

The Serpent King

Jeff Zenter

Reviewed by: Anika 16

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

www.bethestaryouare.org

In the small town of Forestville, Tennessee, lives a boy named Dillard Early. A name that brings him and his family constant scrutiny and bullying. All because of his father, a devoted preacher who goes by the same name, landed himself in jail for child porn. Dill manages to find respite with his friends, Lydia and Travis. But as senior year comes to a close, Dill finds himself worried for the future. His friends both already have something in mind for their lives ahead, Lydia with her fashion blog and Travis with his love for Bloodfall, a fantasy book series. Dill is worried that he won't be able to see them anymore and even more so when he takes his secret crush on Lydia into account. But what he doesn't know is that there is more sorrow to overcome.

Jeff Zenter writes an amazing coming of age story that all readers will relate to. Dill constantly grapples with his feelings towards his friends, his family, and his future. Though he was not alone in his suffering. This story has taught me many life lessons, especially that you are the one in control of your life. You can choose your faith and your future. Along with life lessons, Zenter gives the reader a bit of insight of what it's like to live in a rural town like Forestville. I really enjoyed getting to know all the different characters who live in the same place.

Though I did find it a bit difficult to follow the changing perspectives of the different characters. Religion was also another issue for me in this book. I didn't quite understand the concept of pentecostalism. I wish the author had provided some more information about it. But other readers may find the author's portrayal of Christianity offensive. There were also other parts of the book that I felt needed a better explanation, especially with the Serpent King and a plot twist that I won't spoil. I should warn you that there is some violence and mature language throughout the story, so for those reasons I suggest this book for anyone 14 years or older.

Recommended Titles:

I'll Give You the Sun by Jandy Nelson

Rayne & Delilah's Midnite Matinee by Jeff Zenter

90 Miles to Havana by Enrique Flores-Galbis

All the Broken Pieces by Ann E. Burg