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# Back Before Dark: Sometimes Rescuing A Friend From Darkness ... Means Going In After Them (A Code Of Silence Novel)



## Synopsis

Praise for Code of Silence: "Deliberate, plausible, and gritty whodunit." **Booklist Starred Review** "A detour through the park leads Cooper, Gordy, Hiro, and Lunk straight into a trap, and Gordy is abducted! For the kidnapper, it's all a game, a way to settle an old score, with no one getting hurt. But evil has a way of escalating, and once his identity is discovered, the rules change. Despite the best of police efforts, the hours tick by without a clue or a ransom call, leaving everyone to their own fears. Gordy is gone. Cooper descends deeper into a living nightmare, imagining the worst for his best friend and cousin. Hours stretch into days, and talks of a memorial service begin to surface. But Cooper still feels his cousin is alive and develops a reckless plan, changing all the rules. Now the one who set out to rescue his friend needs to be rescued himself. Sometimes rescuing a friend from darkness means going in after them.

## Book Information

Series: A Code of Silence Novel

Hardcover: 384 pages

Publisher: Zonderkidz (March 24, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0310734991

ISBN-13: 978-0310734994

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 1.2 x 8.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 44 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,452,399 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #87 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Religious Fiction > Christian > Mysteries & Detective Stories #341 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Religious Fiction > Christian > Action & Adventure #754 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Education > Home Schooling

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Gr 7-10-A group of four friends-Cooper, Gordy, Hiro, and Lunk-is quickly reduced to three when Gordy is kidnapped from a park, even as Cooper and Hiro attempt to save him. Cooper is consumed with guilt over his inability to catch up with the kidnapper's van and the boys take the rescue efforts into their own hands. Feeling that the police are not exploring the most obvious

options, Cooper starts investigating local sex offenders whom Hiro located in public records. Lunk supports Cooper's plans, including those that break the law. Equally devoted but more cautious, Hiro challenges Cooper's ideas in an effort to save him from dangerous behavior. Cooper wavers between anger and sadness while holding out hope that Gordy is still alive, despite the town's plans to hold a memorial service for him. The story reaches a climax when Cooper hatches a secret rescue plan that could get him killed. Though references to Code of Silence (Zondervan, 2012) are made, readers do not need knowledge of it to enjoy this nail-biting mystery. The plot is interesting though too drawn out to recommend to reluctant readers. The characters are believable; the dialogue rings true; and the messages about safety, family, and friendship are relevant without being heavy-handed.-Lynn Rashid, Marriotts Ridge High School, Marriottsville, MD (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

The trap that begins this strong follow-up to the excellent Code of Silence (2012) is sickeningly smart. Friends Cooper, Hiro, and Lunk watch in shock as their pal Gordy hails a van to tell the driver that there's a backpack on the roof. But it is a lure; the side door slides open, Gordy is tazed, and the van vanishes with him. The authorities are clueless, so the guilt-ridden friends start taking their own investigative steps, each riskier than the last. Shoemaker's third-person voice gives us the perspective from each kid, including Gordy, who is chained in a pitch-black, slowly flooding basement. We also get glimpses of the kidnapper, who views the whole thing as a game, before it spirals out of control. As with the first book, multiple characters' prayers feel awkwardly inserted, and there is a certain amount of repetition spread across the perhaps too many chapters. Still, Shoemaker's characters and plot possess a believability rare for YA mysteries. And the climax? You will not have any fingernails left by the final page. Grades 7-10.

--Daniel Kraus

My 11 year old son absolutely loved this trilogy of books. He asks all the time when there will be a new book in the series. While I have not read the book myself, my very avid reader could not stop talking about it. He even begged to stay up late so he could keep reading, something he has never done before. After listening to the details of the book, I have no intention of letting my 8 year old read it (which is the minimum recommended age). I think 11/12 yrs old/6th grade should be the minimum, but I realize I may be in the minority. While this is a personal preference, it does not take away from how much my son enjoyed this book and the fantastic writing/style.

I met Tim at a conference and purchased his first book Code of Silence. It is a great story for teens and adults alike. This second book in the series picks up where the first left off and keeps you glued to the pages. These books are enjoyable, clean, and very well written.

Having read the author's previous novel, Code of Silence, I was eager to read this next book in the series. I won't waste time going over the plot as others have done a great job of that already. I'd like to say I couldn't put the book down, but honestly, there were a couple times I couldn't take any more of the suspense and tension. I had to stop reading. This book is every parent's nightmare, seen from the kids' point of view with realistic consequences for poor judgment and bad decisions. It kept my emotions roiling all the way through until I was crying at the climax. In addition, the discussion questions and safety tips for youngsters make this a valuable book for parents to read and discuss with their children. High praise for Tim Shoemaker and his Code of Silence series. I can't wait for the next one.

The book, Back Before Dark, is a teacher's dream. It is broken down into short chapters that hold the attention of even the most reluctant reader. The plot moves with riveting tension at a heartbeating pace. The characters are well delineated and believable. The book does not dodge hard issues or questions, but tackles them with an honesty not found in YA books. The subject matter for the series is where young teens are living in this culture. A great read in any classroom for boys or girls. A book that teachers can suggest to motivate reading skills as well as to build character. Friends take care of friends.

I chose this rating because this book has a powerful story of if you really love your friend. It is a great book for all ages and it is a great book if you like mysteries. Tim Shoemaker did an excellent job writing the book and I especially enjoyed it.

To what limits would you go to help a friend in trouble? This is a action filled story about friendship and persistence.

My grandson loved this book. I will definitely order the next book in the series when it comes out.

An excellent read for Middle School Teens! Recommend that they read Code of Silence so the

readers have background information on the characters. Outstanding finale!

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