



## Offline

### Brian Adams

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Brian Adams's charming and heartfelt young adult novel *Offline* explores the harm that comes with trading the real world for an online one.

Meagan has a real problem. She's not addicted to drugs or alcohol or gambling, but she can't tear herself away from her phone for the life of her. She spends hours swiping, scrolling, and texting. It's beginning to stunt her growth, creating a barrier between Meagan and real, offline relationships. *Offline*, with its accessible, funny characters and engaging storyline, explores what happens when a seemingly harmless habit takes over someone's life.

Most of seventeen-year-old Meagan's technology obsession revolves around perusing online dating apps, flirting endlessly with cute boys but never "taking it offline." Meagan's parents respond by sending her to live with her hippie grandfathers for a technology detox. After a car accident there due to texting while driving, she's forced to attend a Netaholics Anonymous meeting to hopefully get her addiction in check before it ruins her.

Meagan's headstrong and snarky narration rings true, though at times it reads younger than her seventeen years. Some dialogue is awkward, though it has its laugh-out-loud moments, too.

Much of the novel's fun comes from its memorable cast of characters, including Meagan's whimsical grandfathers and her new Netaholics Anonymous group of friends and love interests. Together, the cast softens Meagan's potentially sinister reality as she's consumed by distractions.

Meagan's development is at the center of the novel. The at first deeply superficial teen blossoms into someone who values the complex, tangible world around her. Her addiction, though perhaps more pronounced than those of most people her age, is composed of tendencies and habits familiar to us all.

Humorous and earnest, *Offline* reminds us to unplug and appreciate the things we might miss while buried in our phones.

MYA ALEXICE (May/June 2019)

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