***The Pigman***

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Block A

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I’m only 14 years old, but I’ve lived long enough to tell you this: we don’t live in a perfect world, and that is the cold, hard truth. There is underage drinking, teenagers go out and party, and kids disobey their parents. What I’m saying sounds pretty obvious on the surface, but it is the basis for many banned books in society nowadays. While many parents and teachers have no problem in sharing these ideas orally, people often have a problem when they are transferred to the written work. The book The Pigman has been subject to put downs and prejudice because the characters can be considered as bad examples for growing teenagers. However, the message of the book easily overpowers the wrongdoings of the characters in their influence on children. While a bad influence may only affect a few teenagers in every school, a strong lesson can reach out and appeal to everyone.

Near everyone can attest to sorry being one of the hardest words to say, but what may be more difficult is taking the blame for whatever you are sorry for. Whether a character in a book or an actual human being, everyone feels uncomfortable when saying that they were wrong, and it is instinct to blame another when trying to keep the burden off of you. However, John and Lorraine learn their lesson at the end of the book when John says that his life will be what he makes of it and nothing else. They go out of line with the party, and because of that, they now have to dig themselves out of a heap of trouble. Keeping this everlasting message out of schools only because the characters make some wrong choices makes absolutely no sense. There is no shame in teaching the story because the moral is clearly shown in the end.

The Pigman also presents very realistic situations to complement its unique storyline, which adds some credibility to the story. One of the most annoying things for me when it comes to Young Adult fiction books is the fact that things always seem to work out the way that you want them to. Even if it seems like a positive, it blends all of the stories together into one big happily-ever-after mess. In the real world, you won’t always make the final shot or ace the final. The Pigman’s realism is probably what I enjoyed most about the book and makes it’s themes of family, lies, and maturity much more believable. When Lorriane was brought home after the party, her mom didn’t pat her on the head and say that she was forgiven. This relatable feeling keeps readers intrigued.

Keeping young adults interested in reading can be a challenge in itself, and getting kids to understand the text pushes the difficulty to an entirely new level. However, this story presents a perfect model for teaching. The high level of suspense will keep even the most reluctant of readers intrigued and make them want to turn another page. When Mr. Pignati had a heart-attack, I couldn’t help but keep reading. When John and Lorraine were busted for their “get-together”, my mind was working a mile a minute to try to figure out what would happen next. The direct cause-and-effect relationship between events also makes the story easier to comprehend. This book just about screams middle school.

However, there is clearly a fact lurking in the shadows of this paper that people can argue for days over. As I stated before, John and Lorraine aren’t the best at staying out of trouble, and it is no secret. John drinks until his stomach can’t hold any more and smokes a cigarette every other hour. While Lorraine keeps her name clean for the most part, she is often involved in John’s schemes. The fact of the matter is, though, that if every character in every book was a perfect angel, there would be no point in reading. Paul Zindel, the author, was obviously aiming to make a realistic story, and realistic stories must include realistic characters. Also, the consequences are clearly shown throughout the story, so it’s not like the book was written to endorse underage drinking or having no respect for authority. The moral revolves around making smart choices when these situations evolve, so there is no logical explanation to why this book is unhealthy for a growing student.

We are now teenagers and will soon be entering a world where not everything can be fixed with a trip to the naughty corner. Banning The Pigman is an obvious question after hearing just a summary of the story, but the message is much deeper once you really start to read it. Hearing about these situations can be difficult to relate to, but following both adolescents through their journey with Mr. Pignati makes it much easier to understand. Both of the characters learn their lesson, and it will improve their life and the reader’s for the better for years to come. I beg you to stop lingering over The Pigman’s down side and focus on the lasting positive effect it has on the reader. You may start to question your opinion.