

AIJA MAYROCK



Aija Mayrock started writing *The Survival Guide to Bullying* when she was sixteen years old and finished it in 2015, at nineteen years old. She promised herself that she would publish this book as her gift to the next generation of kids who will be bullied. Aija dealt with bullying for many years, beginning in the 3rd grade. In the midst of these very difficult times, Aija discovered her creativity and passion. She wrote her very first screenplay on the eve of the deadline for the Santa Barbara International Film Festival 10-10-10 competition. She won the competition and from that time forth pursued her passions. Since then, Aija has continued to work with the Santa Barbara International Film Festival. She has also won awards from the Scholastic Art and Writing Competition for her writing and poetry.

Aija is a writer, actress, and filmmaker. Her dream is to give a voice to the voiceless through art.

SEVENTEEN

June 2015

My Bully Dressed Up as Me for Halloween

People were saying that I was "disgusting and should die" or that I "deserved all of this."



BY AIJA MAYROCK

9.6KSHARES

<http://www.seventeen.com/life/real-girl-stories/a32006/my-bully-dressed-up-as-me-for-halloween/>

Halloween my freshman year in high school was the scariest day of my life. But it wasn't scary because of a ghost or a monster — it was scary because in one moment, my life turned upside down.

Just a year before, I moved from New York to California. While in New York, I had been relentlessly bullied. And when I moved to California and started a new life, it seemed like a giant Band-Aid had "fixed" the problem. I had new friends, I started acting in plays and writing stories, and the bullying had stopped.



Halloween that year started like every other Halloween. I dressed up, had a great day at school, ate way too much candy, and laughed with some friends. But then it all changed.

I got a text message from a classmate I had known in New York. The text included a photo of a girl I didn't know wearing a big sign around her neck. The sign had my name on it: Aija Mayrock. I was so confused. Who was this person? I went on Facebook and saw dozens of people posting the same picture. A girl whom I'd never met dressed up as "me" for Halloween.

I was in a state of shock. In that moment, I did not feel sad or hopeless or angry. I felt like I was drowning and no one was there to save me. I scavenged through Facebook to see why this was happening, who did it, and for what reason. As I combed for information, I began to read the most disgusting comments about myself. People were saying that I was "disgusting and should die" or that I "deserved all of this."

I messaged the girl who dressed up as me. Let's call her "Sara." I wrote, "I don't know who you are or why you are doing this, but why would you dress up as me for Halloween?"

But instead of apologizing or even ignoring me, she posted an image of my note to her on Facebook, which only garnered even MORE attention and even MORE brutal comments. Each post hit my heart like a dagger. As this was unfolding, I was standing with my school friends. I showed them the pictures, the disgusting comments, and the text messages. Just when I thought it couldn't get worse, my "friends" laughed at me and walked away. How could they think this was funny? How could they not see how hurt I was?

In a matter of minutes, I had been impersonated and humiliated 3,000 miles away by a girl I didn't even know, my new "friends" had shown their true colors, and the Band-Aid had been ripped off my new life in California. I have never been so afraid of the world. I have never felt so alone, so hated, and so lost. That day I went home and told my mom everything. We found Sara's home number and spoke to her mom. When Sara got on the phone and apologized, I finally felt a wave of relief.

But a few days later, Sara sent me more harassing messages. And then I started to get anonymous phone calls where people said horrible things to me.

I immediately deleted all of my social media accounts and changed my phone number. But it was the most difficult time of my life. I really believed that there was something very wrong with me. Even though I lived across the country, I felt ashamed of myself. I started to wear baggy clothes to hide my body. I picked at my food, thinking my weight was my problem. And I started to avoid people. Maybe if I was invisible, no one would be mean to me?



A few weeks later, I entered a screenwriting competition in a film festival. I needed to find something to pour my pain into. I never thought I would be accepted into that competition. But, miraculously, I was. And I decided to write a screenplay about bullying. That year, I won the competition. From that moment forward, I decided that I would dedicate my life to giving a voice to the voiceless through art. And that's when I started writing my book, *The Survival Guide to Bullying*.

It's not easy for me to share my story with the world. As I write this, I still feel that fear in the pit of my stomach. But I also feel a duty to share this story for you and every other person being bullied. You are NOT ALONE. There is NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU. I know this, because I have felt that way for too many years. Bullying won't last forever and you don't need to go through this alone. Without my parents' support, I never would have gotten through this.

And always remember this: In those moments when you feel that there is no hope, remember that I have had those moments, too. And so has every other person who has been bullied. But we have the power to move past our difficulties. We have the ability to change our lives. I have done it and I know that you can, too.

FLARE

June 2015

Teen Author Aija Mayrock On Surviving Bullying

FLARE chatted with teen author (and future multi-hyphenate) Aija Mayrock about giving a voice to the voiceless through her new book *The Survival Guide to Bullying*



If you're feeling like an underachiever, don't Google 19-year-old Aija Mayrock. Already an accomplished actress, author, and writer, she wrote her first screenplay at 15 (which won the Santa Barbara International Film Festival 10-10-10 award), began writing a book on bullying when she was just 16, and self-published it as an e-book it last October.

