



## Mercy, Unbound

*Kim Antieau*

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Mercy O'Connor is becoming an angel.

She can feel her wings sprouting from her shoulder blades. They itch. Sometimes she even hears them rustling.

And angels don't need to eat. So Mercy has decided she doesn't need to either. She is not sick, doesn't suffer from anorexia, is not trying to kill herself. She is an angel, and angels simply don't need food.

When her parents send her to an eating disorder clinic, Mercy is scared and confused. She isn't like the other girls who are so obviously sick. If people could just see her wings, they would know. But her wings don't come and Mercy begins to have doubts. What if she isn't really an angel? What if she's just a girl? What if she is killing herself? Can she stop?

## **Mercy, Unbound Details**

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Author : Kim Antieau

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## From Reader Review Mercy, Unbound for online ebook

### Aiyana says

Lyrical and dreamlike, this short novel takes you deep into the narrator's struggle with delusion and isolation. Her break from reality is treated compassionately, and becomes a slow journey to make peace with a world that sometimes seems filled with too much pain to bear. The portrayal of life in an eating disorder clinic is all too realistic, and may be uncomfortable for survivors to read. The ending is a bit too pat in some ways for my taste-- understanding and catharsis come wrapped up in a neat little story-bow-- but overall, the storytelling is vivid, clear, and beautiful.

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### Liralen says

Another decent, but perhaps simplistic, book.

I appreciated that the character wasn't entirely angsty (not that I have no problem with angst-ridden characters, when appropriate. It's just that angst gets old). On the other hand, her eating disorder is so easily overcome - that is, it's not really a process for her, just a lightning-bolt moment. Add to that how cookie-cutter the other patients are, and... well, I wasn't so sure about this one.

Still, an interesting take.

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### Jo Carter says

The novel in a nutshell: A unique story about a teenager who has deluded herself into thinking she doesn't have an eating disorder.

The main character Mercy, was a warm and welcoming girl. She has convinced herself she hasn't got an eating disorder and is very patient in explaining why she doesn't eat – she's an angel, simple as that. In an all honestly, at the beginning I didn't feel like Mercy had an eating disorder at all. She almost convinced me that she was becoming an angel. In actual fact she would become an angel after dying of starvation, therefore in a way she's right, but you can tell she doesn't mean it that way. My other favourite character was Mercy's mother, Nancy. I loved the relationship she had with Mercy, and just the genuine awesomeness of her character.

One of the girls from the eating disorder clinic, Susie Q, felt slightly fake to me. To start off with she really did portray herself as the anorexic girl who ruled the clinic, but at the end I felt she was unbelievable. I found it hard to connect with her as a real person.

I remember the first time I ever picked up Mercy, Unbound. It was a Sunday afternoon and for fun I was reading the first page of every book in my TBR shelf. I couldn't stop reading Mercy, Unbound until I reached around page fifty, which is pretty good for a book of 165 pages. I guess that made things less intense when I picked it up this time. Although enough time had passed that I couldn't remember much at all about the book, there was still a part of me that remembered reading it. I knew it wasn't new content, and it didn't

grip me this time.

The biggest frustration, well I think it was more annoyance, with this book was how it switched from first person narrative, to Mercy's diary entries. At least what I think were Mercy's diary entries. It didn't give you the normal signals that it was a diary entry like date and time. It was like Mercy just fired up her laptop and started typing without wanting to give any thought to the day or date. I have no idea if this was any type of strategy. Maybe they were trying to make the transition less jarring? I personally don't find switching from diary entries to narrative anymore jarring than when a new chapter begins. It was more jarring the way they did it. The only indication it switched was a change in font, but as it never told you at the start of the novel which font was narrative and which was diary I can't be certain. The two fonts are block print and cursive. That would be easy to discern had she written this diary, but it is mentioned a few times that she types her diary.

