank you ma'am, you step right in to her crazy family where Paige hides everything important about herself.

Three out of four boxes I know about...Marionette was hitting close to home.

Paige Alexander is a young woman who has lived her life with parents who frankly...need shooting on sight.

Seriously. These are the sort of people that were they dogs...then they would be euthanized to protect the community .

Paige loves Jessica. Secretly. Why you may ask ? Well, for that you need to read Marionette.

What can be a problem with books such as this one, I have found at least, is making the characters believable. Too many writers turn the people in their books in to cardboard cutouts that have no real dimension to them.

As Paige goes off to college, and to counseling, piece by piece we get to travel within [think Fantastic Voyage] her until we finally end up completely in Paige's head, really knowing her.

Along the way we also get to know Jess better. Quite early on you wonder a bit about whether Jess is all she seems. I am not going to give any spoilers here, so if you want to know the answer to that...you know the drill...get the book. Why does this older, educated, confident, funny woman want to be with the younger, damaged Paige ?

The other characters in the book, except for the completely hellish parents, are all well written complementary characters. Not that the parents aren't well conceived, they are just downright evil people.

Liddy, Paige's counselor, is one of my favourites in the book. Slowly through Liddy, we the reader get to know Paige.

Then there are the college friends. Audrey [the roommate], aptly nick named 'Minnie Mouse' by Paige. Jenna and Karen [the suite mates]. Jewels, Emily, Tom, Ben and Aaron. Paige's relationship with Tom provides a few nice twists.

Then there are:

Mel and Wesley. Talk about a couple who need a swift kick.

Alex. Paige's childhood friend. This was one of the saddest but most unexpected relationships in Marionette. Abbie. Paige's sister. Abbie has more than her share of demons too.

Julia. Who runs a diner and through her food has become part of Jess's family and so therefore also Paige's.

This is a book about relationships. How they can grow and surprise you. How you can survive the ugly ones and rejoice in the ones that lift your spirit. It is also about secrets.

I read Marionette in one sitting. Then I went back to read it again for this review and was just as delighted the second time.

Thank goodness it has also been edited and proofread. Self published books that haven't are sadly too many to name these days. They do little to serve the readers or the authors who can't be bothered to make sure that their finished book actually is that – finished.

I look forward to reading the next of T B Markinson's efforts after this.

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## **G.J. Griffiths says**

Marionette is a book about a very difficult subject and it is told with the utmost sensitivity and understanding. T B Markinson does an amazing job of drawing the reader into Paige Alexander's world of self-loathing, suicide and lesbian love. Paige is a teenage girl about to commence college life as a fresher but who is also under-going counselling. On the face of things she appears to hate or belittle her own family and the new students with whom she must share her accommodation. Although the above list of ingredients for this novel would normally make this reader shy away from it, plus the fact it is taking place in an American college where terms and language are unfamiliar to me, I was intrigued and hooked from page four!

The tale of Paige's gradual transformation into a caring young woman with a rewarding future and happy relationships through friends and Jess, her girlfriend, is told in such a non-judgemental way by the author that I grew to care about her more and more. We are not subjected to torrid descriptions of sexual behaviour between gay (or straight) couples, as you may typically expect, but the closeness between Paige and Jess is made very apparent in such a skilful way by T B Markinson that I hoped throughout the story that the pair would stay together.

It is evident that Paige is not seeking the reader's sympathy or pity but does want to find a way out of her tangled and tragic past life. There are humorous moments injected from time to time and the story builds to a satisfying conclusion, though I felt it was a little rushed near the end in clearing up some loose ends. I would have liked to have known a lot more about her sister, Abbie, for example.

Marionette is a very well-written book that I can heartily recommend to anyone who seeks a tale of relationships between family and friends, where serious difficulties are treated with respect and humility. It is gratifying to find a young author, like T B Markinson, who is able to teach this (very) mature male reader something more about life that would not normally be considered, and written in such a thought provoking fashion. Well done, T B.

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## **angie says**

"Reading always gave me comfort. It was a way to get away from me," so says our main character, Paige Alexander, someone I have a feeling I'd enjoy knowing in real life.

I can't remember the last time I read a novel that set such a distinct mood and got under my skin, leaving me thinking long after I finished it. This is something that takes a while to read...because it's so good you don't want to rush it and there's so much to take in: family issues, suicide, college life and even some mystery.

As I do a lot when I read, I jotted down notes and quotes and found myself wishing I had had books like this to read when I was a teenager. At one point our main character thinks with frustration and pain that her friend's boyfriend Wesley (most appropriately nicknamed "Weasel") is always flirting with other women and treating them badly, yet society thinks she (as a lesbian) is the "the freak, the outcast, the downfall of society."

Throughout the novel, T.B. Markinson merges strong atmosphere with riveting plot and very likable

characters you grow to care for deeply. She also pulls off the rare feat of making observations about society, life and human beings without sounding preachy or taking away from the storyline. ("I don't hate men. I'm just gay. I can't explain why.")

Marionette is painfully funny at times ("I wish idiots would recognize they're idiots") and starkly sincere (Paige is facing more than any one person should have to face at her age and the interactions with her counselor Liddy are convincingly awkward, then, later, emotionally moving). The way the author captures the young adult voice is simply amazing. The secondary characters are not only important and complementary to all that happens, they become part of a group that proves that unrelated people can come together and form a family tighter than any blood ties.

Marionette pleases in every way that you would want a book to please you and it takes a serious topic (suicide) and it gives it the care, attention and thoughtfulness it deserves. I wasn't counting on there being a rather significant suspenseful element, which in less capable hands could have been a huge detractor from everything else.

Another big plus for me is how Paige's relationship with her girlfriend Jess is presented. So much fiction with lesbian themes places way too much emphasis on the physical aspects of romance. Here, Markinson pretty much draws the curtains closed on that part of life. What Paige and Jess share becomes all the more sweeter and more tender because so much of their relationship revolves around mutual love, understanding and compassion. They are happy in the bedroom, but that's not what makes their connection work, that's secondary to how they are always there for each other and just connect.

Marionette is something I will definitely be keeping on my Kindle and reading again. It also makes me want to go back and read T.B. Markinson's first book *A Woman Lost*. I will be eagerly on the lookout for her next novel.

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