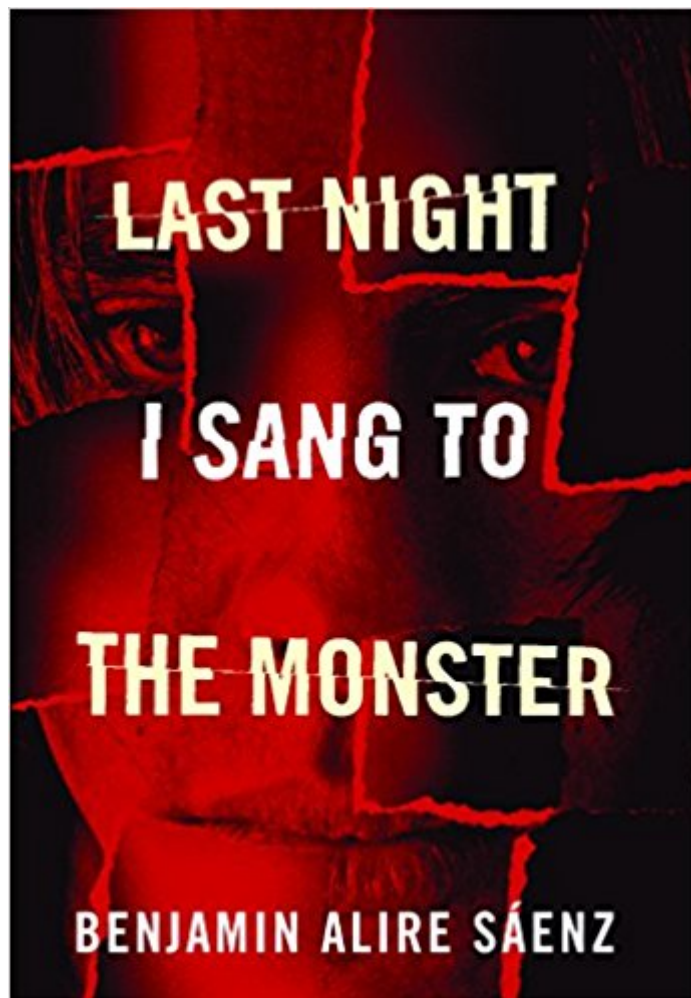


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Last Night I Sang To The Monster



Synopsis

Last Night I Sang to the Monster was chosen as one of the Top Ten YA Books of Fiction in 2010. Zach is eighteen, bright, and articulate. He's also an alcoholic, in rehab instead of high school, but he doesn't remember how he got there. What's up with that?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 9 Up
At 18, Zach finds himself in a therapeutic residential program as both an alcoholic and a post-traumatic-stress patient. In evocative and compelling language, SÃfÂjenz allows an at-first barely articulate, almost amnesiac Zach to show his progress toward remembering and integrating his past into a present with which he can cope. He is guided along the way by a sympathetic and wise therapist, a middle-aged roommate whose own recovery is on an arc ahead of the youth's, and several credible and interesting minor characters. The techniques and realities of such a facility are realistic and fully drawn: addicts who gather for cigarettes, nightmares, group sessions, breathing therapy. SÃfÂjenz weaves together Zach's past, present, and changing disposition toward his future with stylistic grace and emotional insight. This is a powerful and edifying look into both a tortured psyche and the methods by which it can be healed.
Francisca Goldsmith, Halifax Public Libraries, Nova Scotia
END --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

"SÃfÂjenz weaves together Zach's past, present, and changing disposition toward his

future with stylistic grace and emotional insight. This is a powerful and edifying look into both a tortured psyche and the methods by which it can be healed." *•School Library Journal*, starred review "Offering insight into addiction, dysfunction and mental illness, particularly in the wake of traumatic events, SÃfÃjenz's artful rendition of the healing process will not soon be forgotten." *•Publisher's Weekly*, starred review "Zach's first-person voice is compelling and heartbreaking. SÃfÃjenz' poetic narrative will captivate readers from the first sentence to the last paragraph of this beautifully written novel, which explores the painful journey of an adolescent through the labyrinth of addiction and alcoholism. It is also a celebration of life and a song of hope in celebration of family and friendship, one that will resonate loud and long with teens." *•Kirkus Reviews* "There is never a question of either SÃfÃjenz's own extraordinary capacity for caring and compassion or the authenticity of the experiences he records in this heartfelt account of healing and hope." *•Booklist* "Benjamin Alire Saenz's new novel is a gift of honesty and poetry and heart." | This novel sang to me from the opening page and never once hit a false note." *•Matt de la Peña* "I cried with Zach all the way through this book: tears of rage and sorrow; sometimes laughing; and finally, tears of hope and joy. Thanks to Ben Saenz's pitch-perfect writing, Zach will stay in my heart for a long time." *•Linda Sue Park*, author of *When My Name Was Keoko* "Benjamin Alire SÃfÃjenz's most devastating and exquisite novel to date." *•El Paso Times* "Zach's story as an alcoholic is a painful but positive reaffirmation of the human spirit." *•Library Media Connection* "SÃfÃjenz does a wonderful job of painting Zach's struggle while in a rehab center where the Zach fights his inner monster. This inspirational story can help middle to high school students learn about the beauty of life, hope, healing and family." *•Oneota Reading Journal* "Last Night I Sang to the Monster will provide younger readers with reassurance that they are not alone in dealing with the demons of dysfunctional families and painful memories." *•El Paso Scene*