Mercy's voice was welcoming and conversational. I felt like she really wanted me to read her story, however it wasn't compelling. I was happy to read my 50 pages for the day, but it wasn't unputdownable.

My feelings after finishing the book in one word: INDIFFERENCE; I liked reading Mercy, Unbound, but it would have been no great loss to have not read it.

For my extended review including a cover & blurb review head follow this link <http://wp.me/p4q8GT-bf>

And for more reviews on other novels head to my blog [www.writerjocarter.com/novel-reviews](http://www.writerjocarter.com/novel-reviews)

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### **Paige Pagnotta says**

I'm not sure what to say about this book, so instead I'll leave you with this gif...

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### **Jensownzoo says**

The basic plot is that the protagonist believes she is turning into an angel, and angels don't need to eat at all, right? She must deal with the consequences of this decision as it relates to her family and her health, etc.. All I can say is that the author sure knows how to pack a fairly short novella with societal issues. Not in a preachy way, either. Good read.

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### **Z says**

Mercy's mindset through the first part of the book was interesting, but her 'cure' was too far-fetched for me. I want to see a story about a girl who overcomes an eating disorder that doesn't involve miraculous instant cures.

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### **TJL says**

I read this book when I was... geez, probably 14? And it was the unusual premise of the book that I think made it stick with me.

I think it's because this was the first book that gave me some perspective on eating disorders outside of bulimia and anorexia (which I researched a lot as a teenager). It was interesting to explore a character who clearly had... well, disordered eating, but with unique symptoms that I hadn't seen or read about before (a lot of shows, movies and books tended to show anorexia or bulimia, and the symptoms were always generally presented the same way).

I think my only complaint with this book- now and when I first read it- was how Mercy managed to almost "get over" her eating disorder very quickly. It felt unrealistic, even if Mercy's symptoms/"justification" (that is to say, her internal reasoning for why she couldn't eat) for why she behaved the way she did were unusual.

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### **Sherry says**

This is just bad writing! I got to page 72 before I had to give up. Ms. Antieau thinks using the f-word very often is equivalent to good writing. She also thinks toting every liberal concept (and I mean EVERY liberal concept in rapid fire succession) is good writing. Even discounting those two things, the writing is just bad. I usually want to finish the book to give them time to 'turn it around', but I just couldn't handle one more page.

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### **SEMI PRECIOUS JADE says**

I really truly hate to say this but I just didn't like this book. It was boring and annoying. I just couldn't continue reading it any longer. And I did not exactly like the way that bad language was just used so randomly and is she not meant to be an angel? I really do doubt angels would say such things. Beginning this book I didn't even know what was going on. At first I thought this might have been a sequel to something. Is it?

[wow i wrote this review in 2012 and ew. did i even know what i was saying lmao. let's try again]

This book was very poorly written. Yes, it's meant to be the story of a girl with an eating disorder. Why? Because she believes that she's an angel and angels don't need to eat. Okay. Has it been well executed or effective? No. Just. No. This book is honestly a mess, I don't I ever even got to the 100th page. I stopped waaaaaaaay before that. There was a ton of unnecessary cuss words which also really ruined it for me. Besides, if you're an 'angel' shouldn't you be doing good for the world? Stupid.

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### **Therese Fisher says**

I really enjoyed this book. It addresses a concept not often successfully captured; that of a family walking

through life with completely different realities. The dance between these realities was heartbreakingly inspiring all at the same time. The eating disorder could easily be a metaphor for any of life's struggles. How might the situations in our lives be different if we took the time to really listen to and believe in the realities of others, even (and especially when) they seem absurd to us?

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### **Meagan says**

[3.5]

The beginning definitely grabs your attention. I loved all the themes and topics this book got into with being under 200 pages!

It ended up not being as revolutionary as I thought it was going to become by the end but I still overall really enjoyed.

I would recommend it to others! It's definitely got some dark topics but a lot of light shed on that darkness by the main character Mercy.

The writing wasn't really the best, that's why I rated it lower, but I still found myself really loving the story!!