<http://www.flare.com/culture/teen-author-aija-mayrock-on-surviving-bullying/>

She was also bullied mercilessly for much of her childhood and adolescence. While the years leading up to her early successes were characterized by painful bullying that left her feeling isolated and self-conscious, it was that experience that propelled Mayrock forward creatively. Her book, *The Survival Guide to Bullying*, available June 30, is a roadmap for kids on how to overcome bullying, complete with specific instructions (e.g. when to “go dark” on social media and a step-by-step guide on how to tell your parents you’re being bullied). We talked to Aija about finding solace in roems (that’s rap + poems), forgiving her bullies and writing the book she never had, but always needed.

You started writing your book when you were only 16. Did you start out with a plan and how did it evolve as the book progressed?

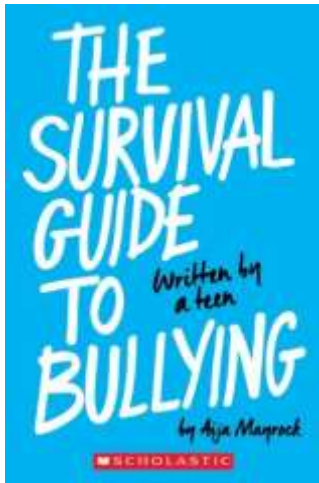
I didn’t start out with a plan. I was actually having a bad case of writer’s block and I started the book by writing the roems, or rap poems, because I couldn’t really write and I was listening to a lot of rap music at the time and the rap poems really flow very easily. And then I thought, OK, I have to be able to write something that’s a little more valuable than just these roems so I decided to create the book that I never had but always needed about bullying—something that you could kind of hold in your back pocket and use whenever you were confused or desperate.

Speaking of the roems, can you explain what a roem is and tell us if writing them is still a part of your process?

So the roems are rap poems that started because I was actually really inspired by Eminem, and the rhythm and the cadence of his music; I wanted to write something that was kid-friendly but also very cool, that could talk about bullying and would have a really nice arc of going from more nitty-gritty bullying to a really nice positive light, which I think resembles the arc of kids’ lives who survive bullying—from moments that are harder to a life that is great and positive. I do still write roems; I write them about all sorts of issues and but I just write them whenever they come to me.

In the first chapter of your book, you mention that there's a huge number of celebrities that have been bullied and that researching how many well-known, successful people were bullied when they were younger gave you some comfort when you were going through it. Where there any particular celebrities whose experience with bullying helped you?

That really did help me because when I was younger and I would hear about the celebrities that had been bullied, I would think *Wow, well, maybe there's nothing really wrong with me because these people are beautiful and successful and inspirational and they too went through what I'm going through.* Demi Lovato was a big one. Angelina Jolie, even though she's not exactly near my age, I really admire her as an actress and a spokesperson so her story of not fitting in and being bullied really inspired me as well.



You repeat the advice of not bullying yourself quite a bit in the book, which I think applies to people of all ages. What advice do you have for a person, regardless of their age, who struggles with self-criticism?

That is something that every human being struggles with. I still struggle with it sometimes. I read a quote the other day that I love and I think this applies. It says “We were born to be real, not to be perfect” and I think that’s something really important to remember. We, as human beings, are imperfect, and that’s totally fine and we need to embrace our imperfections. It is terrible to compare yourself to a model or celebrity and think that you have to look like that person or be as successful as that person. So I think it’s important to remember that you are a beautiful imperfect, perfect person and to embrace that and to know that it’s OK to not be as beautiful or as skinny as a model. There’s nothing wrong with that and I think that would be probably my biggest advice.

Can you talk a little bit about the experience of being bullied by a teacher? I can only imagine how difficult that would be.

Yes, that was really difficult because I had a lisp when I was younger and so I was bullied by a teacher about it. It was really scary because then I couldn’t participate in class. I felt like there was no one I could go to and no one I could trust. Why would a teacher, who I thought would be my safety net, come after me and bully me? But when I was 16, I met a teacher who actually changed my life and her quote is at the beginning of my book in the first chapter, and it says “It’s never your fault that you’re being bullied” so that was a very important experience for me because I realized there are incredible teachers out there, there are teachers who save kids’ lives, change kids’ lives.

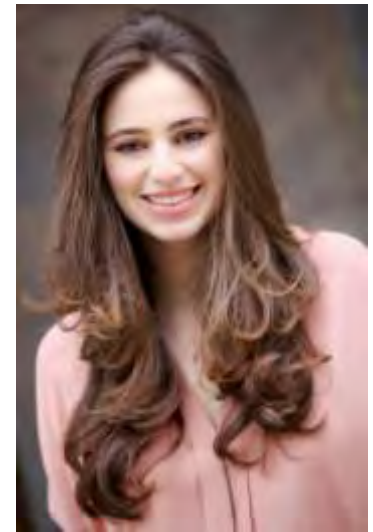
How would you train or advise teachers, parents, and adults on helping kids who are being bullied?

I think that there's a common misconception that bullying is a normal part of growing up, *Kids will be kids*, and that's a really big problem. It used to be where kids would go to school and be bullied but then they could go home and be safe, and now it's 24/7 with the Internet and with cellphones. I have a list at the beginning of my book which identifies the three categories of bullying...bullying doesn't just mean that you're beaten up.

I always tell kids this: if you think you're getting bullied, you probably are. It's OK to look at a list and make sure that it's really happening, but I think it's important for kids to trust their gut. I would love for parents, teachers and adults to really be open to this broad term of bullying and really be supportive of kids that might be going through it, because it's hard to know the emotional inner life of kids dealing with it.

