

MAKAILA
NICHOLS

BLATANTLY HONEST

NORMAL TEEN
ABNORMAL LIFE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TODAY'S YOUTH PRESSURED TO GROW UP BEFORE THEY ARE READY

Teen Gives Blatantly Honest Advice to Peers About Friends, Dating, Sex and Bullying

DALLAS, TEXAS — Everyone has their idea of the hardest job in the world — policeman, firefighter, coal miner ... The list is long. Somewhere on that list has to be the job of being a teenager. The social, educational and performance pressures put on teens are enormous. Teen model, actress and author Makaila Nichols knows firsthand about the hardships, anxiety and stress associated with growing up in today's world.

Nichols debut book, *Blatantly Honest: Normal Teen, Abnormal Life* (Brown Books Publishing Group), offers peer-to-peer inspiration and advice on everything she has experienced in her young life — from failed relationships to endless bullying.

“I wanted to turn my experiences and difficulties into a platform that could truly reach and help others my age,” says Nichols. “I hope the book sparks *real* conversation. Teenagers should talk about their problems to others and be able to make a change in their lives.”

Nichols started her modeling career at age fourteen, when she was discovered by a modeling scout at a mall in Orlando, Florida. Since then, she has juggled school, modeling, a budding acting career and now her newfound passion for writing. She accomplishes all this while traveling between New York and Los Angeles for work, as well as home to Florida for school and family.

In *Blatantly Honest*, Nichols offers a fresh and honest perspective to the stresses she and other teens face every day.

“I’ve become more honest, and I no longer sugarcoat *anything*,” Nichols says emphatically. “Perhaps I grew up too quickly, but it’s hard for me to grow ‘back down,’ so to speak, although often I wish I could. Ultimately, I think my experience in a high-profile industry (modeling) and my life choices have made me stronger and more confident.”

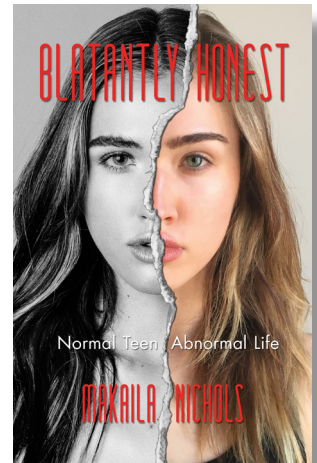
Nichols’ beauty and steadfastness sometimes mask the scars of insecurity and doubt she battles, much of which stem from years of bullying.

“I’ve been bullied for as long as I can remember,” Nichols says. “Whether it was because of my glasses, braces, weight or height or was merely jealousy, bullying has never left me. When I started modeling and had to lose weight, I had food thrown on me, and kids would make fun of my weight and call me disgusting ... as would some of my own teachers. I am still a victim, but I have gained the confidence to stand up for myself.”

Readers of *Blatantly Honest* will turn pages with encouragement from Makaila and can trust in finding words of support from someone their age who has experienced the same challenges readers are facing now.

“I’ve needed and searched for advice I could trust on relationships, sex, bullying and all the challenges people my age face every single day,” Nichols says. “But every book I’ve ever come across was tough for me to relate to. So I wrote *Blatantly Honest* to share my story and give readers and friends empathy, guidance and understanding from someone their age.”

For more information, please visit www.MakailaNichols.com.



The Agency at Brown Books | www.TheAgencyatBB.com
Media Contact: Brian Briscoe | 972-248-9500
brian.briscoe@theagencyatbb.com

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MEET THE AUTHOR

NORMAL TEEN, ABNORMAL LIFE

Though she still claims Buffalo as her hometown, Makaila and her family moved to the Sunshine State when she was four years old. Better known to her many fans and followers as Mak, she spent her childhood climbing trees and playing sports. Modeling was a distant thought for Mak, but that quickly changed when a scout approached her while she was shopping in Orlando.

She began her modeling career at age fourteen after signing with a respected agency, Wilhelmina Models International. Since then, she's juggled her education, modeling, acting and a newfound passion for writing. Mak accomplishes all this while traveling coast-to-coast for work and then home to Florida for school and family.

Currently, Mak is focusing on inspiring, serving and supporting her peers through philanthropic initiatives and the release of her first book, *Blatantly Honest*. Although her life has been anything but ordinary, she faces many of the same challenges as other teens. In her debut title, out October 2016, she hopes to reach other young people by sharing her insights and advice on how to handle common teenage problems such as friends, dating, sex and bullying.

