

The Testing

Joelle Charbonneau

Reviewed by: Audrey, 16

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

www.bethestaryouare.org

In a future decimated by the Seven Stages War, the human race has to rebuild the world from the bottom up. Revitalization is the key to survival, and only the brightest can pull it off. University is where the leaders of the future are formed. However, in order to be one of the chosen elite who get to attend, you must first pass the Testing. Malencia Vale dreams of being chosen for the Testing, just like her Dad was, despite the fact that no one from her home in the small Five Lakes Colony has been chosen for years. When suddenly four students from her graduating class of eight are chosen, herself included, Cia is beyond ready to take on the Testing. But as she will soon find out, nothing is as it seems, and no one can be trusted.

Futuristic, post-apocalyptic novels can either be really good, or really bad, and many of them don't quite hit the mark. With *The Testing*, however, that was not the case. Joelle Charbonneau's novel was compelling and moving and had all the right elements to create a great story. No one can see the future, but Charbonneau did a great job of making the reader see her version of it very clearly. Not only did she create a great setting for the story, but also a complicated history leading up to its present time period. She set up the background early on in the novel, which was helpful in getting the story flowing, and no part was too fast or too slow. However, there were moments when the book became a bit predictable. It was less that I had seen these scenes before in other books and more that they lacked the proper tension to make them interesting. I especially would have liked to have more suspense between Cia and the other characters, especially her love-interest Tomas. The characters themselves all had great potential, but I was hoping to see more developed interactions between them.

I would say *The Testing* is a great choice for readers ages thirteen and up. It is pretty violent, including a suicide and several in-action deaths, and especially since the characters are all teenagers, I would be careful if this sort of thing really affects you. However, it was written extremely well and the author made some great writing choices to keep everything appropriate. Overall, I would definitely keep this book on your recommendation list, because lots of people will probably enjoy it! It is also the first of a series (and having started the second book, it is just as good as the first), so it would be a great gift idea!.

Recommended Titles:

Dare Mighty Things, Heather Kaczynski

The Selection, Kiera Cass

City of Ember, Jeanne DuPrau

Divergent, Veronica Roth

The Finisher, David Baldacci