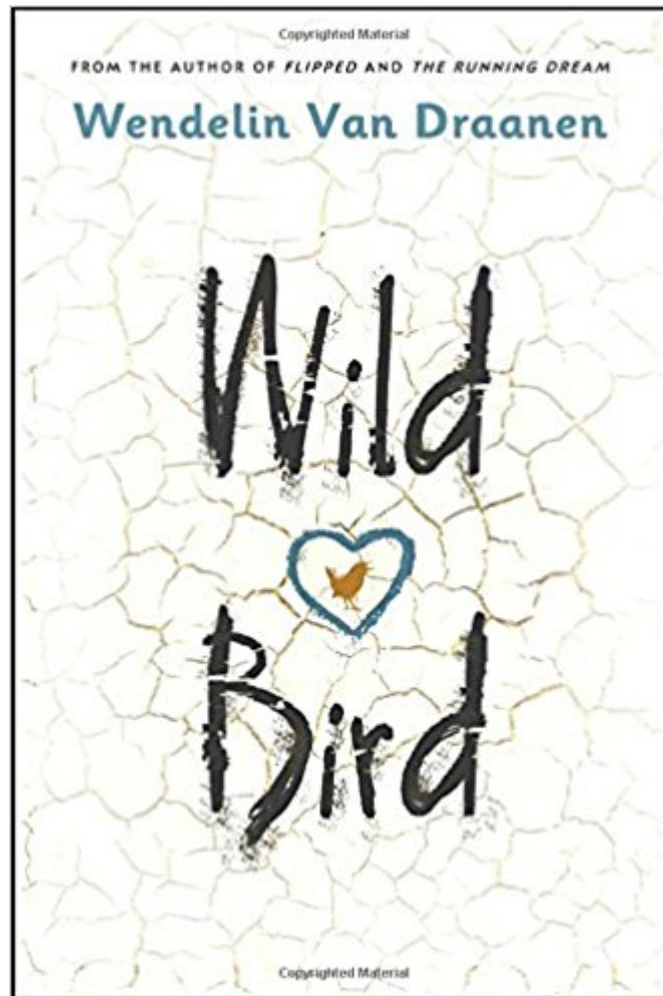




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# Wild Bird



## Synopsis

In her most incisive and insightful book yet, Wendelin Van Draanen, award-winning author of *The Running Dream* and *Flipped*, offers a remarkable portrait of a girl who has hit rock bottom, but begins a climb back to herself at a wilderness survival camp in the desert. 3:47 a.m. That's when they come for Wren Clemmens. She's hustled out of her house and into a waiting car, then a plane, and then taken on a forced march into the desert. This is what happens to kids who've gone so far off the rails, their parents don't know what to do with them anymore. This is wilderness therapy camp. Eight weeks of survivalist camping in the desert. Eight weeks to turn your life around. Yeah, right. The Wren who arrives in the Utah desert is angry and bitter, and blaming everyone but herself. But angry can't put up a tent. And bitter won't start a fire. Wren's going to have to admit she needs help if she's going to survive. Advance praise for *Wild Bird*: "I read *Wild Bird* in one long mesmerized gulp. Wren will break your heart and then mend it." — Nancy Werlin, National Book Award finalist for *The Rules of Survival* Praise for Wendelin van Draanen's *The Running Dream*: "An accessible and inspirational novel." — *The Horn Book Magazine* "Readers will truly feel what it's like to walk (or run) a mile (or 10) in Jessica's shoes." — *Booklist* "Inspirational. The pace of Van Draanen's prose matches Jessica's at her swiftest. Readers will zoom through the book just as Jessica blazes around the track. A lively and lovely story." — *Kirkus Reviews*

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Advance praise for *Wild Bird*: "I read *Wild Bird* in one long mesmerized gulp. Wren will break your heart and then mend it." — Nancy Werlin, National Book Award finalist for *The Rules of Survival* "An exhilarating story of survival and second chances." — Dana Reinhardt, author of *Tell Us Something True* *Wild Bird* grabbed me by the wrist on page one — it's riveting." — Jenny Hubbard, author of *And We Stay*, a Printz Honor Book "This was an absolute one-sit read and I recommend it highly." — Rene Kirkpatrick, University Bookstore, Seattle "Wow! This book is a gem. I could feel the heat, the cold, the fear and frustration at every turn of the page." — Valerie Lewis, Hicklebee's Bookstore

Wendelin Van Draanen is the author of many beloved and award-winning books. For middle graders, she's written *The Secret Life of Lincoln Jones*, *Swear to Howdy*, and the Sammy Keyes mystery series. For teens and tweens, there's *Flipped*, *The Running Dream*, *Confessions of a Serial Kisser*, and *Runaway*. And for younger readers, check out the Shredderman quartet and the Gecko and Sticky series. Wendelin Van Draanen lives in central California with her husband and two sons. Find her on the Web at [WendelinVanDraanen.com](http://WendelinVanDraanen.com) or on Twitter: @WendelinVanD.