In addition to penning *Blatantly Honest*, Mak maintains a thriving entertainment career, and she's now represented by both a renowned theatrical agency and a high-fashion modeling agency in the Big Apple. Next up, she's taking her dark side to the silver screen with a sinister role in a horror film that is currently in preproduction.

Mak will be attending the University of Central Florida this fall to study business, entrepreneurship and writing, and she'll also continue her work as an actress and model.



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ABOUT THE BOOK

#BEENTHERE: REAL ADVICE FROM A TEEN INSIDE TODAY'S TOUGH SOCIAL CLIMATE

Being a teenager today is one of the hardest jobs in the world. You have grades to maintain, obligations to participate in extracurricular activities, and soul-crushing pressure to excel at everything so colleges will take notice. On top of it all, you're forced to act as your own public relations manager because, thanks to social media, every bit of your life is on display. No one knows that better than teen model, actress and author Makaila Nichols.

Nichols's book, *Blatantly Honest: Normal Teen, Abnormal Life*, is filled with peer-to-peer advice on navigating life as a teen in a world that begs young people to grow up before they are really ready. Unlike books for teens written from an adult's perspective, *Blatantly Honest* offers real, relatable advice based on lessons learned in today's world. After all, adults today have no experience being a teen in a social climate where peers have immediate, constant access to one another. Despite her rising fame, Nichols has struggled through issues with body image, dating disasters, friendship failures and bullying. In this refreshing, open and honest book, Nichols offers hard-earned advice on these tough topics and more.

Features include:

- *Relatable advice from a teen navigating today's tough social climate.*
- *Identification of real issues plaguing teens.*
- *Open and honest storytelling, explaining lessons to be learned.*
- *#BeenThere stories from twenty- and thirty-somethings who have snippets of advice to share.*



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Q&A WITH MAKAILA NICHOLS

What was your inspiration for writing *Blatantly Honest*?

My inspiration was simple. I wanted to turn my experiences and difficulties into a platform that could truly reach and help others. I've needed and searched for advice I could trust on relationships, sex, bullying and all the challenges people my age face every single day. But every book I've ever come across was tough for me to relate to. So I wrote *Blatantly Honest* to share my story and give readers and friends empathy, guidance and understanding from someone their age.

What key message do you hope to convey to readers?

I hope that the book sparks *real* conversation. Teenagers should talk about their problems to others and be able to make changes in their lives or even learn something. It is important for all people — but especially people my age — to realize that they can conquer anything life throws at them, and it is important for those who are not yet teens to know what the next years will encompass. It is my desire to help preteens or teens not to face going blindly through their teenage years and deal with problems they are not familiar with.

Did you learn anything new or surprising about yourself while writing the book?

I realized I liked writing even more than I thought I would. It's become my escape. And now it's given me an incredibly fulfilling opportunity to be of service to others and share a message that can help anyone anywhere find relief and help when they need it.

How have you changed as a result of working in the fashion and entertainment industry?

I've become more honest, and I no longer sugarcoat *anything*. Also, I've been trying to strike a balance between my studies and my career, which means my mind is always occupied with work and focused on the next task. Perhaps I grew up too quickly, but it's hard for me to grow "back down," so to speak, though often I wish I could. Ultimately, I think my experience in a high-profile industry and my life choices have made me stronger and more confident.



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What are the three biggest challenges or pressures people your age face today?

The biggest pressures my peers and I face now are drinking and drugs. Almost every party has some type of alcohol or drugs, and when teens are around an atmosphere like that, the peer pressure to participate becomes overwhelming. As for the biggest challenge, I believe it's body image. If you have one flaw, you're bullied because of it. People are so quick to judge that they condemn you for almost any choice you make or how you look.

How has bullying manifested itself in your life?

I've been bullied for as long as I can remember. Whether it was because of my glasses, braces, weight or height or was merely jealousy, bullying has never left me. I'm still a victim; however, I've gained the confidence to stand up for myself and not take others' words or actions as personally as I once did.

For me, bullying started on the playground when kids would make fun of me for having a geeky appearance or because I was taller than everyone else. As time progressed, their hurtful messages escalated, and the bullying continued because I developed more quickly than other girls. Meanwhile, boys started picking on me because they supposedly had "crushes" on me.