For several years I worked in a therapeutic setting for male juvenile sex offenders. What a gift this book would have been back then. Before I launch into my accolades, let me state that there are elements of this book that many adults may find to be lacking in authenticity. In other words, Zach at times says things that I know someone with his troubled mind would not say. Most certainly he would not have finished this program as quickly as he does in the novel. But remember this: the book was not written for adults although I highly recommend for adults. The other reviews provide you with information about where Zach is and why he is there. So I will not do that. Instead I want to focus upon why we need more books like this. Millions of kids grow up in hostile homes. And so

much damage is done by parents who do not have the skills needed to be effective parents. Most situations are not as overwhelming as Zach's, of course, with his many addictions as well as his seeming inability to relate to anyone, to trust anyone. The reader, however, will not know the full reason until the end. In other words there is a plot. The book is very engaging, skillfully written albeit not exactly authentic in the voice of an 18-year-old in a few places. I quite literally did not want to put it down. So I spent the entire day reading it. And now I am about to order three copies as gifts to people I think will find it a rich experience.

This is not a great piece of literature but it is a good book nonetheless. I was weary by some of the same material treaded over and over again but very much valued having a window into the process and experience of an addict in rehab who came to terms with his addiction. It is tender but the reason why Zach is thrown into rehab is just too darn extreme. I don't want to give away the ending so that is about as clear as I can be about that. And that ending or overall context for how he ends up in rehab actually takes his family off the hook for their contribution to his addiction. Anyway, I really did value it for the insight into how brave someone has to be to counter their "demons."

I bought this book after I fell in love with his writing in "Aristotle and Dante discover secrets of the universe". I knew that this book was not a romance (really I do read a lot of books in other genres :)), but subject matter hinted strongly that I need to be in the appropriate mood before starting this one. So it stayed in my TBR for few months, but yesterday I picked it up and I could not put it down, literally. I think this novel is another proof of the obvious - good writer can make any subject interesting and engaging. Not that I have not read about enough traumatized people in m/m romance novels (this book is NOT a romance of any kind), but I do not remember recently (or ever) reading a book which is devoted to the recovery from addiction almost exclusively and we are deeply in the head of Zach's (the narrator). Zach is in rehab and trying to recover from the alcoholic addiction. He does not remember how he got there (or he does not want to remember) and the story also deals with him slowly allowing himself to remember the other trauma he experienced. He interacts with his roommates, his therapist, he also has a lot of imaginary conversations :), and this is pretty much all that happens in this book and I loved being an observer of that. It is a very character oriented book. It is very painful being in Zach's head, but it also raw, honest and very exhilarating to see him slowly moving to the better place in his life. There are no guarantees that he won't relapse to drinking, there are no guarantees of anything, but we can see that he has a good chance of having more and more good days .

The voice comes into its own a little farther in than I would like. If the author didn't have the credentials he does, I'm not sure I would have stuck with the beginning writing that was basically sceneless. BUT, I'm glad I'd read about him and the book before I read it so that I stuck with it, because it turned into a touching novel that made me cry and drew attention to those connections that happen outside of the traditional realm. I love seeing unlikely relationships take shape and how sometimes it happens that an older, unrelated person, helps a younger one. I love books that show how connections happen all kinds of ways. Finally, GREAT title.

I love this so much!! I was sobbing during all the goodbyes and dear Jesus the letter that Raphael wrote to Zack was so beautifully emotional...I sat down for 2 minutes and cried! I felt like the book was well written because when Zack felt these emotions concerning the other characters I felt them too. I believe that anyone who wants a soul searching, mind griping, emotional tale about a boy trying to find his was should read this book!! I promise you it is worth the read!!!SPOILER ALERT:!!!the moment I going out that sacks parents had been murdered by his brother who also committed suicide I felt so...sad for him. And when Sharkey left I was so disappointed because I wanted the characters to have a happy ever after moment!! And instead he left because it was too much to bear. I absolutely love/hate Adam!! He's so amazing in the ways he helped Zack out but at some point his receptiveness irked me!

When I really really love a book, I read it VERY slowly. I read this one like I was a snail. Emotional and real, the words are poetry. But then again, this author is a poet.I started with his most famous book, Ari and Dante, and then worked my way backwards through his YA novels; I liked them all, but this one was my favorite. I'd recommend it if you are working to try to figure out the meaning of life and fun s*** like that.I'm going to read his regular novels next, and definitely try out a volume of his poetry. I don't buy poetry, if that gives you some indication of my view of this book and it's author.....

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