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### **Jennifer says**

So, this was interesting to me, because it wasn't really a book about eating disorders. It was a book about a girl with a broken brain. And I think that distinction has thrown a lot of other readers off, because that's not something you would necessarily pick up on without some experience with mental distress and disorders yourself. The book is also not so much a struggle with "do I or don't I have an ED." It's very clear throughout the book that Mercy believes she's becoming (or is) an angel. I would even go so far as to say that Mercy is correct when she claims that her not eating does not mean she has an eating disorder. I don't think she was anorexic. The anorexia was a symptom of an acute stress reaction.

Anyway, the plot of the book was fairly simplistic. The characters weren't particularly well developed, but they did serve the plot without getting in the way due to inadequate characterization. I did feel like Mercy's mom knew what she'd been doing all along, exposing Mercy to news and world events and information that she wasn't old enough to be able to properly process. But she didn't pull back, or try to better explain that Mercy didn't need to worry or feel responsible about it.

I think this is actually one of only a few books that deal explicitly with eating disorders and the psychology that goes along with them that I've ever read--maybe the only one that dealt with the psychological aspects and not just the physical. For that, I liked it, but I don't feel like it's the best book on this subject that's out there. I'm interested to track down other books on the subject, so I can have a better grasp of what's out there.

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### **Elizabeth says**

This is a very strange book that doesn't accurately portray eating disorders and isn't really about anything.

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## **Sarah Crawford says**

This is a rather unusual book. At first glance it seems to be another in the group of books that deal with anorexia, yet it's not that. It's more like a political diatribe of various political/philosophical positions than anything else.

Mercy thinks she's an angel and angels don't have to eat. She ends up, as expected, at a treatment center and makes friends with other girls (somewhat like *Girl, Interrupted*), yet always holding herself separate from thing since she does not feel she has any kind of an eating disorder.

Her friends apparent death sends her out into the desert for days where she ends up befriended by a couple. Mercy is suffering from total amnesia, but gradually the two adults are able to piece enough together to notify her parents and the center.

There are times in the book where one or the other thing happens or is seen that makes it appear that Mercy could, indeed, be an angel. While suffering from amnesia she has no trouble eating at all, calling into question whether she is, or is not, actually anorexic. She did binge on food before when she was "sad" but stopped that when she began to believe she was an angel.

It's sort of a confusing book. It almost seems like the writer wanted to present a particular political position on various issues and is using the book as a springboard for those issues. The question of whether she is or is not an angel could have been explored in much more depth and it seems it should have been the center concern of the book but it sort of gets lost along the way.

The part in the treatment center is similar to what I've read in various other books, so that was nothing new or particularly different.

In summary, I'd have to rate the book as not being particularly good. It's confusing, it's too full of political issues and discussions, and the material it does have on anorexia isn't anything particularly new or done in a different manner. It could have developed the angel concept much more and run with that but it was sort of kept dangling. Overall quite disappointing.

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## **Becky says**

Mercy is a fifteen year old girl with an eating disorder; she's on the verge of starvation when her parents send her to a treatment facility in New Mexico. But these facts, clearly evident to the reader, allude the patient in question.

Kim Antieau has created an incredible novel narrated by Mercy. Seen through her eyes, her warped, diseased perspective, Mercy is not sick. She doesn't need treatment. Her problem? No one believes what she holds to be true. Mercy is an angel-in-disguise whose wings are always days away from sprouting on her back. She feels the wings itching beneath the surface. She sees the world differently. She feels that once she is an angel she can help people...she could help ease some of the world's pain. As a human, she's useless...but as an angel there's endless possibilities for her to change the world. Food just stands in the way of her destiny. Angels don't eat. And she is almost there. If only people wouldn't pressure her, they would see the truth...

Mercy's breakthrough from almost-insanity to recovery leads the reader on an exciting, realistic journey of the psychological impact of eating disorders.

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