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About Me



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Zinta Aistars is the published author of three books in the Latvian language and has recently completed a second collection of poetry. She is publications editor and writer for Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and was writer and editor for the Kalamazoo College alumni magazine in Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA prior to that; has published poetry, travel essays, stories, and articles in the United States, Latvia, England, Sweden, Germany, and Australia. Her work also appears in many ezines - including Xelas Magazine, Lagos Literary Journal, Cezanne's Carrot, Scriptum, Outsider Ink, Boston Literary Magazine, Menda City Review, Megaera Magazine, Fiction Attic, Ascent Aspirations Magazine, Saucy Vox, Ghoti Fish, Ash Canyon Review, Her Circle Ezine, Flashquake, 63 Channels, milk magazine, Serene Light, River Walk Journal, Bobbing Around, Burning Word, Poems Neiderngasse, Midwest Book Review, and many others. She is an editor for the literary e-zine, insolent rudder, the poetry editor of Her Circle Ezine, and managing editor of The Smoking Poet (<http://thesmokingpoet.tripod.com>)

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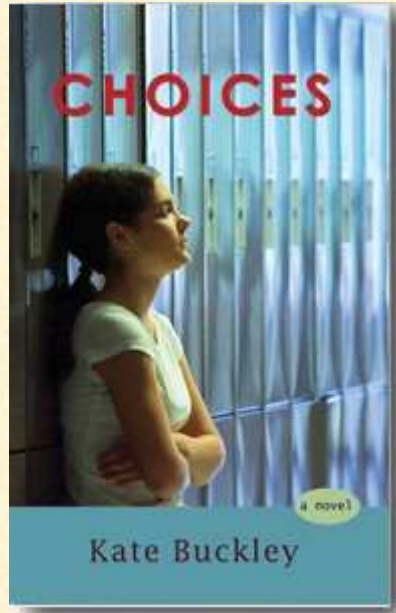
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TUESDAY, JULY 08, 2008

Choices by Kate Buckley



Book Review by Zinta Aistars

- Reading level: Young Adult
- Paperback: 170 pages
- Publisher: iUniverse, Inc., 2006)
- Price: \$13.95
- ISBN-10: 0595409261
- ISBN-13: 978-0595409266

In this novel for young adults—with something valuable to say to older adults, as well—Kate Buckley has had the courage to take on subject matter few will touch.

The author comes to her writing with substantial experience. A Santa Fe, New Mexico resident, Buckley holds a master's in human development with a concentration in women's studies. She has facilitated support

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groups for girls in California and New Mexico. An activist for women's rights, she has worked as a teen advocate in the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women's Teen Abuse Prevention Project and has trained for the LA Commission's Rape Crisis Hot Line team. Buckley has administered a three-year, science based drug and alcohol abuse prevention program in public middle schools of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

When Buckley wrote *Choices*, she meant it to be read and discussed not only by teen girls, but to open lines of communication between girls and their mothers, equally their fathers and brothers, even an entire community, for it takes a village to protect a young woman. Indeed, this is the line running through the novel. When 15 year old Kara MacNeill finds herself pregnant after being raped by a school jock at a party, she must confront her every fear in dealing with a moral and ethical dilemma. There is the rape itself. She must cope with the violation of body, mind and spirit that a person undergoes after a rape. To complicate matters, Kara's mother is an impassioned pro-life activist who often has her daughter help in passing out flyers and joining in protests against abortion clinics. Surely, Kara will not find help in her dilemma at home. Time is of essence, however, as Kara searches for support in various places with varied results. The young rapist adds pressure to abort the fetus, for, as it turns out, she is not the first girl in school he has raped. The complicit and shamed silence in his female victims is something he has come to rely upon.

Choices addresses all variations and possible solutions to a problem too many adolescent girls and young women face. Is Kara in some manner responsible? Is a girl at a party who drinks too much accountable for what a boy does to her? Will a parent who has strong pro-life views feel the same way when a daughter has been raped? As simple as it can be to hold firm views when they apply to others, the insights Kara's parents experience when the results of rape hit home are fascinating for the reader to witness.

This is a story about growing up, about being accountable and taking responsibility, about taking risks and being honest when honesty becomes a matter of life and death. This is a story about what it means to be a young not-yet-woman in a society that often puts the blame and the shame on the female (in no small part due to the views of women themselves about being "nice" and that "boys will be boys") when sex becomes an act of force. Kudos to Buckley for speaking up.

To read an interview with Kate Buckley, visit this issue of The Smoking Poet's [Feature YA Author Interview](#).

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