You make a point about forgiveness in the final chapter of the book, saying that choosing to forgive one of your former bullies was for you and not for them. How did forgiving this person help you move forward?

At that point in time, I think I was still very stuck in the bullying. I had tried to move past it—and I was moving past it—but seeing this person, I was very afraid and I was suddenly very self-conscious. It was like I catapulted back in time to when I was bullied. Choosing to forgive, for me, was very, very freeing and I was think I was sort of able to leave the bullying for good. I wasn't afraid to go out in public anymore or see my bullies because I realized in that moment that I was strong enough.

**You recommend in your book to do at least one thing every day that makes your heart smile. What are some things that made your heart smile when you were being bullied?**

I acted in a lot of theatre, which was my happy place. I would do things, but not every single day, and I noticed that in those moments when I did those things that made my heart smile, I was my happiest, I felt my strongest and like, *I can get through this*.

AOL BUILD

July 2015



Aija Mayrock discusses 'The Survival Guide to Bullying'

After suffering years of bullying, Aija Mayrock fought back through creativity. At 14 years old, she wrote and directed a short film about bullying that won a Santa Barbara 10-10-10 award, and at 18 years old, she self-published "The Survival Guide to Bullying," to help others overcome abuse. A newly updated edition of the book hits shelves this week.

<http://features.aol.com/video/watch-live-aija-mayrock-discusses-survival-guide-bullying>

CAMBIO

July 2015

Aija Mayrock is Here to Put an End to Bullying



Aija Mayrock is not your typical college student.

After being personally victimized for about 8 years and hearing of a teen's suicide due to bullying, Aija was 16 when she decided to take action. She wrote and self-published a book titled *The Survival Guide to Bullying*. Now the 19-year-old's not-so-little book has been published by Scholastic and together they are setting out to help kids around the world and to erase the stigma attached to being bullied.

<http://www.cambio.com/2015/07/09/Aija-Mayrock-End-Bullying/>

C: What is like being the voice of a generation on such a sensitive topic?

AM: "I don't feel like I'm the voice of my generation! I think that it is tricky for such a sensitive issue. But, I feel really lucky that I'm able to have this book out because every day when I get messages from kids, it really makes me realize how important this issue is and that no matter what really difficult times I've been through, I'm lucky to have gotten through it and to have this book to help these kids."

C: What's the biggest upside of your whole journey- from being bullied, to writing a book, to being published?

AM: "I would say the two best things would be first, the strength that I feel from all of this. I know that I've gone through something really hard...and that I made something positive from a negative. The second thing is hearing from these kids all over the world. It is the craziest, most unexpected and wonderful thing."

C: Has social media played a role in all of this? If so, how?

AM: "It's been huge. Without social media I wouldn't be able to talk to these kids. One girl commented this morning that my story made her realize that she can survive and that she's really not alone. She said, "Thank God there's another girl out there like me!" I said, "Yes, I'm here and there's 13 million in America, you are so not alone!" So I think social media has been the most incredible platform for all of that."

C: Were you always so optimistic, even in high school when you were going through your darkest days?

AM: "Well, I started off like this. In third grade I was so optimistic and fun, and as I started getting bullied, I actually kind of stopped talking. I thought maybe if I was invisible, no one would bother me. But I was very lucky because I won a film festival competition and redeveloped that confidence. And, to be honest, it's something I struggle with every day. I'm not always confident and sometimes I feel really, really insecure. But, I have gotten to a point where I can get through those difficult moments."

C: What piece of advice would you give young girls that might be going through something similar to what you went through, but don't feel like they have somebody to talk to?

AM: "I would say, you need to become your own superhero and take charge of your life. I understand what it's like to feel like there's no one there. I thought my parents would never understand, but years later when I talk about it with them, I realize that they did understand and that I made such a big mistake by not telling them. I wasted so many years being so upset and so hopeless, when I had 2 people right there. And for girls who don't have parents or people that they can trust, I guarantee that there's one person in their life- it could be on the outskirts, it could be a soccer coach- but there is one person and you need to keep trying to find that person."

C: What's your number one goal for all of this?

AM: "I want to get this book in kids' hands, and give a voice to the voiceless. I want all of these kids in the world to know that the bullying is here and now but it doesn't exist in their future, and they don't have to go through it alone. There's a little bit of a stigma against bullying, like there must be something wrong with you if you're bullied. I want to completely destroy that stigma because there is nothing wrong with anyone..."

C: [#BUILTBYGIRLS](#) is all about encouraging young women that they can be whatever they want to be and build whatever they want to build. You're obviously very successful at a young age, what's the one piece of advice you would give a girl your age trying to follow her dreams?

AM: "I spent a lot of years being told I would never be successful, I would never get into college, I would never have a book- all the nevers. I want to tell all of these girls to never believe the nevers, never take no for an answer! Turn around and show everyone what you can do and what you can achieve. Anything is possible if you work at it!"

MOMENTS

June 2015





AIJA MAYROCK

*Story and photos by Paula Arango
Hair and makeup by Jessi Butterfield*



"I WANT TO BE A WRITER AND ACTRESS THAT GIVES VOICE TO THE VOICELESS THROUGH MY ART."