When I started modeling and had to lose weight, I had food thrown on me, and kids would make fun of my weight and call me disgusting ... as would some of my own teachers. As I started booking jobs, things got even worse. Those who I thought were my friends turned their backs on me. They called me an egotistical bitch. I felt utterly alone, and I began to dread social media thanks to constant comments calling my career a "sham" and labeling me a "fake." Some of these taunts came from people I've never met, and it was very tough for me to realize that no matter where I went or what I said in my own defense, it was impossible to escape the anonymous cowards who lurked online.

However, I had a full-circle moment. At my high school prom, I was voted prom queen, and my boyfriend and very best friend, Evan Anderson, was voted prom king. When we danced as king and queen, no one joined in. But it didn't matter, because during the four-minute song, I was on top of the world — and the popular kids were speechless.

Who is your hero and why?

Though there are many, many people I look up to and consider heroes, I believe strongly that people should learn to view themselves as their own hero. We make choices every day that define who we are, and I believe that we're in control of our own lives. So at the end of the day, I try to be wholly authentic, stay the course I've chosen, and be the person I'd like to become.

With that said, however, my parents are definitely my heroes. My dad worked so hard to provide for us as a family, and he's supported me so much throughout my career. And without my mother's help, I don't know if I could've grown into the young woman I am today. I feel strong and confident and grateful to have such caring parents behind me every step of the way.



What words of encouragement would you give the next generation of teens?

Teenage years go by in the blink of an eye. But whether they are the worst years of your life or the best, they will *not* determine you, your path or who you are long term. As a teen, you are only just beginning in the world, and you can become anyone or anything you desire. You just need to believe in yourself. And yes, I need to remind myself of this often!

If you said one blatantly honest thing about yourself, what would it be?

I may seem confident, but deep down, I'm battling my insecurities and doubts every moment of every day. And I have zero idea what I'm doing nearly 100 percent of the time. In many ways, I am still just a kid.

Now that you are a burgeoning author, what is next on your creative horizon?

I'll go wherever this book takes me. I'm committed to sharing my story and encouraging others with my message by any means possible, whether it be another book or even a novel or screenplay. Whatever the opportunity and platform, my desire is to keep on writing!



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UNDER THE COVER

ON BULLYING

What makes one person superior to another? Nothing. We're all equal, yet we choose to tear each other apart. I've been bullied. I'm not asking for your sympathy; I'm just letting those of you who've also been picked on know that I understand. I know how it feels.

"I am glad Makaila doesn't come to school anymore. Life is better with her gone."

"Makaila Nichols is the biggest slut. I bet anyone could get it from her."

"I hope you die alone."

"Who do you think you are?"

These are some of the insults I've recorded from social media. Some of them

were said by close friends, others by people I've never spoken to. Yet all of these words formed a false projection of who I am as a person.

Sometimes, the words will get to you. There was a point in time when I thought to do the worst. I thought that maybe the world would be better with me out of the way. Yet the more I thought about it, the more strength it gave me to push on. Cowards quit. Real courage is gained through withstanding difficulties. We all have families who love us, whether we realize it or not. After all the abuse and cowardly attacks, I found myself becoming a more forgiving person because people deserve second chances. We're all human, and we all make mistakes.

—EXCERPTED FROM CHAPTER 2

ON FRIENDSHIPS

Maybe we don't have enough people in our lives who can be considered "true friends." Why do I say "true friends" instead of "best friends"? I don't believe in the idea of a best friend anymore. The word "best" implies superiority to all others, and in friendships, one should never be above someone else. Thus, this is where the "true friend" can be defined. Location, time, distance, or any other variable you throw at a friendship is weak if there is a real bond between two people. When people say life gets in the way, sometimes it's just because they're not willing to make an effort. You can't leave friendships up to fate. If people want to be in your life—or vice versa—then they'll make the effort, and if they don't, then they're not worth having anyway.



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A true friend can be hard to find, especially as a teenager, when everyone is trying to figure out who they are. And even though you're surrounded by peers all day, you don't have much control over who you come into contact with. You could be friends with Suzi Q, who lives down the road, or maybe with the kid who smiled at you in class when everyone else looked down at their phones. Even though your options are limited, creating and investing in a true friend shouldn't be a random choice—and certainly not someone you'd deem to be your last option.

