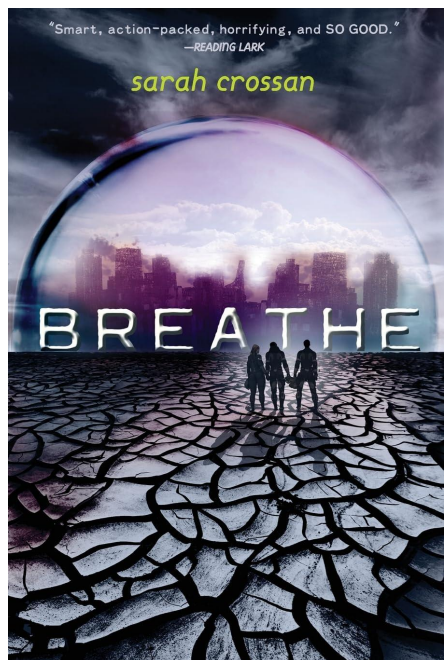


Breathe



Book Summary

Set in a future where the Earth's oxygen is nearly gone and controlled by a powerful corporation called Breathe. Society is segregated into the wealthy "Premiums" who can afford unlimited oxygen, and the struggling "Auxiliaries," who must ration it.

Summary of Concerns

This book contains; alternate gender/sexual ideology (implied), coerced alcohol consumption, death, deception, physical assault, profanity (minor), stealing, sexual content/nudity (minor), toxic relationships and violence.

Young Adult

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CONTENT WARNING

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Youth Advisory

Page	Content
29	<p>“What will they do to him?” I ask. I am imagining Abel bound to a chair, being beaten until he bleeds. I am imagining him hanging upside down. Having pins driven up his fingernails. And naturally, I am imagining the obvious—Abel being pushed from the pod and starving of oxygen. Suffocating.</p>
36	<p>“He’s a pervert and an ignoramus,” I interrupt. “That’s harsh,” he says, but he’s still snickering, so I know he doesn’t mean it. He’s as repulsed by Ferris as I am. “What about the time he snuck into your house so he could do whatever he wanted with that girl without his family getting an excess oxygen charge? I don’t even want to think about that,” I say, though I am already thinking far too much about it. “Don’t be jealous. You can use my room any time you like.” He winks playfully and I blush, not sure what he means.</p>
38	<p>“Sixteen! Ha! Well, you’re a fine specimen. You could be twenty-one. Jude, get this man a drink,” he says, finally letting go of me and gesturing to the whiskey bottle on the sideboard. My father scurries over and pours a little of the amber liquid into a clean tumbler. “Is that it? Ha! Don’t be a miser, Jude,” the Pod Minister says, and laughs through his nose. My father chuckles, too, and fills my glass to the top.</p>
83	<p>We’ve been walking for more than two hours, and I think I’ve spent one hour looking at Alina’s ass and another hour trying not to look at it. I have to be careful though, when Alina glances around, not to let her see me staring. She’s the kind of girl who’d be likely to sock me if she caught me.</p>
93	<p>“This is a Death Station,” she whispers. Bea stands up and holds out the flashlight as though she expects something to attack her. The station shudders as it takes another hit aboveground. “It’s getting worse,” Bea says, looking up. I nod. She’s thinking of Quinn. I am, too. “I were a nurse,” Maude tells us. “I were a young nurse. Well, actually, I were a student. I were a student-nurse, you know. I hadn’t passed all me exams when the universities shut down. But people needed nurses and there weren’t enough, see, so even the students had to work. People needed us. We was needed. We did our best.” “But what could you do? You couldn’t save anyone,” Bea says. “Nope. So we did the opposite. Right down ’ere.” “What do you mean?” Bea whispers. “People came and waited on the platforms and the doctors and nurses walked through the tunnels from station to station doing what they could.” Bea is frowning and casting her eyes about looking for answers. “You killed people,” I say. Maude hugs her knees into her chest. “We put ’em out of their misery. No one else would. It were illegal.” “Death Stations,” Bea says. “It were the only way out in the end. And they came to us. All different types, they was, though usually they was poor. They knew they hadn’t a chance of buying themselves a place in the pod.” “Death Stations,” Bea repeats. She shudders as another blast rocks the station. “I helped deliver a baby down here,” Maude continues, “and the first thing the mother said when I told her she’d had a boy was ‘do it.’ I knew what she meant. We all knew. But how could I?” Maude is speaking quickly now, more to herself than to us. Bea is watching her, hypnotized. “What happened to the baby?” she asks. She has tears in her eyes.</p>
98	<p>I don’t love him in the way my parents love each other—sweetly, almost wearily. When I’m with him I feel each nerve within me awakening so that when he touches me, when he brushes my arm accidentally, I shiver and I have to bite back an urge to cry out. I feel the ache everywhere: in my neck, in my belly, between my legs.</p>
119	<p>I’m standing freezing and half naked and close to death, and all I can think about are Silas’s muscles.</p>
136	<p>“The Pod Minister made his instructions very clear,” my father says in a low voice. “I can’t save you. I doubt I could help you even if you were my own son.” Silas looks at me in horror. My father turns and climbs onto the turret of the tank. “Captain,” he says, clicking his fingers, “take care of him.” Then he vanishes. The captain nods at the soldiers next to Inger, who pull him to his feet, remove his airtank, and throw it aside. Inger doesn’t struggle.</p>