It's been a long time since I have felt a sharp disappointment when a book ended - this is such a book. Wren is a very troubled teenager. At 14, she feels like the odd man out in her family. Her older sister Annabelle is the pretty, smart, popular one, and everyone has the expectation that Wren is just like her. While Wren has tried to live up to those expectations, she feels like a fraud, like she isn't good enough. One day she meets Meadow, who likes Wren for Wren. Then Wren meets Nico, and her downward spiral begins. Things bottom out when Wren is awakened in the middle of the night by the police, who take Wren to the middle of nowhere in order for eight weeks of 'wilderness therapy'. Wren needs to make a choice, but is she strong enough to make the right one? I am a HUGE fan of this book. Actually, I would love to be able to attend a program like Wren does to see what kind of person I would come out as on the other side. Wren is a very relatable character, which is a good and bad thing. Ms. Van Draanen has done a wonderful job of creating Wren, her family and their dynamic, and situation. It's also unfortunate that the situation Wren is in IS so relatable. Though it's been awhile since I was Wren's age, I can vividly remember having the

same feelings of loneliness after moving to a new school, the same feelings of not living up to expectations, the same feelings of not being understood or listened to by my parents. Making the right choices were not always easy back then, and with social media in the mix and no real escape from peer pressure, it's scarily easy to see how a girl like Wren could make one wrong choice that snowballs. My only complaint with this book (other than being too short) is the use of the word "tweak". Wren doesn't get angry or upset or mad, she gets "tweaked". This word is way, way, way overused. My niece and nephew (who read this book as well) said neither they nor their friends would use tweak like this.

The character development of the main character is quite in depth and realistic. Through lashing flames of anger to pure, rich malevolence, I saw myself in this character from beginning to end. While more of a drama than a suspense, the story contains pleasant surprises and thought provoking messages. It makes us look deeper into ourselves and other people. The plot contained conflict, buildup, and release, and has dramatic adventure. Most of all, this book is an emotional journey. At times, it metaphorically represents the wilderness of our complex lives with the elegance of the actual wilderness in the desert of Utah. After reading this book, I felt as though I went on this adventure with Wren, and it shall be one I never cease to remember.

What do you do when you have a child so out of control with drugs, alcohol, and whatever psychological issues are pushing them to the brink? You provide whatever kind of help and resources you can, therapists, family discussions, intervention of some kind. On a day at 3:47 am we meet Wren Clemmons, 14 years old, as she is awakened and transported to the wild deserts of Utah. She is told nothing, suffering from a hangover, Wren tries to acclimate herself. Her handlers or jailers as she calls them are with her on the plane, and car ride to the check in spot, and then the long walk to the campsite. She has no personal belongings, clothes provided for her, camping gear, and food. This is the start of an eight week wilderness camp therapy. Anger, hostile, bitter are the emotions for the first days, and then the real work begins. We are with Wren as she faces her demons and meets her new 'family'. This is a story that is difficult to give up. I read it in a day with one time out. The story draws us in until we are with Wren, sharing her dilemmas as the real world reaches within. Wren against the wilderness, who will be the winner? Such superb writing. The characters are all upfront, drawn out clearly. How would I survive this wilderness therapy, I wonder? What are the consequences of not recognizing and reacting to yourself? Highly Recommended.

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this is a wonderful book about a troubled teen's transformation after being sent to a wilderness camp. Wren is on a downward spiral, hanging with a bad crowd, smoking pot, stealing and failing in school. She has one dubious friend and her homelife is fractious. In desperation her parents send her to a wilderness program. The harsh conditions will either make her or break her or maybe both. This is an excellent book. The voice is authentic without a single false note. At times humorous it is a readable tale about one young woman's fight to find her authentic self. Tweens and teens will relate to Wren's challenges at home and at school. entertaining, uplifting and inspiring.

I love Wendelin Van Draanen's work and this novel does not disappoint. Wren is a girl that many teen readers will be able to identify with. After moving, she is left feeling as though she doesn't fit in. Having a pretty and popular older sister doesn't help things, either. After falling in with the wrong people, using drugs and alcohol, and resisting any counseling or help her parents can provide, Wren's parents send her away to a program in the wilderness that will provide Wren with the help she desperately needs. Part of this novel is focused on Wren and the physical challenges she faces in this wilderness therapy program, while part of it focuses on the ways Wren must come to terms with the decisions she has made and really look within herself. This isn't an easy journey for Wren, and Van Draanen's development of Wren's character and her family is very realistic. This is another great novel by a great writer.

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