

Reading Ebook My Absolute Darling: A Novel By Gabriel Tallent



INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER "Impossible to put down." —NPR "A novel that readers will gulp down, gasping." —The Washington Post "The word 'masterpiece' has been cheapened by too many blurbs, but *My Absolute Darling* absolutely is one." —Stephen King A brilliant and immersive, all-consuming read about one fourteen-year-old girl's heart-stopping fight for her own soul. Turtle Alveston is a survivor. At fourteen, she roams the woods along the northern California coast. The creeks, tide pools, and rocky islands are her haunts and her hiding grounds, and she is known to wander for miles. But while her physical world is expansive, her personal one is small and treacherous: Turtle has grown up isolated since the death of her mother, in the thrall of her tortured and charismatic father, Martin. Her social existence is confined to the middle school (where she fends off the interest of anyone, student or teacher, who might penetrate her shell) and to her life with her father. Then Turtle meets Jacob, a high-school boy who tells jokes, lives in a big clean house, and looks at Turtle as if she is the sunrise. And for the first time, the larger world begins to come into focus: her life with Martin is neither safe nor sustainable. Motivated by her first experience with real friendship and a teenage crush, Turtle starts to imagine escape, using the very survival skills her father devoted himself to teaching her. What follows is a harrowing story of bravery and redemption. With Turtle's escalating acts of physical and emotional courage, the reader watches, heart in throat, as this teenage girl struggles to become her own hero—and in the process, becomes ours as well. Shot through with striking language in a fierce natural setting, *My Absolute Darling* is an urgently told, profoundly moving read that marks the debut of an extraordinary new writer.

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Amazon.com Review An Amazon Best Book of September 2017: There's so much to admire in *My Absolute Darling*: acute emotional insight, precise and evocative writing about the natural world, and pacing worthy of an action movie. How can this possibly be a debut? But some people live up to their names, and Gabriel Tallent, whose first novel this is, writes with bravura more experienced authors can only envy. His story, which feels a little like a girl-power fairy tale come true, starts dark. Fourteen-year old Julia, called Turtle, or sometimes Kibble, lives with her paranoid, survivalist father in the wilds of Mendocino County. Their ruin of a house has boarded-up windows and "spindled wooden railings overgrown with climbing roses and poison oak." If Turtle is that rose, then her father is the poison oak: his touch (and he touches Turtle) leads to trouble. But he's taught his daughter to shoot and forage -- she can "decipher" the woods, even at night -- and those skills serve her well when she finally starts to free herself from his control. One of the delights of this novel is the way Tallent reveals another culture -- another world, really -- coexisting in Mendocino, where middle-aged women practice yoga naked and swear by "the goddess" while their sons joke about hippies reading *Finnegans Wake* to their peyote plants. These flashes of humor and evidence of the sometimes goofy pleasures of civilization are like beacons lighting the way to a better life for Turtle, if only she can make her way out of the woods. --Sarah Harrison Smith, Amazon Book Review Review "With its unconventional heroine and unflinching portrayal of an abused girl's fight to save herself, *My Absolute Darling* seems poised to become the breakout debut of the year." —The New York Times "My Absolute Darling is Gabriel Tallent's first novel, and no less than Stephen King has called it a "masterpiece" to rank with *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *Catch-22*." —NPR "Our generation's next beloved literary heroine....this is one of the most important books you'll pick up this decade." —Harper's Bazaar "My Absolute Darling is a novel that readers will gulp down, gasping...Tallent [is a] prodigiously talented new writer." —The Washington Post "A gripping introduction to a seriously brave little girl... *My Absolute Darling* is an affecting read but also an important one." —USA Today "Impressively, this is...a novel of great beauty, filled with lush evocations of the woods." —Wall Street Journal "There's no shortage of things to admire in *My Absolute Darling* —it's a devastating and powerful debut from a writer who's almost certain to have a wonderful career ahead of him." —NPR.org "An unputdownable coming-of-age novel." —Entertainment Weekly "Lush and vivid. You'll read it with your stomach in your shoes, rooting for [Turtle] the whole time." —Marie Claire "[An] engrossing read." —InStyle "Captures a compelling young heroine." —Vanity Fair "A major American debut that incorporates psychological realism of the highest order, juxtaposed with nature writing that at times is so lyrical, you might as well be reading poetry." —The Houston Chronicle "Extraordinarily unsettling and ambitious...an amazing debut." —The San Francisco Chronicle "Brilliant and terrifying, told in expansive, wild and bold prose...Reading this book is like watching an electrical storm, both beautiful and dangerous." —The Minneapolis Star-Tribune "Explosive...There are many elements of this story we would rather not believe — all so convincingly rendered that we can't help but believe them." —The Boston Globe "With its excellent prose and fast-paced plot, it is a spirited debut." —Dallas News "My Absolute Darling is an absolute triumph." —The National "Loved every minute." —Newsday "The year's must-read novel...Tallent in this debut makes an old story — the drama of coming of age — feel original and full of youthful power." —The Times (London) "The magnificent, inhospitable landscape of northern California is itself a character here...a fast-paced adventure story...[a] strange and remarkable book." —The Guardian "Ferocious, heart-breaking ...Tallent combines gorgeous passages about the wilderness Turtle knows well and a steady beat of dramatic tension in this smashing debut." —BBC "[A] gripping, vivid debut...Readers will root for Turtle as she sets out to escape and be absorbed by Tallent's stunning descriptions of nature." —RealSimple "The cinematic pace of *My Absolute Darling* will have you physically reacting...as you barrel to the end of this incredibly redemptive, satisfying book." —goop "Easily one of my favorite debut novels of the past decade." —LitHub "To read [*My Absolute Darling*] is to become an evangelist for it." —The Millions

