

## **Suicide Notes**

**Michael Thomas Ford**

**Reviewed by: Audrey Soohoo, Age 19**

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

[www.bethestaryouare.org](http://www.bethestaryouare.org)

*Suicide Notes* is a coming of age novel featuring Jeff, a witty and sarcastic 15 year old boy who wakes up in a psychiatric ward without explanation. All he is told by the staff is he attempted to end his life on New Year's Eve, but that his parents came to the rescue before he succeeded. Jeff looks down on those around him in the hospital, believing that they are all completely "crazy," and that he was sent there accidentally. However, as the story progresses and readers grasp a deeper understanding of the protagonist's situation, it becomes achingly clear that he is suffering more than he lets on. The novel is written through Jeff's perspective, retold through somewhat of a "diary" format as he recalls each of the 45 days he spends in the ward. Jeff is met with an onslaught of feelings and experiences through the meeting of other patients, and comes to the realization that he is not as different as he believes himself to be.

I absolutely adored this novel and its protagonist, for despite its dark subject matter, his bluntness and sassy behavior still managed to make me laugh. All of the characters introduced throughout the story are lovable and special in their own way, creating a deep connection between them and the reader. From the first few pages of reading it, I could already tell that I would love the story and would not be able to put it down until I had finished. Though not much "occurs," as there is only one setting in its entirety, the growth that Jeff undergoes can be recognized and appreciated, making the novel a riveting read. It balanced elements of tragedy and hope perfectly. The only thing that I didn't enjoy about the book was a few explicit scenes that took place, as I believe the story could have and should have progressed without them. I think it's important to recognize how young the characters are, and thus, I felt it was inappropriate to portray certain scenes in such a graphic manner. Other than those parts, the story was exceedingly well-written.

I would recommend this book to the age group 15+, as it features sexually explicit scenes, some vulgar language, and the rather heavy subject matters of depression, suicide, eating disorders, self-harm, and mental instability. I think that as long as the reader can fully comprehend and recognize these elements of the story, then it should be alright. I believe kids in early to late high school would really like it. It is somewhat difficult to find, therefore I believe purchasing it online would be the best method of acquiring it; but some specific libraries may rent it out as well.

### **Recommended Titles:**

13 Reasons Why, Jay Asher

It's Kind of a Funny Story, Ned Vizzini

They Both Die at the End, Adam Silvera