

The Jewel

Amy Ewing

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In the Lone City, an old virus has long since affected the nobility of the land, causing all the women to be unable to bear children. This is why, every year, hundreds of young girls from the lower classes of the land (who were unaffected by the mysterious virus) are brought up and trained in preparation to one day become sold as surrogates for the high ladies of The Jewel, the district of the highest social class of the Lone City. When Violet Lasting becomes sold to the Duchess of the Lake, she suddenly becomes placed in one of the rare top families of power and wealth. Despite this, she soon learns that power can be a poison, and luxuries can come at terrible costs.

This novel is geared for young adults, however there is some indirect but mature suggestive content that may be inappropriate for young audiences. I would suggest that this would be best for an age group of 16-20 years old. Other content warning that may be helpful to be aware of is some use of drugs and misogyny.

This book wasn't so bad. The plot was great toward the end. The later quarter of the novel was unpredictable and had lots of great twists and turns, that kept me thrilled and interested. However, around the middle of the novel, there was less thrill and it seemed that there wasn't too much driving the story forward. I feel that beneath everything that went on, there was a much greater conflict and issue to take care of. However, a lot of the times, the issue seemed downplayed, and greatly overlooked. The components that contributed to the most pivotal detail pushing the story along would sometimes be present, then disappear. The other events along the way kind of seemed irrelevant. In addition, the writing style wasn't particularly distinctive and character complexity and development was more simple. Despite this though, I don't think it hindered the storytelling that much.

For a debut novel and as the first book of a coming trilogy, I definitely don't think *The Jewel* was unsuccessful. Although the initial momentum of the story was a little slow, it set up a lot of the foundation and important background information to establish Violet Lasting as a worthwhile character. In terms of the storytelling, the first book isn't extremely conclusive. It doesn't even seem as if there was a distinctive climax to pinpoint either. The ending just felt like we were still in the place of the rising action, like the story was just only warming up for more surprises later. However, the end doesn't leave me in a sense of disappointment either. I think the end was quite intentional but also effective in growing my hunger for more. For that reason, I think I had an overall pretty happy and positive impression of the novel.

I would suggest this book for readers who enjoy fantasy and dystopia. The story reminds me a little of *The Handmaid's Tale*, but more romanticized with touches of glamor and fantasy. In a way, it's interestingly like a utopian-style dystopia.

Recommended Titles:

Perfectly by Kate Jarvik Birch

The White Rose by Amy Ewing

The Selection by Kiera Cass

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

Wither by Lauren DeStefano