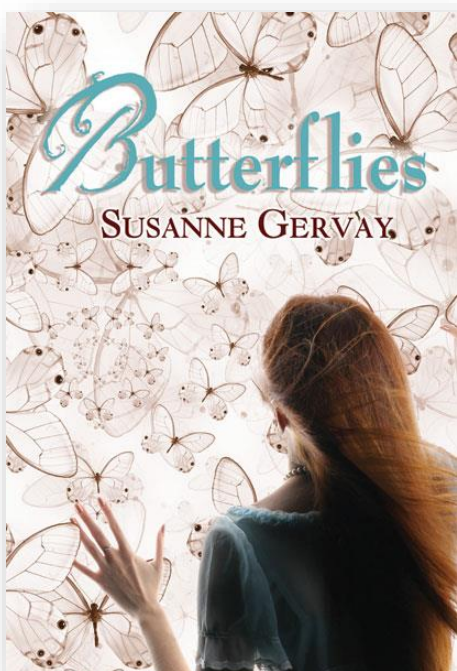


# BUTTERFLIES

Susanne Gervay

Fiction | 978-1-61067-043-2 | Ages 11+ | Paperback | 5 ½ x 8 ¼ | 256 pp | \$4.99 | LOC: 2010941662

Seventeen-year-old Katherine deals with school, friends, and growing up as she copes with the disfiguring burns she suffered as a child. A moving tale of individual strength and family love.



- Honest, sensitive, realistic.
- Uplifting and inspiring; sparks discussion.
- Self-esteem, perseverance and determination.
- IBBY Outstanding Youth Literature on Disability.

for myself, you know?" Rachel pushes away rising resentment. She concentrates on her sister's hair. Carefully cutting each strand, she trims, twirls, styles, before she threads the silk braid into the long braid that hangs over the side of Katherine's face. Rachel glances at the photograph that's been on the mantelpiece for as long as she can remember.

*Katherine is sitting on Santa's lap holding Small Pup, her fluffy toy sheepdog. She's wearing a white cotton dress with chocolate-colored polka dots that match the color of her eyes. There's a cream satin bow in her hair. It hangs over her left ear. On the right side and along the back of her head, there is no hair.*

*In the hospital, her mother had been furious at those other mothers who concealed their children's scars under hot sweaters or huge hats, making the children sticky and afraid. She attacked them. "Those burns are part of your babies. You have to accept the burns if you accept your babies."*

*As if in defiance of those mothers and the people who wanted their children to hide, she insists that Katherine wears a bow in her hair for the Santa photograph. Rachel is wearing a bow too. It's yellow.*

*"But Mama, I've got no hair. Everyone can see, Mama."*

*"Katherine, you cannot hide your scars or you will be hiding always." Mum pulls her cream jacket around her, then bends to kiss her little girl's scarred head and the side of her face without hair. Her voice quivers just a little bit. "I love every part of you. You are beautiful, Katherine. Make sure you smile for the photographer."*

*"I don't want to smile, Mama." Her face scrunches into a frown, and the satin bow wobbles. A big boy stares at her half-bald head, and Katherine dives at him, giving him a huge bite on his arm.*

*"My sister is strong." Rachel giggles, as the boy runs off to tell his mother. The boy's mother looks up to see their mother standing with her arms crossed and Katherine with no hair. She doesn't say anything, and Katherine is smiling when she goes up to Santa.*

Rachel smiles, remembering Katherine taking a chomp out of the boy, and anyone else who stared at her.

"What's so funny? Have you wrecked my hair?"

"Right, as if I would." She points to the photo.

"Katherine, do you remember when that picture was taken?"

"Sure."

"You were really cute. Santa nearly had a heart attack when you asked him for some hair for Christmas." They both laugh – a secret, connected laugh of growing up together. "Santa looked really stupid not knowing what to say. Mum whispered something in his ear, and then he told you that you'd have long hair one day, but not this year." Rachel's fingers tighten around the braid. "You got so angry, you know."

"But I have hair now."

*Fluid pumps under Katherine's scalp, making her head wobble like a freakish growth. And then there's the cutting, the dragging of the stretched skin across her head, the draining of the fluid and*