IT IS A WARM SPRING DAY AT THE HIGHLINE in New York City when I meet up with Aja Mayrock. She is chatting with confidence, standing tall with platform shoes, and enthusiastic about starting our interview and photoshoot. With such a sweet disposition, it's baffling how she was once a target of bullying for much of her childhood and adolescence. Luckily for her, she found a healthy and productive outlet for channel that negative energy by writing about her experiences. This led her to become an anti-bullying activist, actress, screenwriter, and writer.

Her writing career and activism began when she was only 14 after entering a competition for student filmmakers and screenwriters. This was when she realized she could successfully raise awareness about the issue through her passion for writing. At the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, she accepted an award for screenwriting through the "10-10-10 Student Screenwriting and Filmmaking Competition." It was a really pivotal moment for me because I don't know if I believed in myself before that moment.

Now a screenwriter, she has inked a deal with Scholastic. On June 30, the California native and current NYU student will have her original self-published novel, *The Secret Guide to Bullying: Phrases for a Kid for a Kid*, republished under Scholastic.

Aja knows first-hand the thoughts that run through a kid's mind when being bullied. She grew up without having a support guide to reference during those tough times, which is what inspired her to write the book. "I thought that there was something wrong

with me and that it was my fault (I was being bullied) because I couldn't understand why exactly," she says. "The first chapter of the book is 'Why Me?' Why is this being targeted towards me? Through writing the book, I was able to heal myself and really answer so many of the unanswered questions I had."

Bullying has been a hot topic in the last several years, with many organizations and public figures raising awareness about the issue—especially with the transition from bullying on the playground to cyber-bullying. Before kids usually lived on social media and cell phones, society associated bullying with kids being stuffed in lockers or their lunch money being stolen. Now in the digital age, bullying for kids is more and can happen anytime on various platforms. Even for Aja, sometimes it was hard to realize it was happening. "I knew something was wrong and I knew I didn't deserve to be treated that way. And I didn't know what to call it. When people said bullying I was like, 'Oh, that's not happening to me.' I think that's something that's really important is to realize that bullying is such a broad spectrum."

The Secret Guide to Bullying takes on a refreshing perspective coming from a young person who has recently experienced it. Kids and teens may be scared to approach an adult when they're being bullied, but now they can reference the book and find it relatable.

Aja hopes to inspire kids to achieve their dreams, despite their struggle with bullying. After all, she is living proof. "I hope my audience can understand that bullying doesn't define them, that they can go on to

achieve their dreams and have the life they dreamed of, that their past of being bullied doesn't have to affect their future."

Aija has already received responses from readers across the globe on social media, email, and in person. She finds this the most rewarding part of her writing career. "I got an email yesterday from a girl in Germany. It makes me feel like all the years I spent being bullied and writing this book and not really sure where I was going... it makes me feel like I did the right thing," she says.

"When I go to events, I get approached by girls and boys who are so open and honest with me, which I think is so brave because I never would have been able to do that." Aija went on to explain how she recently participated in an event for *Girls' Life Magazine* where a girl approached her in tears. After hearing Aija's story, the girl realized she had the ability to overcome her struggles with bullying and look forward to a bright future. "I almost started crying because I can't believe that I can actually help someone with my story," she says.

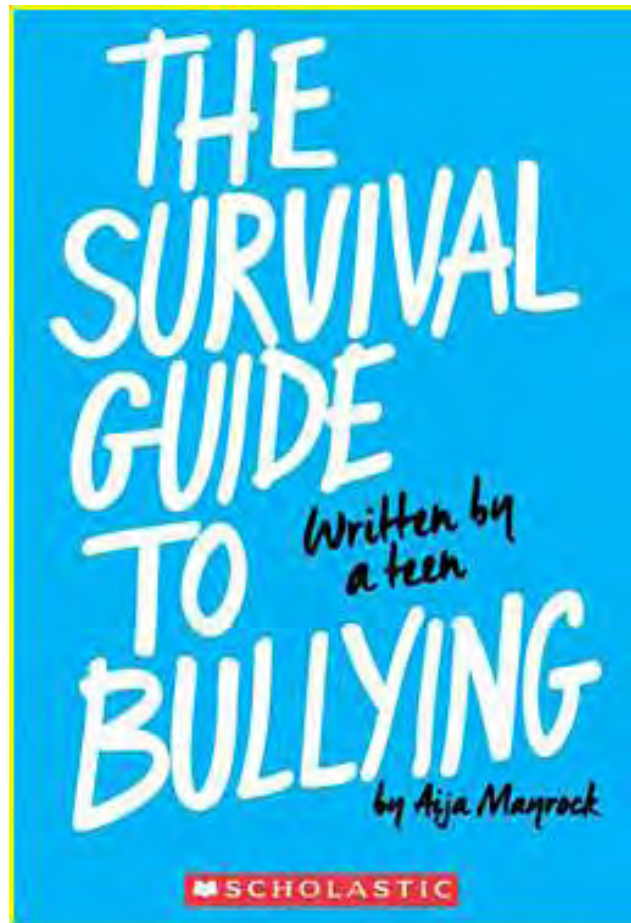
Aija is currently working on her next book as well as some digital projects. Whether she's writing or acting, her goal is to use her talents to make a difference. "I want to be able to be a writer and actress that gives voice to the voiceless through my art."



