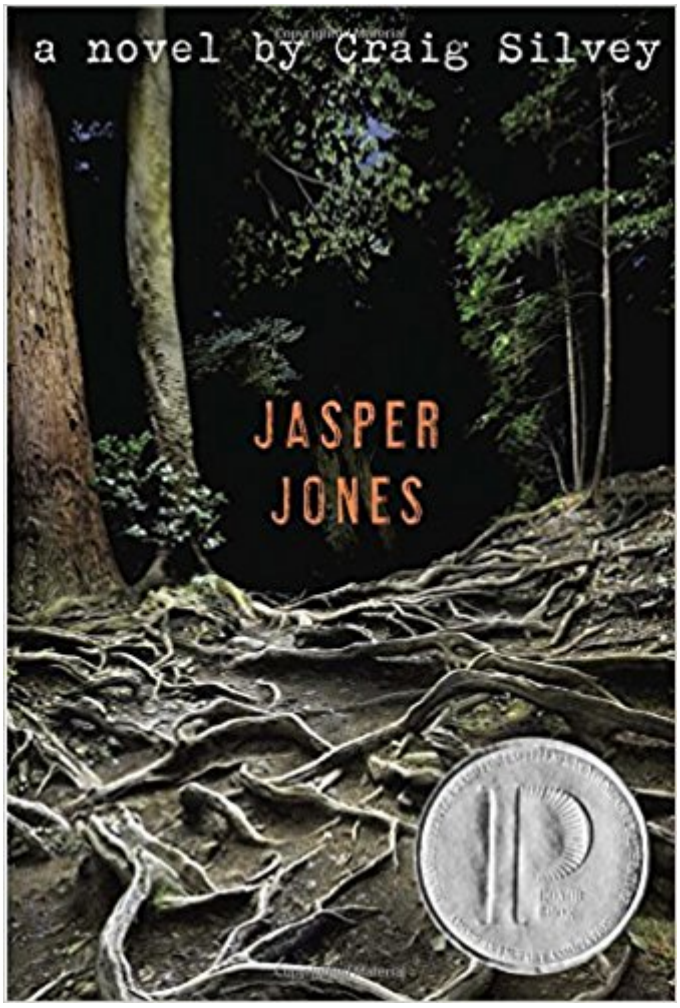
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Jasper Jones



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Synopsis

A 2012 Michael L. Printz Honor BookCharlie Bucktin, a bookish thirteen year old, is startled one summer night by an urgent knock on his bedroom window. His visitor is Jasper Jones, an outcast in their small mining town, and he has come to ask for Charlie's help. Terribly afraid but desperate to impress, Charlie follows him into the night.Jasper takes him to his secret glade, where Charlie witnesses Jasper's horrible discovery. With his secret like a brick in his belly, Charlie is pushed and pulled by a town closing in on itself in fear and suspicion. He locks horns with his tempestuous mother, falls nervously in love, and battles to keep a lid on his zealous best friend. In the simmering summer where everything changes, Charlie learns why the truth of things is so hard to know, and even harder to hold in his heart.From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Gr 10 Up-A rap on the window awakens 13-year-old Charlie Bucktin. He's startled to find Jasper Jones, the bad boy of his small Australian town, frantic and in need of his help. Charlie follows Jasper into the night and is led to the battered body of Laura Wishart, hanging from the noose of a eucalyptus tree. Jasper is desperate to cut Laura down as the rope around her neck belongs to him. Convinced of Jasper's innocence, Charlie helps submerge Laura's body in a river and the boys vow to find Laura's killer. Set in the 1960s during the Vietnam War, Craig Silvey's novel (Knopf, 2011) perfectly captures the time period. Charlie's small town reacts with fear at Laura's disappearance and the bigotry simmering just below the surface of the town erupts into violence. Matt Cowlrick

gives each character a unique voice and his pacing is impeccable. Strong language and mature content make this appropriate for older teens.-Tricia Melgaard, formerly Broken Arrow Public Schools, Tulsa, OKÃ Â (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Starred Review, Kirkus Reviews, March 15, 2011:"The authorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s keen ear for dialogue is evident in the humorous verbal sparring between Charlie and Jeffrey, typical of smart 13-year-old boys...A richly rewarding exploration of truth and lies by a masterful storyteller."Starred Review, The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, April 2011:"SilveyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s sure-footed, evocative prose, intelligent humor, and careful plot structuring may well ensure this Aussie import lasting status."Starred Review, The Horn Book Magazine, May/June 2011:"The mood and atmosphere of the 1960s small-town Australian setting is perfectly realizedÃ¢â ¬â •suspenseful, menacing, and claustrophobicÃ¢â ¬â •with issues of race and class boiling just below the surface."Starred Review, School Library Journal, June 2011:"Silvey is a master of wit and words, spinning a coming-of-age tale told through the mind of a young Holden Caulfield." From the Hardcover edition.