Page	Content
136	<p>Even when his tank has been removed he stands rigid. “Your last moments are free ones,” the captain tells Inger, and the soldiers step aside so he can walk away, or run, or do whatever he pleases. Inger takes a few breathless steps and I expect him to run toward the building we are in, where he knows there is a solar respirator, but instead he turns and hobbles into the building they dragged him from not long ago. “Attention!” the captain cries, and every soldier salutes before taking his place in line. Within a few minutes every tank and soldier is out of sight. Silas jumps up and hurtles across the street. On his way he grabs Inger’s tank. I’ve never seen a person run so fast and without thinking, I bolt after him. We find Inger lying across the foyer. He is completely still. Silas pushes the mask into his face and opens the valve wide so Inger gets a high dose of oxygen. Inger doesn’t move. Silas tries blowing air into his mouth. Then he shakes him. “Inger. Inger, you’re safe now,” he says. “Wake up.” Inger is so still and looks so peaceful there can be no mistaking it: he is dead. Silas hangs his head and presses his hands into Inger’s chest. He sniffs and I look away.</p>
145	<p>“Uh ... I ...” I stutter, not knowing how to tell her about Bea and Quinn. “Don’t be ashamed. We’ve all found creative ways to survive,” she says. In order to escape, many members of the Resistance, especially the girls, have had to offer up their own bodies to the stewards in exchange for safe passage through Border Control. Some recruits have betrayed friends to get across, and there are those, like Petra, who have murdered for freedom. “I befriended a Premium,” I begin. Petra nods.</p>
183	<p>“Yeah. ‘Course. I mean, I didn’t tell my parents about Alina because they’d have given me the talk. Every time I meet a new girl they remind me how dangerous it is to get naked. I mean, I’d be lucky, you know.” The stewards are now bent over, trying to subdue their chortling.</p>
185	<p>“So, Quinn. If you had to swear to me that you’re telling the truth, would you?” the Pod Minister asks. Quinn nods emphatically as he tries to extricate himself from his mother’s embrace. “Well, good. Good.” Here the Pod Minister looks at Mrs. Caffrey and licks his lips. “And if I made you swear on the life of your unborn brother, would you still claim to be telling me the truth?” Quinn looks at the swell in his mother’s body as Mrs. Caffrey stands up straight. I have never liked Mrs. Caffrey, but she is so tiny she looks like a pregnant teenager rather than a woman in her forties. I can’t help shuddering at the thought of something awful happening to her or her baby.</p>
220	<p>As soon as my father is close to the Pod Minister, he launches himself forward, punching the Pod Minister square in the jaw and knocking him to the ground. The crowd, for a brief instant, gasps collectively, and then everyone is hollering, shaking their fists, and catcalling. What my father has done feels like a victory, especially to auxiliaries who’ve spent their lives complying. But the Pod Minister will not be beaten this easily. Lying prostrate, a trickle of blood running from his nose, he raises a finger and within seconds more stewards emerge from the recesses of the stage, spread themselves among the crowd, and begin to flail their batons. A steward strikes a young woman on the side of the head and she crumples to the ground like a rag. People begin to scatter, but even more stay exactly where they are, my parents included. No one has figured out how to turn off his microphone, and Quinn is yelling again. “Fight for the right to air! There is life outside the pod. And there are trees. We could live out there! We—” He stops, his attention distracted. The Pod Minister is back on his feet. And he has a gun pointed at the crowd. Though not at the crowd, exactly. He is smiling. My stomach flips and I lunge at the screen. “NO!” I scream. A shot breaks the momentary silence and then my mother is on the ground in a flowering pool of blood. My father looks at her aghast and turns to the Pod Minister when another crack swallows all hope and my father too is on the ground bleeding. Quinn flails, but the stewards keep a tight hold on him and eventually drag him off the stage and out of sight.</p>

Profanity & Sexual or Derogatory Terms	Count
Ass / Jackass / Asshole etc.	4
Bastard	1
Breast / Tit	2
Piss	3
Shit / Bullshit etc.	3
Sacrilegious & other offensive language usage	Count
Damn	10
God / God damn etc.	20
Hell	10