

DIARY
OF A TEENAGE
GIRL
A NOVEL
BOOK No. 05

by Chloe Miller

NAME IS
MY
CHLOE

MELODY CARLSON

Someone to talk to. I would never admit this to a single living soul,
but sometimes I get lonely. Real lonely. And sometimes I want to tell
someone exactly how I feel. But I can't. I can't tell anyone. I can't tell anyone.

Diary of a Teenage Girl

Chloe Book No. 1

MY NAME
IS CHLOE

a novel

MELODY CARLSON

Multnomah® Publishers Sisters, Oregon

This is a work of fiction. The characters, incidents, and dialogues are products of the author's imagination and are not to be construed as real. Any resemblance to actual events or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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BOOKS BY MELODY CARLSON:

Piercing Proverbs

DIARY OF A TEENAGE GIRL SERIES

Caitlin O'Conner:

Becoming Me

It's My Life

Who I Am

On My Own

I Do

Chloe Miller:

My Name Is Chloe

Sold Out

Road Trip

Face the Music

Kim Peterson:

Just Ask

Meant to Be

TRUE COLORS SERIES

Dark Blue, color me lonely

Deep Green, color me jealous

Torch Red, color me torn

Pitch Black, color me lost

One

Monday, September 2

I don't hate my life anymore. At least not today. I guess I consider myself a recovering pessimist. Or at least I'm trying. I used to be completely negative and cynical about everyone and everything, but I found that made it difficult to breathe. So now I'm trying to be more of a realist. That way I can be negative when I choose to, but there's still a little room for hope.

Some people think I am dark. I suppose they're a little frightened by me. By my appearance, or my opinions, or the way I look them straight in the eye without blinking or turning away, or even my music, which can be, I suppose, unsettling. Although I doubt they'd ever admit to such fears. Because no one likes to fess up to being scared. But I'll admit to it—at least within the privacy of my own journal. I seriously doubt that I'll go take out an ad in the Daily Times and go public with this news. Like anyone would care.

But it's true: I am scared. And sometimes I scare myself. Okay, I'm not talking about when I look in the mirror, although that can be a little

frightening, especially on those mornings when I have flattened down bed head and my eyelashes are stuck together with that gluck that gathers in your eyes while you're asleep. But for the most part it's not my appearance that scares me. Although I'm sure I seem frightening to some people—narrow-minded people who want everyone to look the same—like cookie-cutter characters where everyone has a happy face stamped right into their heads.

I've seen people stare at my hair (I cut it myself— all jaggedy so it can stick out in all sorts of interesting shapes, and I like putting colors on it, such as magenta and lime and purple), and I've seen some people stare at my multiple-pierced ears and belly button and wince or just back away. As if this is something unusual. And I suppose I derive some weird sense of satisfaction from their response. Like, see "I told you so." Does that make sense?

My friend Caitlin O'Conner (about the straightest chick I know) says I use my appearance to keep people from getting too close to me. And maybe she's right, although I've never admitted this to anyone before, except her and then only briefly. But I do sort of enjoy keeping up an exterior that turns some people off—or even frightens them. I figure if they're so shallow that they're threatened by my appearance, well,

then who wants to know them anyway?

Besides, if you don't let people get close to you, you lessen your chances of getting hurt by them. Right? And that's something I could sure live without. Not that I'm afraid of pain, because I'm not. Believe me, I'm not! I just don't go around inviting it to come over to visit me on a regular basis.

I guess that's one thing that scares me though—the way I keep shoving people away from me. It's as if it's become this habit that's getting harder and harder to break. In fact, I've gotten uncomfortably comfortable with my isolation. Well, for the most part. I mean, no one really wants to be alone all the time. Do they? But somehow Caitlin just pushed her way past all my barbed-wire barriers and brick walls and actually became my friend. Well, sort of. Actually, I still wonder if she reached out to me because my brother Josh told her I was such a pathetic mess. She probably felt sorry for me too, because she's that kind of person—overly caring and sympathetic—something she needs to be careful of, I think. Too much empathy can get you into trouble.

But besides Josh's involvement, I suspect Caitlin (a Christian who takes her faith real seriously) probably had great hopes of converting me, not that I've ever done anything to encourage her. But that's all history now

because Caitlin has just gone off to college. And I'm sure she'll forget all about me before long, if she hasn't already. I guess it just proves my point about not getting too close to people. Because in the long run, whether they mean to or not, they'll eventually hurt you or leave. That's what I've found to be true anyway.

But here's another thing that scares me about myself: It's the way I question just about everything. My parents call me rebellious and headstrong. My teachers say I have an attitude problem. Caitlin just says I'm searching. And in some ways I think she's closer to the truth than the rest of them. But for whatever reason, it seems as though nothing ever comes easily for me.

I'm not like Josh, the golden boy, who just seems to coast through life on his wave of charm, good looks, and general popularity. I'm probably more like my older brother Caleb, although since he left home while I was in grade school, it seems I barely knew him. But his life has been pretty messy too. Actually he's done a much worse job of it than I have (so far). I realize that could change for me any day now. And according to my parents it will.