JUST JARED JR.

July 2015

JJJ Book Club: Aija Mayrock's 'The Survival Guide to Bullying'



The [JJJ Book Club](#) wants to recommend Aija Mayrock's new book "*The Survival Guide to Bullying*"!

The 19-year-old author started writing in 2012 when she was sixteen years old after moving across the country with her family, having been tormented by constant bullying for many years, beginning in the 3rd grade.

In the midst of these very difficult times, Aija discovered her creativity and passion. She promised herself that she would publish this book as her gift to the next generation of kids who will be bullied.

The book offers a fresh and relatable perspective on bullying, offering guidance as well as different strategies that helped her survive even the toughest of days. "The Survival Guide to Bullying" is now on shelves! Pick up your copy!

GLITTER

April 2015

Interview with Aija Mayrock



Glitter recently sat down with Aija Mayrock, author of *The Survival Guide to Bullying*, to talk about how the book came about, where you can find her this summer, and how people can rise above their bully. Read on to find out more about this extremely talented author who is helping change lives!

<http://glittermagrocks.com/connect/2015/04/27/interview-with-aija-mayrock/>

GLITTER: Tell us 5 random facts about yourself.

AIJA:

1. My name is inspired by the continent of Asia, just spelled differently.
2. I'm obsessed with the TV show, *Lost*.
3. Before I start writing, I always listen to two Eminem songs to get me pumped up.
4. My book's title was inspired by Nickelodeon's *Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide* and the cover was inspired by *The Fault In Our Stars*.
5. I'm answering these questions while in class at NYU.

GLITTER: Tell us about your journey to becoming a writer.

AIJA: I always used to write in my childhood. But while I was being bullied, I stopped writing. Then, at 14, I moved across the country to California with my family. One day, I passed a poster for the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, on my way to class. It was the day of the deadline and they were advertising a screenwriting competition. I had never written a screenplay before, but I decided to write one and submit it. I ultimately wound up winning the festival and having my film made into a short film. I also got to act in it! After that, I continued to pursue writing, even winning the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. At 17, I started to write my book, *The Survival Guide to Bullying*. This October, I self published it. One month later, Scholastic bought the book and is publishing it this July! Crazy!!!

LITTER: Tell us about your upcoming book. Why did you want to pen it?

AIJA: I was bullied in middle school and for part of high school. I decided that I had to write the book I never had and help the next generation of kids that would be bullied. I hope this book will help kids through the toughest of times and move fourth into the life they dream of having.

GLITTER: Do you think that people can rise above bullying?

AIJA: Of course they can! I did and so many people have. My book gives the tips and tricks to help kids rise above it, build confidence, and accomplish their dreams.

GLITTER: Have you had any fan mail from teens you've helped with your book, *The Survival Guide to Bullying*?

AIJA: Yes! It's so incredible. I get messages almost every day from kids, adults, parents, and teachers. I have gotten messages saying everything from "your book saved my life" to "I now know that I can have the life I dream of having, because of you."

GLITTER: What are you terrified of?

AIJA: Big spiders!!! Especially the ones that jump.

GLITTER: What has been the toughest criticism given to you? What has been the best compliment?

AIJA: When I was in middle school, my classmates often told me that I would be 'nothing' and I was worthless. I actually believed them for a while. It was really hard on me. But that criticism actually gave me tremendous drive. I decided I would accomplish all of my dreams and never stop working towards my goals. As for compliments, every positive message or comment I get from kids at speaking events, online, etc... mean so much to me. When I am upset or stressed, I reread their beautiful comments and it gives me such energy and happiness.

GLITTER: Have you met any of your favorite authors? If so, who?

AIJA: I got to meet Brian Selznick through Scholastic who wrote *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. I love that book and it was so cool to speak to him.

GLITTER: Favorite inspirational quote?

AIJA: Like all of us, sometimes I have doubts of doing things that are different or will make me stand out. So I have this one quote that I constantly remind myself of: “Because in the end they’ll judge me anyway, so whatever.”
–Kid Cudi

GLITTER: What should teens do if they see someone being bullied?

AIJA: 50% of the time, if a bystander intervenes in bullying within the first 10 seconds, the bullying will stop completely. People should DEFINITELY intervene. If they don’t feel safe or comfortable, you can always get a teacher or just go up to the kid being bullied and comfort them. Sometimes the best solution is just showing the kid that is being bullied that they have a friend or someone that cares about them.

GLITTER: Do you have a book tour this summer?

AIJA: I will be speaking at tons of events in the summer and also the fall, as school will be back in session. If you want me to come to your school, community, etc... you can always email me at aijamayrock@gmail.com !

GLITTER: How do you inspire others?

AIJA: I hope I inspired others. My hope is that my story and my book will help kids realize that they can survive bullying and pursue their wildest dreams.

GLITTER: What do you call your fans? How can they follow you?

AIJA: I don’t have a name. I feel like they are all my friends, from all over the world!
On Instagram and Twitter, they can follow me at: aijamayrock
Facebook: [facebook.com/aijamayrock1](https://www.facebook.com/aijamayrock1)

I love to connect with my fans and I try to always respond to messages and interact with them!!

