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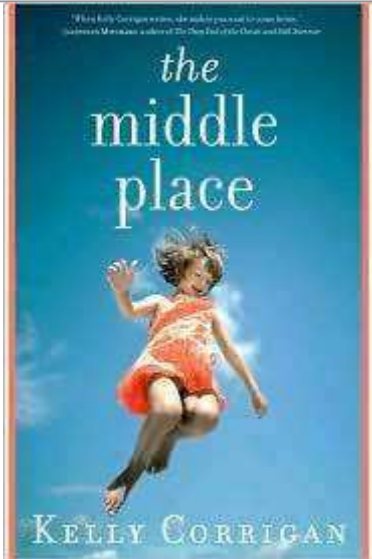
"THE NAKED TRUTH: YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL, AND (HIV) POSITIVE" BY MARVELYN BROWN WITH COURTNEY E. MARTIN

"Although black people represent only about one in eight Americans, one in every two people living with HIV in the United States is black," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Marvelyn Brown is one of them.

Pain, anguish, confusion and loneliness follow devastating news. Marvelyn, a shadow of her former self, is HIV-positive. She will never forget the day ... July 17, 2003.

[He] answered the phone on the second ring: 'Hello.' 'How you doing?' I asked out of habit. 'I'm good, baby girl. Did the doctors ever find out what was wrong with you?' 'Yeah.' 'So what's the problem?' he asked, hope in his voice. 'They told me that I'm HIV-positive,' I said somberly. There was a long pause, maybe ten full seconds of silence. And then he said what I knew he would: 'I'm sorry, baby. I'm sorry. I got to go now.' There wasn't an ounce of surprise in his charming voice.



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WOMEN'S HEALTH

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"The Naked Truth: Young, Beautiful, and (HIV) Positive," by Marvelyn Brown with Courtney E. Martin peels back the layers of a gutsy, 19-year-old girl to reveal poor self-esteem, desperation and sexual promiscuity.

Many readers will identify with Marvelyn's poor taste in men, poor self image and need to party. She's obviously searching for something. But what? A father who sticks around? A mother who hugs and consoles her?

In this revealing memoir, Marvelyn describes a youthful life, full of regrets and repetition, in her hometown of Nashville, Tennessee. She repeats the same, destructive patterns in searching for love that eludes her. She lacks direction, motivation and is barely getting by in school.

After her grim diagnosis, Marvelyn comes close to giving up, but a near-disaster saves her life. So, instead of moping and playing the blame game, she gets busy planning for the future and seeking answers. How much does she really know about HIV? How does she feel about the young man who infected her?

Despite fear of being an outcast and a failure, Marvelyn goes public with her pain. The disease that no one wants to talk about becomes her platform; and applause is accompanied by occasional hate mail and public putdowns. One humiliating incident at a nightclub knocks her off her feet at first, but eventually this harsh confrontation, like many others, makes her a little stronger.

Most inspiring is her drive and tenacity to first share with the public, and now readers, a valuable lesson on self-esteem and survival. Marvelyn, beautiful and a fresh voice in literature, gathers the pieces of her tattered life and puts them back together again, slowly, piece by piece.

What's next in the fight against AIDS?

- Congress approved the Global AIDS Bill on July 24, 2008. The legislation approved by both the House and Senate also includes a requirement that the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) providers work to deliver lifesaving treatment in a more efficient manner.

- The global AIDS bill, signed by President Bush on July 30, 2008, will approve \$48 billion over the next five years for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria programs in Africa and other afflicted areas of the world, including \$2 billion for American Indian health, water and law enforcement programs, according to the Associated Press. Its agenda includes treatment for more than 2 million people, provide support care for 12 million people infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS and prevent 12 million new HIV infections.

Sources include the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), the nation's largest non-profit HIV/AIDS healthcare provider, The Associated Press and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

WOMEN IN PERIL

The Naked Truth: Young, Beautiful, and (HIV) Positive

Nonfiction

Author: Marvelyn Brown with Courtney E. Martin

Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers

Publication Date: August 2008



[Listen to an excerpt from *The Naked Truth: Young, Beautiful, and \(HIV\) Positive*](#)

Lopsided: How Having Breast Cancer Can Be Really Distracting

Nonfiction

Author: Meredith Norton

Publisher: Penguin Group USA

Publication Date: June 2008

The Middle Place

Nonfiction
Author: Kelly Corrigan
Publisher: Voice
Publication Date: January 2008

Down to the Marrow
Nonfiction
Author: Catherine Ann Stone
Publisher: Bryant Park Press, Inc.
Publication Date: February 2008

"The Week's Most Talked About Book(s)" is a weekly book review and literary criticism column that publishes every Friday. Selected titles are based on popularity, public opinion, research and observation. Questions, comments and suggestions should be sent to book lover and columnist Karla Mass at kmass@mcclatchyinteractive.com. She is a content producer for McClatchy Interactive.

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