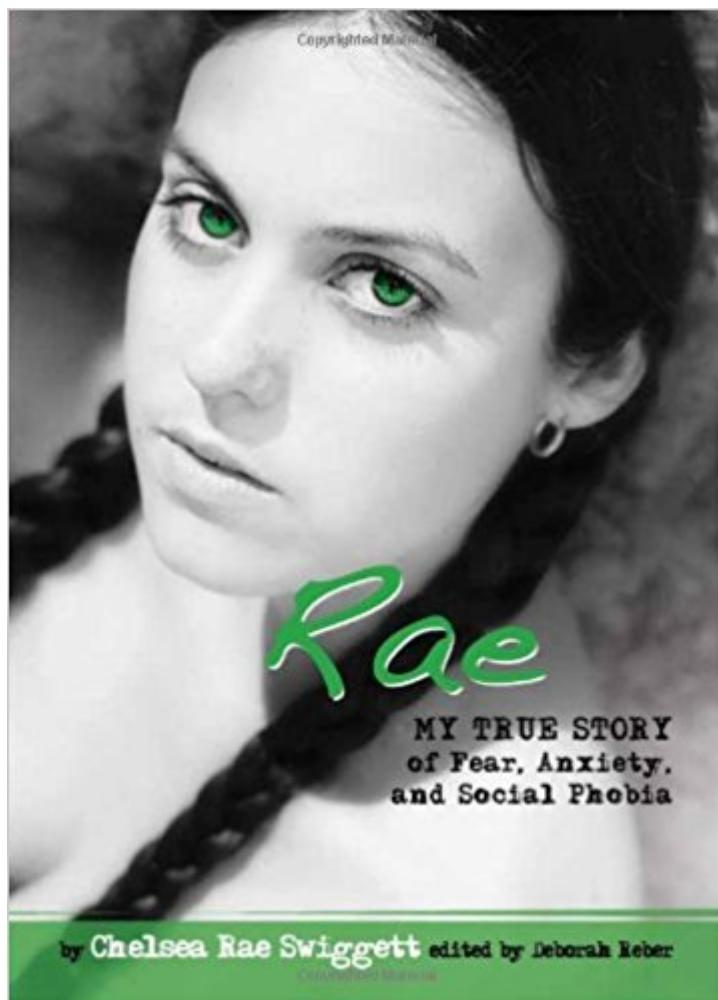


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# Rae: My True Story Of Fear, Anxiety, And Social Phobia (Louder Than Words)



## Synopsis

Rae is beyond socially awkward. Since she was a little girl, Rae Swiggett knew something was different about her. The sound of planes flying overhead could spark a panic attack. Being called on in class was enough to push her over the edge. She feared the unknown, life, death, people . . . even fear itself. By the time she reached ninth grade, Rae was muddling through life in relative silence, convinced everyone was mocking her, judging her, picking her apart, bit by little bit. Rae knew she couldn't keep going on this way. She knew something had to give. 'It's a game of catch-22 I constantly play with myself. If I keep acting normal, I hope one day I will be, but every time I try, I just let myself down. I'm so entirely sick of this game.' Because Truth Is More Fascinating Than Fiction [www.louderthanwordsbooks.com](http://www.louderthanwordsbooks.com)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Chelsea Rae Swiggett is eighteen years old and will soon be heading to college to major in English and immerse herself even further into the world of books and writing. She currently serves on the Ypulse Youth Advisory Board. Visit her blog at <http://thepageflipper.blogspot.com/>.