SANTA BARBARA INDEPENDENT

July 2015

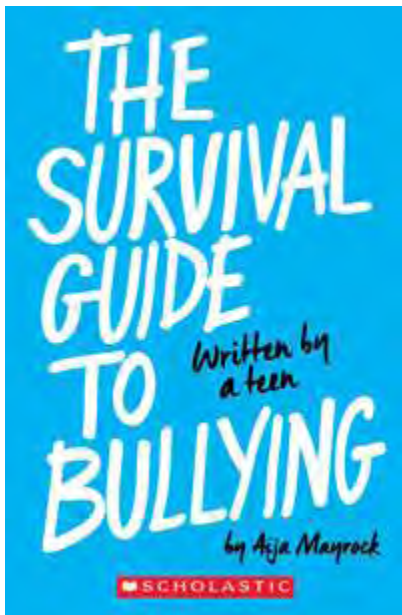
Aija Mayrock Beats the Bullies **Young Author Pens *The Survival Guide to Bullying***



The old saying “The pen is mightier than the sword” is an adage to which Aija Mayrock, the 19-year-old author of *The Survival Guide to Bullying*, can certainly attest.

Before penning her guide, which is being published this week by Scholastic, the young author moved to Santa Barbara from New York when she was 14. During her middle and high school years, she was a victim of bullying in both places.

<http://www.independent.com/news/2015/jul/01/aija-mayrock-beats-bullies/>



“I was bullied verbally as well as cyberbullied,” said Mayrock. “I would sit at the table and write stories, and I was different from everyone else and I think that people are afraid of what they don’t understand.”

In 2011, Mayrock entered the Santa Barbara International Film Festival’s 10-10-10 youth filmmaking content by writing her first screenplay. The screenplay, which highlighted the effects of bullying, launched Mayrock into what would become a turning point in her young life.

“I needed to find something to put my time into...to find a purpose,” explained Mayrock, who decided to “give a voice to the voiceless” through her creativity. “That was a really pivotal moment in my life because I realized I could tell stories and help people with those stories,” she said. “When I decided to write the screenplay, I wanted to find a way to help kids.”

At age 16, Mayrock channeled her experiences and began writing the *The Survival Guide to Bullying* in the hope of helping future students who might face the same struggles. Mayrock initially self-published her survival guide as an e-book priced at \$4.99 so that virtually any kid could afford it. But a story about **Mayrock’s** accomplishment featured in *Publisher’s Weekly* soon caught the eye of Scholastic book publishers who wished to publish **Mayrock’s** survival guide. “It was my dream to work with [Scholastic],” Mayrock said. “I’d grown up reading their books. I knew it was the perfect home for my book.”

This isn’t Mayrock’s first success with Scholastic: she was also recognized for her talent in poetry writing and received Scholastic’s Art and Writing Award in 2013. She credits Scholastic for helping her use her creative talents to make a difference for youth. “Anyone could be bullied for anything,” Mayrock said. “I want kids to know it is never their fault for being **bullied.**”

The young author also encourages readers to turn to trusted adults when it comes to confronting bullies. **“The number one thing I say is you can’t go through [bullying] alone,”** Mayrock said. **“The emotional effects of being bullied can haunt kids and go with them for the rest of their lives.**

“Whenever I see kids, I talk about my story,” she continued. **“There’s a really crazy statistic out there [that says] that 50 percent of the time if someone interferes in a bullying situation, that person will never be bullied again. I always encourage kids to never be a bystander, and if they’re too afraid to intervene it’s okay. I tell them, ‘You have to get a teacher and tell them to intervene’.”**

According to Mayrock, approximately 13 million kids in the United States are bullied each day. It is her goal not to ever be a bystander, nor let other young people become bystanders, either.

“The most incredible thing that has come from this book is that I’ve been getting messages from kids all over the world saying, ‘Thank you for writing this book; it’s showing me that I can be strong and that I can survive’,” Mayrock said.

The nine-chapter book is relatively small-sized, which Mayrock said enables readers to carry the book with them anywhere, whether at school, at home, or hiding away from the bullies. The survival guide also includes short **quizzes, survival tips, reflection questions and “rap poems,”** which helped Mayrock cope with bullying. **“I perform these everywhere and kids love them because it reminds them of rap,”** Mayrock said, citing Eminem as an inspiration for her poems.

Now a freshman at **NYU’s** Tisch School for the Arts, Mayrock is studying film and television production and hopes to continue writing and eventually become an actress and possibly a filmmaker after college. As someone who has found her purpose so early in her life, Mayrock gave the following advice to other young people hoping to make a **difference: “One thing I would say is don’t be afraid to create your own path. I went the self-publishing route which is really, really rare. I would say don’t be afraid to take chances and create your own path to get where you really want to go.”**

ADWEEK

February 2015

Aija Mayrock Inks Deal With Scholastic



Aija Mayrock has landed a deal with Scholastic to publish a revised edition of *The Survival Guide to Bullying: written by a kid for a kid*. Mayrock (pictured, via) had originally self-published the title as an eBook back in September 2014. The newly revised book will come out in digital and paperback formats in July 2015. A hardcover library edition will be released in September 2015.

Here's more from the press release: "Written by a teenager who was bullied throughout middle school and high school, *The Survival Guide to Bullying* offers a fresh and relatable perspective on bullying.