I really enjoyed reading this very well written novel which tells the tale of unusual friendships in the 1950s. Jasper Jones is a half caste aboriginal teen who is always in trouble and gets blamed for everything that goes wrong in the town. Charlie Bucktin is the son of a very proper schoolteacher and his ever so uprightious wife. When Jasper comes to Charlie's window one night asking for his help, Charlie can't resist the lure of why the town troublemaker needs him.When he discovers the reason why Jasper needs him it rocks his world and so a friendship of partner-in-crime develops. Charlie longs to tell him best friend, Vietnamese Jeffrey Lu, who is hated by the town louts, who call him "Cong" and dispite his prowess as a cricketer, dont allow him to be included in their games.Then there's the daughters of the equally righteous Mayor, Laura and Eliza Wishart. When Laura goes missing, the eccentric hermit, Jack Lionel gets the blame and the police immediately assume Jasper knows something about it. Woven together, these characters create a web of intrigue and mystery. Jay Jay.

An engaging tale that uses the death of a teenage girl to examine the loss of innocence in rural, mid-70s Australia. I was reminded of Shark Net, Stand By Me, Blue Velvet and To Kill A Mockingboard (the latter because the author kept bringing it up). It is Winton-esque in tone. Although this is a more meandering narrative, which was probably the intent, to reflect life in country

areas. The tensions simmer, and simmer, frustratingly at times, as the narrator seeks meaning and significance, expanding on events and descriptions. Adolescence, coming of age, sexuality, racism, domestic abuse, incest, infidelity, and violence are explored on personal, family, community and national levels. When it boils over, it does so with an urgency and inventiveness that is captivating and believable. It’s the lulls between that can make you feel like you spent a week in this town one afternoon. That may be its greatest strength and, at times, a small weakness.

The dialogue between Charlie and Jeffery was a highlight for me. I well understood why teachers love this novel. By-the-by, the boys on the displayed novel cover are not quite old enough. Prior to my reading the story I have heard some refer to the text as "To Kill a Mockingbird 2.0" but that does a disservice to both; certainly there are connections as there often are between stories that are at once life-affirming and challenging, but for me the lack of an Atticus Finch ensures the link is broken. The adults in Silvey’s text are all flawed to varying degrees. None inspire confidence or a consistent sense of safety. It actually makes the boys the genuine heroes because their actions and decisions are often more selfless and considered. In that sense "Jasper Jones" Captures the heart of many good adolescent fiction, where we not only see events through the eyes of the young protagonist but rely on him to make more sensible and just decisions than the adults.

Absolutely brilliant. This is an Australian young adult novel but don’t let that put you off. It’s much more graphic than other YA titles but I would have let my daughter read it at 12. (i’m permissive when it comes to books, so be forewarned.) to say that it’s almost as good as "Mockingbird" is not hyperbole. If you "love" books, "Jasper Jones" is not to be missed!

Jasper Jones is an intense read on several levels. Young protagonist, Charlie, often makes references to his latest favorite book, To Kill A Mockingbird, and there many similarities in these two novels. Jasper Jones is set in 1960’s small rural town Australia. Like To Kill A Mockingbird, Charlie’s town is being poisoned by poverty, prejudice, gossip, alcoholism and despair. Charlie ends up in the center of the town’s unraveling when he promises his classmate, Jasper, he will keep a horrible secret about something Jasper has discovered - a secret that is the inciting event for dragging all of the town’s deplorable secrets out in the open. Charlie is just trying to do the right thing, but how can it be right, if it is causing so many negative consequences? The story has a gripping opening that leads the reader to believe Jasper Jones is a mystery, and it is, partly."And I see it. And everything changes. I’m screaming, but they are muffled screams. I can’t breathe in. I feel like I’m underwater.

Deaf and drowning..."""We can’t tell anybody Charlie. We have to find out who did this."The first thing readers will think is, how are two young teens going to solve such a huge mystery? The mystery doesn’t crop up again for 200 pages. Most of the story focuses on Charlie trying to survive his decision to keep the secret, and his trying to understand what is happening to all of these people he has known all of his life. But when the Charlie and Jasper finally step up to solve the mystery, it brings surprise twists and surprise ending. Like To Kill A Mockingbird, Jasper Jones is foremost a coming of age story. Also like To Kill A Mockingbird, it does not have a happily ever after ending, but it does have a realistic and satisfying ending.

This is a story for young adults, but as a grandmother I found it so insightful and it certainly gave me an understanding of how young minds work - how sensitive they are, but also their resilience. The author also placed the reader firmly in the town around which the story was woven. I felt as though I was actually on the sidelines and experiencing all the ups and downs and prejudices of an relatively isolated community. I was very engaged throughout the book and truly recommend it to older readers.

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