

Split by Avasthi



Some of the best fiction books take a situation of which you have very little first-hand

knowledge and through sympathetic characters and solid storytelling create some sort of understanding of what living that life would be like. Swati Avasthi's first Young Adult novel about domestic violence and abuse, Split, is a great example. Avasthi is able to allow the reader to care about the main character and his struggles with both the violence of his father and the legacy he is hoping to avoid.

Teenage Jace leaves his parents' house with almost nothing after a particularly brutal fight with his father. He sets off from Chicago with his camera and the New Mexico address of his older brother who disappeared several years earlier. Jace's brother Christian is less than thrilled to see him with a bruised face despite having come from and escaped the same back ground. Their transition is rocky and a lesser book would have trivialized this time. Instead their difficulties felt genuine.

This book isn't always easy to read. Jace is really struggling to come to terms with his recent past and the path isn't always easy. His rawness is moving. And the abuse scenes as inflicted by both Jace and especially his father are extremely painful. With that said, I thought this was an excellent book about teenagers making tough decisions and growing up with a difficult past. Despite some of the emotional gut wrenching, I would recommend this book to a wide range of teen readers who like "real life" stories.

This book was nominated for a 2012-2013 Eliot Rosewater Indiana High School Book Award. Check out the entire list of Rosie Nominations. The winner will be selected in May.

Posted by sbowman on April 11, 2012

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