They're predicting that I'll seriously blow it in my first year of high school. They could be right. I just might blow it—or blow up. I might

explode into millions of tiny pieces and fly throughout the universe. Or maybe I'll try to prove them wrong. I'm still not sure which way this thing will go.

Caitlin thinks I'm going to do "something wonderful with my life." Ha! But then she's like that—the perennial Pollyanna of the new millennium. And I'll admit I liked that book as a child, back when I thought everything always ended up "happily ever after." I just don't believe that anymore. And I don't mean to slam her exactly, but I do think she's a little too idealistic. I mean, what could I possibly do that would ever be described as "wonderful"? I don't even like that word! Like I said, I'm trying to lean more toward realism, even if it does get me down sometimes.

And I suppose that's why I question God a lot. But that's only on the days when I still believe in him. Because a lot of times I don't. A lot of times I wonder about things like religious wars and starvation and child slavery and just general greed and cruelty—and I find it hard to believe that God would allow such chaos.

But Caitlin says it's okay to question God. She says, "He can handle it." And she positively assured me that no matter what questions I ask, God has all the answers. But she also said that I might not always like all his answers. But what probably frightens me the most is the very

likely possibility that he won't answer at all—the possibility that he's not even there—and that we're all alone on this rapidly spinning ball called earth going nowhere fast. And for some reason that scares me more than anything. But I'd never admit this to anyone. In a way it seems pretty childish to see it written down. It's as if I try to act all grown up and mature and, I suppose, even tough, but inside I'm just a frightened little kid. Pretty scary, huh?

There we have it. I have just confessed my biggest fears, but I have some smaller ones too. They may seem minor compared to what I've just written above, but unfortunately they don't feel minor right now. I'll tell you what my most current pressing fear is: School starts tomorrow.

It's my first year in high school, and I don't even have one single friend to walk onto campus with. Oh, sure, it's my own fault since I no longer act, talk, or dress like my old friends. But were they really my friends? Would real friends shun me so easily? I think Jessie and I might've eventually become friends again, but then she moved last spring.

But to think I lost all this on account of a moronic boyfriend who stabbed me in the back because I wouldn't give in to him? How stupid is that? Maybe it was one of those Freudian things, like I really wanted to blow my life into

smithereens on purpose. Or not. The fact is, I now have to face entering high school as a solo act. And that freaks me out.

Pitiful, isn't it? Oh, I keep telling myself that I'll just act exceptionally hard and aloof, dressed in my tough chick threads (which have sent my mom to her room with a headache again), and I'll march right in there and take nothing from nobody. But despite my plan, I still feel pretty worried. And a small part of me wishes I'd listened to my mom and gotten some of those more "mainstream" kinds of clothes and tried to make what she calls a "fresh start."

I suppose this is where my rebelliousness comes into play. I just could NOT do it. I could NOT give in to my mom. I think it's because I actually like how I look. It's kind of creative, you know, like an alternative rock star. And so far I only have seven piercings, and I think I'll keep it at that since seven is a perfect number. And I don't even have a tattoo (although I've been tempted a time or two and am still considering trying a henna one). You'd think that alone would make my mom happy.

And I like how my hair looks all spiky and wild and colorful. Really, I think I look pretty cool. And since I AM a serious and aspiring musician, I think this image works for me. Of course, no one (well, except for Caitlin) really knows how

committed I am to my music. Maybe I'll get more out there with it this year. Maybe I'll see if I can play at the new coffeehouse that just came to town. Who knows? I could even become famous someday. It happens.

I've heard of fifteen-year-olds who've hit it big. Besides, everyone thinks I'm old for my age, plus I'm old in my class since my parents started me to school a year late due to a silly childhood illness that didn't seem like such a big deal at the time, to me anyway. Even my grandmother says I have the soul of an old woman, although I don't think she necessarily thinks that's a good thing. But maybe that's why I've always related better to older people. The kids in my own grade feel too immature for me, and yet I still feel like a little kid sometimes too.

Caitlin encouraged me to journal down my thoughts. She said it's a good way to get in touch with my feelings, although I feel pretty in touch already—sometimes too much so. She also said I should write down prayers. I tried not to laugh when she said that, but I'm thinking: What prayers? I mean, I don't ever pray. I don't even want to pray. And why is that? I say I still believe in God. Well, sometimes anyway. So why wouldn't I want to try praying to him?

I guess it's because I'm worried that, if he really does exist, he'll want to change me. And

I'm not sure I'm ready for that yet. Even though I'm unhappy and mixed up and feeling a little frightened, I'm still not sure I want to change. So instead of a prayer, I guess I'll just write down a poem. Because I'm not only a musician, I'm also a poet. And I am me! Chloe.

WHAT IF

what if all there is
is me?

what if i am all i see?
what if life is only this?
and ignorance is bliss?
what if love is only pain?
and nothing can be gained
by living every day
and there is no better way?
what then?

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