"Philosophical but without pretense, the novel proves a fascinating examination of personal strength... by allowing Turtle to define her own reality." —Paste "Cathartic and spine-tingling as hell." —Vox "Turtle is the strong, resilient heroine we didn't know we needed, and you'll fall head over heels in love with My Absolute Darling." —HelloGiggles "A fearless adventure tale that's as savvy about internal emotional storms as it is about wrangling with family and nature... A powerful, well-turned story about abuse, its consequences, and what it takes to survive it." —Kirkus, starred review "Lucidly written, both heartbreaking and heartfelt, this book is ultimately affirmative without the slightest sentimentality, and it's remarkable." —Library Journal, starred review "Remarkable not only for its characterization but also for its minute examination of the natural world that Turtle inhabits. So vivid is the gorgeously realized setting that it becomes itself a major character in a novel that lingers in the mind long after the final page." —Booklist, starred review "Emotionally fraught... Turtle's story is harrowingly visceral." —Publishers Weekly "There are books we like well enough to recommend, but there are a very few... that we remember forever. To my own shortlist I can now add My Absolute Darling, by Gabriel Tallent... This book is ugly, beautiful, horrifying, and uplifting." —Stephen King "Impossible to put down... a heartrending debut that will shock, then shake, then inspire you." —Celeste Ng, New York Times bestselling author of Little Fires Everywhere and Everything I Never Told You "Every scene in this astonishing novel packs so much tension, so much insight, such beautiful prose and such masterful handling of detail, I simply could not stop reading." —Phil Klay, National Book Award-winning author of Redeployment About the Author Gabriel Tallent was born in New Mexico and raised on the Mendocino coast by two mothers. He received his B.A. from Willamette University in 2010, and after graduation spent two seasons leading youth trail crews in the backcountry of the Pacific Northwest. Tallent lives in Salt Lake City.

Customer Reviews Most helpful customer reviews 53 of 55 people found the following review helpful. Grueling and over-the-top By Cynthia C. Ward I bought this book based on rave reviews, and maybe I'm going against the prevailing opinion, but I found it grueling, painful, and excessive. I wasn't prepared for the themes of abuse, incest, a sick man's obsession about post-apocalyptic survival with his daughter, and the grotesquely twisted forms "love" takes. Stephen King proclaimed this a masterpiece, but I should have remembered that he's a writer who deals in horror, psychological suspense, and atmospherics, and it occurred to me afterwards how subjective reviews always are (so take mine too with a grain of salt). I was drawn to the idea of a young girl ultimately emerging victorious, her soul and spirit defiant, her cunning and powers almost superhuman, and the descriptions of the natural world of the northern CA coast are lush and intricately detailed, like a dreamscape. I wondered: is it meant to be like a myth, a nightmare journey? The dialog is stilted, the violence prolonged, the perils extraordinary. I admit, I kept going, but at times it made me feel squeamish and sordid, and overall, it was an exhausting book. I'd say, just be forewarned that's the territory you're entering, and decide. 72 of 77 people found the following review helpful. Outstandingly good By Sid Nuncius I thought My Absolute Darling was outstandingly good. It is beautifully written, remarkably insightful and completely gripping. This is the story of 12-year-old Julia "Turtle" Alveson who lives with her survivalist father on the fringes of society in Mendocino, California. She is skilled in guns, survival skills and so on, but at sea with other people and in social situations. Told entirely from Turtle's point of view, we see her struggles with understanding her father's obsessive and abusive behaviour which she (and probably he) believes to be what love is. As events and growing maturity begin to make her more aware, the tension between what she has believed and what she begins to recognise as reality grows and Turtle has to wrestle with where her future lies and how, if at all, she can realise it. This doesn't sound like a great read on the face of it, but it is. I genuinely found it hard to put this book down; the story is gripping, with some passages of incredible tension and real adventure, and Gabriel Tallent takes us right inside that young woman's head with her confusion, self-doubt (often spilling into self-loathing) and resilience in a way which I have seldom experienced. The portraits of her and of her monstrous father are fantastically real, and I found the entire thing completely convincing. Be warned that there are some quite horrifying

scenes of child abuse, but they are absolutely justified in the context and excellently judged - a world away from the often offensively facile use of child abuse as a theme in run-of-the-mill thrillers. The prose is excellent. Gabriel Tallent writes in a measured, unmelodramatic but rather lyrical style, which brings the people, especially Turtle, wonderfully to life. Just as a tiny example, we get sentences like this: "She waits there in the grass, feeling her every thought stored up and inarticulate within her," and this sort of brilliant distillation of internal experience shines through the book. The sense of place is excellent and dialogue is completely convincing; I especially liked some wonderful episodes of the jokey, wordy, literate chatter of two High School boys as it contrasted with Turtle's near-silent inarticulacy. I find it hard to express quite how good I thought this book was. It is a rare combination of an utterly gripping story, excellent writing and genuine depth of content. Very, very warmly recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Worth the read, but not your average heroine By R. Stone I was torn about this book. It's beautifully written, characters are richly written and engaging (even if the teenagers are well beyond their years) and the subject matter is interesting, and equally disturbing. I vacillated about writing a review until today, when in a moment of my daily life I actually said in my head, "What would Turtle do?" The book provides a flawed, in-progress heroine that is worth spending time with. See all 129 customer reviews...

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