Along the way, author Aija Mayrock offers guidance as well as different strategies that helped her survive even the toughest of days. *The Survival Guide to Bullying* covers everything from cyber bullying to how to deal with fear and how to attain the self-confidence to achieve the life the reader dreams of having—from inspiring "roems" (rap poems), survival tips, personal stories, and quick quizzes. The updated Scholastic edition also features new, never-before-seen content, including an epilogue and an exclusive Q&A with the author."

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

June 2015

Teen's Self-Published Book on Bullying Picked Up by Scholastic

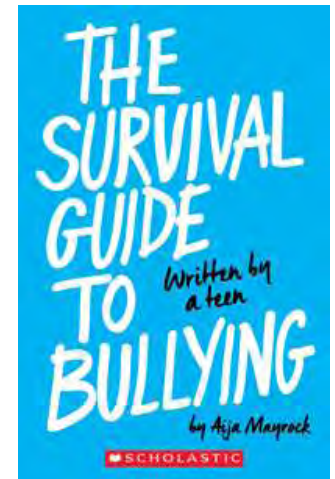
Last November, self-published author Aija Mayrock was driving to a meeting in Los Angeles when her mother called. “My mom had just gotten off the phone with my agent and said, ‘Scholastic is going to publish your book!’” Mayrock recalls. “I slammed on the brakes in the middle of L.A. and was in shock. It didn’t sink in until that evening. I remember driving around L.A., blasting Eminem’s album ‘Not Afraid.’ It was a great day.”

Mayrock’s path to publishing wasn’t what most would call normal. Just a month earlier, the 19-year-old had self-published *The Survival Guide to Bullying* as an ebook to coincide with National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month. “I didn’t want to wait the minimum 18 months for a publisher to publish my book. I felt that it was very important for kids to have this book as soon as possible, so I decided to self-publish,” she told *PW* last November.

What Mayrock didn’t know at the time was that *The Survival Guide to Bullying*, filled with “roems” (rap poems), quizzes, and strategies on how to combat common teenage stressors like anxiety and cyber-bullying, would not only attract the attention of kids across America, but of publishers as well.

Fateful Phone Call

In the weeks prior to and following National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month, much change was taking place in Mayrock’s life. She moved to New York City in fall 2014 to attend New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, to study film and TV production. In her off time, she did [the occasional media interview](#) and visited schools and libraries to promote *The Survival Guide to Bullying*. And she picked up an agent – Jay Kramer – just in case a publisher might be interested.



Mayrock also took a shot in the dark and did something bold. According to Samantha Schutz, associate publisher, nonfiction and licensing at Scholastic, Mayrock pitched her book in an email directly to Ellie Berger, Scholastic's president of trade publishing. The tactic worked. "We saw the article about her in *PW* and that [Aija] was already getting so much press on her own, so we downloaded the book," Schutz says. "We were just so incredibly impressed by her. Yes, her book was self-published. That being said, [we thought] it was really well done. It very much felt like it was from a kid, but had polish to it and was relatable."

By Thanksgiving, Mayrock had inked a deal with Scholastic. "I knew I wanted to sign with [them] because I was so proud to have won [a Silver Key] in Scholastic's Art and Writing Awards just a year and a half before," she says. "I couldn't believe it! My dreams came true when [I found out] Scholastic was interested."

What's New

On June 30, Scholastic will publish a revised ebook, and a paperback version of Mayrock's original ebook, newly vetted by Deborah Temkin, an expert in the field of bullying; a hardcover library edition will follow in September. They contain most of the original roems and anti-bullying quotes like "Do NOT let being bullied define your success in school." They also include new elements, such as an epilogue, a Q&A containing answers to some of the frequently asked questions Aija has encountered during visits to schools and libraries, and a chapter entitled "Getting Help: Becoming Your Own Superhero" that explains why talking to teachers or parents about bullying is a crucial step, and provides realistic tips on when and how to do so.

Schutz explains, "[Aija's] self-published book was really amazing and she did have it vetted [by psychotherapist Myrna Fleishman, Human Rights Watch West founder Dr. Victoria Riskin, and director of teen program AHA! Dr. Jennifer Freed]. But I felt one big piece that was missing was more of a parental involvement, and really urging kids to start by speaking to their parents. If a kid doesn't know what to say or how to say it, [Aija's] really giving them some options now."

LADY GUNS

July 2015

AIJA MAYROCK

NEW YORK | NEW YORK



Author & Student

"I'm a freshman at NYU Tisch, but I'm also an author!"

WHAT SHE DOES FOR LOVE: "I love what I do as a writer and activist. So it's not a job for me. I love to speak to kids/teens, write, act, adventure, travel - the list is endless!"

HER STYLE: "I love shoes that give me height, because being tall makes me feel confident. I just got these Vagabond shoes from Urban Outfitters and I am in love with them. I wear them every day."

HER 2015 GOAL: "I want to help as many kids and teens as possible with my book *The Survival Guide to Bullying*."

A LADY SHE ADMIRES: "My mom."

HER INITIAL REACTION TO HER LADY GUNS NOMINATION: "WOAH! This is SO COOL!"

ON CHALLENGES: "I was bullied in middle school and high school. I was told that I was worthless and so I felt worthless. But being bullied was actually a gift, in a very ugly disguise. Through bullying, I have found my passion in life as a writer and an activist. I have created a book to help kids and teens through their darkest moments too: *The Survival Guide to Bullying*."