THE CLICK OF MY VAN DOOR IS SIMILARÂ to the monotonous beeps of an alarm clock. You know how, after you've heard the same incessant noise day after dayÃ¢â ¸ always with the same dreaded awakeningÃ¢â ¸ you begin to cringe at the sound? That's what our van door, sliding open, does to me. It's the bugle of yet another school day. Since I'm totally into mythology, I'll

relate how I feel about school by referencing a well-known tale of a fellow named Sisyphus who, for doing something punishable to the gods, was forced to push an extremely heavy boulder up a hill day after day. Once he got to the top, the boulder would roll back down and he'd have to start all over again. School is my boulder. And I have no idea what I did to piss off Zeus. I think it has less to do with school and more to do with the people occupying it. I'm, under no lesser terms, the opposite of a 'people person.' I'm a loner, and I like it that way. But humanity is kind of a nationwide epidemic, as any die-hard Buffy fan would quote, so I hobble myself down the sidewalk and into the glass doors of my high school. I walk down the halls, watching my admittedly ugly tennis shoes clomp themselves over shiny tiles. I try to stay on one line as I make my way to my locker and on to homeroom. When I get to my seat and classes start, the evaluation begins. You know how people say you are your own toughest critic? It's totally true. I zone out once the teacher starts talking, and the only thing I think about is how people view me. I check my breathing to make sure I can't be heard. I yank my shirt and pants so there's no way anyone can see an inch of me. I bite my lip and suffer through what I'm sure is just an assessment of how I look, cleverly disguised as 'Homeroom.' Everything comes down to how I act, too. I know I'm quiet, but I'd rather go unnoticed than say something wrong and be insulted for it. Right now, I'm on the edge of my seat, waiting for my name to be called for attendance. Waiting, in dread, to speak out the word 'here.' When I quietly do, I wonder if I said it too silently or if my voice pitched Å- Å- awkwardly. Everyone starts talking in whispers while the rest of the attendance is called. I hear everything I'd ever want to know about X's party or A's concert. People always talk like nobody's listening in. It's not like I eavesdrop on purpose, but if someone's having a conversation right next to a ghost, that poor ghost can't help but pick up a few disjointed words. 'The football game was . . .' 'I can't believe she . . .' 'Were you at . . .' Sometimes I wonder what it'd be like to be someone else, like the girl two rows up and one seat over who had 'an awesome time' this weekend. If we somehow pulled a Freaky Friday with our minds, would life be easier? I'm not naive enough to think other people don't have Å- Å- problems . . . we all do. But I know it'd be nice to not care so much. To just let things go and be happy and carefree. I made a promise to myself that this year, my freshman year in high school, would be different. I moved from my last school in Berea to get a fresh start here at Avon Lake. I was done being labeled 'mute,' and I thought with a new school I could make myself over and be a new, outgoing person. As it turns out, it doesn't matter what school I'm at; I'm still chronically shy. While everyone else is busy talking like normal teenagers, I'm doodling. It's pretty depressing when someone who can't even draw a basic stick figure is resorting to 'art' just to busy herself. There are lumps of mashed potatoes where my clouds are supposed to be. The bell rings, and I'm five

minutes closer to the end of the day. Welcome to my life. ©2010. Chelsea Rae Swigget. All rights reserved. Reprinted from Rae. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the written permission of the publisher. Publisher: Health Communications, Inc., 3201 SW 15th Street, Deerfield Beach, FL 33442

I bought this to help my 16 year old daughter who suffers from extreme Social Anxiety. Her anxiety was so bad last year during her first year of High School, that we decided to let her do online schooling this year. While I enjoyed reading the book, as many of the Author's struggles mirrored my daughter's, I wish the Author had talked about how she overcame her struggles. The book ended with her being Home Schooled, and then jumped into her being in College. It would have been nice for her to have outlined what type of help she received in order to be able to attend college. I enjoyed reading about her childhood, as it showed that my daughter is not alone but it didn't offer any suggestions with overcoming the crippling affects of social phobia. I really didn't gain any insight into helping my daughter

Bought this for my daughters, I wanted them to see that it's not uncommon for teens to have social phobia and anxiety. I always call myself socially retarded. I read this too, and it brought back my own teenage years and how I felt. My 12 year old stayed up all night reading she liked it so much.

Very interesting and informative! Great lessons for teenagers! My 15 year old daughter is very inspired by what these girls went thru!