—EXCERPTED FROM CHAPTER 3

ON EATING DISORDERS

She then pointed to a scale in the restroom and asked me to step on it. I didn't mind. I considered myself skinny. After all, I was an athlete who played volleyball and did track and field. She told me I weighed 137 pounds, which I already knew. . . . She said if I wanted to become a successful high-fashion model, I needed to weigh in at no more than 125 pounds (regardless of my height or muscle mass). Because I was a fourteen-year-old with a dream, I told her I could lose the weight, no problem.

At the time, I thought it'd be easy to lose twelve pounds. I figured that if I didn't eat and worked out all the time, I would drop the weight in no time. Man, was I wrong. I found myself eating at least six times a day, doing two brutal workouts a day, wearing sweat suits, drinking distilled water, and spitting into buckets to lose every ounce of water weight possible. A month later, I was 126 pounds. . . . My skin had also turned a yellowish color, signifying that my body was facing malnutrition. My parents seemed disgusted, but I thought I looked like a million bucks.

After I lost the weight, the agency set up three back-to-back test shoots in Miami. . . . When we wrapped the shoot, the photographer waltzed over and rewarded me with Krispy Kreme doughnuts—a whole box of them.

Doughnuts? It seemed like a contradiction. . . . So, I had two.

Immediately, I regretted it and excused myself to the bathroom. I had to go to the agency after this shoot, so I plunged my fingers down my throat. . . . Tears welled in my eyes, and I felt the mascara trickle down my powder-stained cheeks.

—EXCERPTED FROM CHAPTER 1

TALK TO MAK



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PRAISE FOR BLATANTLY HONEST

“As a father, I see the impact of social media and other influences on my kids’ lives, and it’s not always positive. Makaila Nichols shoots straight about the pressures of growing up in such a highly social climate and offers much-needed advice for other teens.”

—David Boreanaz

actor, director, producer of film and television

“It’s a daring undertaking to be honest about ourselves. Nothing out there is real anymore; every picture gets retouched. Makaila genuinely shares her experiences. It is such a true gift to her peers for them to realize that we all deal with our insecurities.”

—Frederique van der Wal

super model and entrepreneur

“By sharing her story, Makaila is helping other teens know they aren’t out there alone in trying to maneuver through tough situations like bullying. She knows what she stands for and is using her voice to encourage others to do the same. Because real change takes courage!”

—Shawn Edgington

author and founder of The Great American NO BULL Challenge

“Blatantly Honest makes you feel like you’re talking with an older sister or a close friend—but this isn’t your mother’s advice.”

—Anna Caltabiano

teen author and media influencer



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“Growing up in the spotlight, I have always been criticized for my body and held to impossible standards. Bullying comes in all shapes and sizes. You can either let it tear you down or you can use it to motivate yourself toward success. Mak is a great example of being courageous enough to speak up. I think she will leave a lasting impact on the next generation.”

—Sophie Simmons
actress

“Wow! No better person to give teens advice than a teen herself. Makaila is so candid and open about her experiences that everyone her age can relate to her story. But age aside, Makaila’s writing on difficult situations flows quickly and is inspiring. I know that we will be hearing more from her!”

—Jake Marcionette
New York Times best-selling author



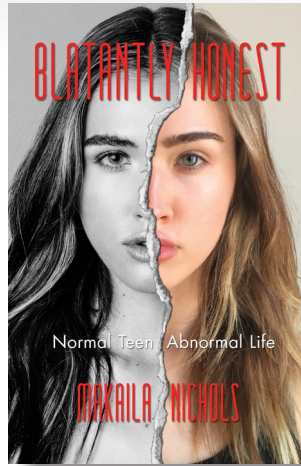
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GENERAL INQUIRIES
 THE AGENCY AT BROWN BOOKS
 THEAGENCYATBB.COM
 16250 Knoll Trail, Suite 100
 Dallas, Texas 75248
 972.248.9500

MARKETING & WHOLESALE
 CATHY WILLIAMS
 972.248.9500 x 744
Cathy.Williams@TheAgencyAtBB.com

MEDIA
 BRIAN BRISCOE
 972.248.9500
Brian.Briscoe@TheAgencyAtBB.com

TALENT REPRESENTATION & MANAGEMENT

To contact the author's modeling and theatrical agencies or talent manager, please visit:

www.MakailaNichols.com



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