THE TIMES HERALD

July 2015

Books to Buy

“**The Survival Guide to Bullying**” by Aija Mayrock, Scholastic, 153 pages, \$9.99 paperback

•**Read aloud:** Age 10 and older.

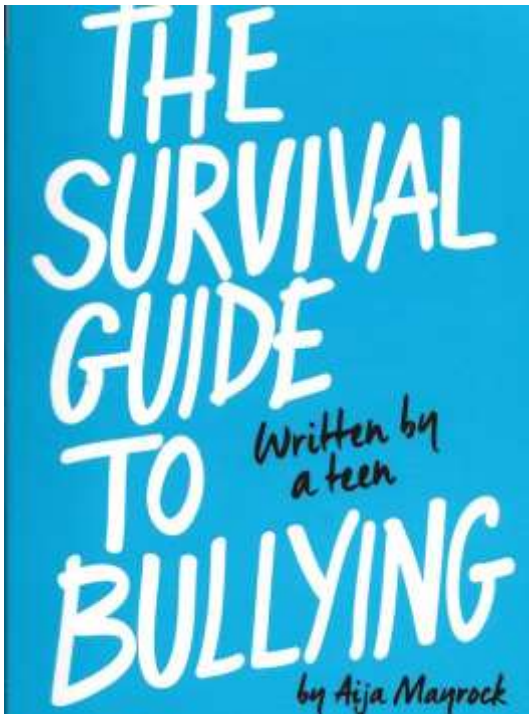
•**Read yourself:** Age 10 and older.

Written by a teenager who was the victim of bullying for many years, this well written, powerfully important book should be required reading.

An honest look at bullying, the emotions that the bullied person feels, and how to survive and ultimately thrive, a great deal is gained from what author Aija Mayrock writes.

“I know what it’s like to be hated for no reason, to be isolated with no explanation, and to feel alone with no end in sight... But I will not dwell too much on what knocked me down, because what knocked me down is not as important as what made me stand up.”

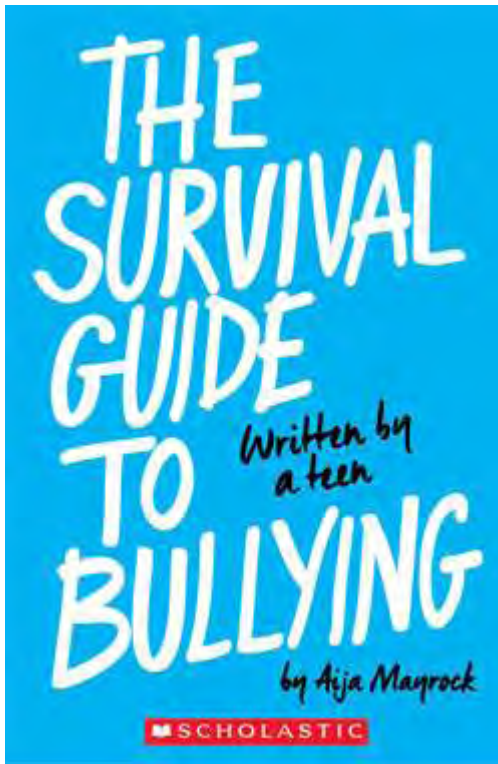
Full of a positive spirit, encouragement, and solid strategies, “The Survival Guide to Bullying” is first-rate.



BOOK TRIB

July 2015

The Survival Guide to Bullying: Written by a Teen



Aija Mayrock began writing *The Survival Guide to Bullying* when she was only sixteen, envisioning the book as her gift to the next generation of bullied kids. Initially self-published as an ebook, *The Survival Guide to Bullying* touches on a variety of hard issues from cyber-bullying to dealing with extreme anxiety. Aija’s words are comforting as well as inspiring— she sadly knows about bullying from her own painful personal experiences in middle and high school. Aija faced merciless insults and isolation at the hands of her peers but came out of “The Dark Tunnel” a stronger person, ready to help those around her in similarly bad situations.

Throughout *The Survival Guide to Bullying*, Aija offers accessible guidance for kids and their caregivers in the form of survival tips, daily strategies, and quizzes. The updated Scholastic edition also features new, never-before-seen content, including an epilogue and an exclusive Q&A with the author. Readers will identify with Aija and be inspired to use their own creativity to face down their fears and honor their real selves, much like Aija wrote powerful rap poems she calls “roems”, ten of which are included in the book.

The Survival Guide to Bullying offers a heart-wrenching but hopeful perspective on the tough topic of bullying that causes so much pain for so many tweens and teens.

PILLOW TALK / SNAPCHAT

June 2015



<https://www.facebook.com/AijaMayrock/videos/vb.798059186911701/952308618153423/?type=2&theater>

SETH SPEAKS / SIRIUSXM

July 2015



Seth Speaks on Sirius XM

7 hrs · 🌐

#SethSpeaks is on @SXMONBroadway w/ a #Stars4FosterKids recap from @iamrachelcrow + @aijamayrock talks bullying.



PRESS CONTACTS



Lauren Felsenstein
lfelsenstein@id-pr.com
212-774-6162

Matt Haberman
mhaberman@id-pr.com
646-723-3852

Taylor Johnson
tjohnson@id-pr.com
323-822-4813