Many of us as adults live and deal with fear, anxiety and social phobia but for a teenager these afflictions can be even more devastating. In Rae: My True Story of Fear, Anxiety, and Social Phobia, Chelsea Rae Swiggett shares her very personal journey through trying to be normal but never quite getting there. I found I was able to really relate to Chelsea because I deal with fear and anxiety myself. I've never been socially phobic though or worried what people thought and reading her thoughts on it really makes your heart break. How awful it is to be so constantly worried about how people are seeing you. In her own words, she says... 'I'm the type of person who gets embarrassed ---not just red-faced embarrassed, but moments of utter humiliation where I feel like every person in the room is watching, staring, criticizing, laughing, and generally hating me --- over things like: a) breathing, b) eating, c) walking, and d) being.' (pg 27) Chelsea has an overwhelming

fear of school - she tried getting out of going as often as she could. Her days were full of anxiety over trying to not call attention to herself and being laughed at for being awkward and different. She just never felt like she fit in. She kept asking to be home schooled and eventually she is which ends up being the one thing that helps her the most. She also has an overwhelming fear of death which I can completely relate to. I think most people probably do but it's the extent to which we let the fear control us that ultimately matters. Chelsea also struggled with her weight. Being called fat numerous times in school led her to feel as though she had to change herself. She spent a lot of time controlling the amount of calories she took in and basically for the most part was starving herself in an attempt to change her image. I think this need for control over her eating is one of the ways in which she can have control over something thereby reducing her anxiety if only a little. There are also her issues with her mother's drinking throughout her childhood into her teen years. There was always the happy/sad times, the worry over her mother getting killed while drinking and then later always the fear of her going back to drinking. Again this could have had a huge impact on Chelsea's anxieties and fear. Very often things from our childhood will cause us to be anxious, etc into adulthood without us ever realizing it and Chelsea is still dealing with the effects of this. I really give Chelsea credit for sharing her story. This is a difficult one to share I think because ultimately these issues are extremely personal and normally ones we all go to all lengths to hide. By sharing this story with other teens, Chelsea is opening a door for them to understand themselves a little better and realize that they are not alone in their fears and anxieties. Chelsea now shares a common interest with many of us and reviews books over at a blog called The Page Flipper. She's planning on soon heading to college to major in English and continue on in her love of books and writing. What she hopes... '...if there's one thing I could ever inspire in someone with my words. it would be to find themselves and what they love and never, ever, no matter what anyone says, give up on it.' (pg 151)

RAE is raw, real, and I'm truly grateful that Swiggett shared her story. As one of the newest additions to the Louder Than Words series of memoirs, RAE is definitely memorable and worthwhile to read. Rae is quiet and introverted outside of her comfort zone at home. She gets tongue-tied whenever she has to speak in class, forgetting the right answers in only seconds. She worries that everyone's watching every move she makes. Even her weight becomes something she struggles with. She's the girl who just might be faking sick at home, or maybe even ducking her head when you pass her in the halls...and she's completely real. RAE is one of those memoirs that I'm sure a lot people can relate with at one point or another. I knew by the time I finished reading the first chapter that RAE

was eerily close to how I remember my high school experience. All those times when you think everyone is mocking you and your heart won't stop pounding, or when all the wrong words come out in a jumbled mess whenever you try to speak around people you aren't comfortable with, the fear that grips you sometimes, even when you know everything is okay...it's real, it happens, and it's nice to know that those of us who experience some of these moments are not alone. Highlights: I could relate with certain aspects of Swiggett's memoir. I remember those days in high school (I still can feel that way in class). I have to really praise Swiggett for taking a chance, being brave, and sharing her story. I know I really wish I had read something like RAE back when I was in high school. Lowlights: There were a few confusing moments. Yet, I couldn't stop reading until I finally finished the entire book. I couldn't tear myself away. RATING: 4.5 out of 5

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