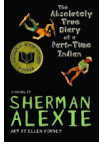


Young Adult Fiction Debate - How Dark is Too Dark?



Several weeks ago, a contributor for the Wall Street Journal wrote an article entitled

[Darkness Too Visible](#) . The author's complaint was that contemporary YA literature, aimed at the broad range of 12-18 year-olds is inappropriate for it's heavy inclusion of "explicit abuse, violence and depravity".

Then the internet blew up. Several interesting responses have come from NPR, one from pop culture expert [Linda Holmes](#) , and [another interview](#) . with a YA librarian, YA authors, and the original author of the WSJ article.

Without rehashing too much, I found some of the titles mentioned in the debate interesting. In the original article, [The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian](#) . by Sherman Alexie is mentioned in the "too dark" camp. Yes, this book has it's harsh moments and may be best recommended to slightly older teens, but it is also a beautiful, intelligent and hopeful coming of age story. The WSJ article also has a list (on the side) of titles that they "can recommend" and include the post-apocalyptic [Z for Zachariah](#) . by Robert C. O'Brien which I read as a teenager. It was nightmare inducing at the time and still gives me the chills - 20 years later.



As an adult reader of YA fiction, I generally find there to be a wide variety. With only a few exceptions, dark themes seem to be mostly handled in a constructive way. If that isn't enough - sweet titles still exist!

I recently read and highly enjoyed [Little Blog on the Prairie](#) . by Cathleen Davitt Bell - super funny and a perfect summer read - and for even more (generally) happy girly fun adventure, try the [Gallagher Girls series](#) . by Ally Carter.

Posted by sbowman on June 15, 2011

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Links

- [1] <https://mcpl.info/blogs/love-reading/young-adult-fiction-debate-how-dark-too-dark>
- [2] <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1000142405270203067404070202952697038>
- [3] <https://www.npr.org/blog/mrkeynote/2011/06/06/137020356/keeping-them-gentle-we-wish-they-were-the-debate-over-ya-fiction>
- [4] <https://www.npr.org/2011/06/14/137174977/the-dangers-all-as-of-dark-teen-4711-1&mp=i-1032>
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