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Angry: A Novel



Synopsis

Emma is angry. She's angry at her siblings, who she always has to baby sit; her parents, who are divorcing and ruining her life in the process; and herself for not measuring up to anyone's standards. With her simmering feelings ready to spill over at any time, Emma's self-worth plummets. Her faith in God is tested in the face of overwhelming hurt that threatens to send her over the edge. Can she turn back in time? Online study guide companion available.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although *Angry* by Laura L. Smith is marketed as "teen fiction", I don't believe I would allow my teenage daughter to read this. (if I had one) Divorce, adultery and alcoholism are some of the sensitive topics mentioned in this book and I strongly suggest that parents read this for themselves before handing it over to their teenager. Readers should also be aware that "slang" is used in this book and the main character talks about losing her virginity. All of these issues are very hot topics and I think that parents will have to decide for themselves whether or not this is an appropriate book for their child to read. The book is about an angry teenage girl whose parents are divorcing after an extramarital affair. This story details the thoughts, feelings and emotions that a teenager might experience while going through this. Emma, (the main character) is also angry at God. Based on the book's description of this family, they do not appear to be actively practicing any type of faith so I'm not sure how the main character even knows about God. There's no mention of church attendance (past or present) or religious beliefs and God, family and marriage aren't a high priority in this

family. The parents have both thrown themselves into their careers, neglecting each other and leaving their teenage daughter to care for her siblings. Emma is confused, frustrated and battling low self esteem. At the end of the book, Emma talks about a "warm golden feeling" which she attributes to God, but the reader doesn't walk away with a sense of reconciliation. There's nothing to indicate that Emma is making major changes in her life other than not being so angry at God anymore. While she "talks" to God and asks Him for things, that's about the extent of her relationship with Him. She doesn't seek out a pastor, counseling or a church, she doesn't read the Bible; there's just a lot of conversation between her and God in which she supposes what He says back to her. I have to say I was a little disappointed in this book. It didn't convey the message of Christ that I thought it would. Granted, you don't have to be preachy to get the Gospel across but this title didn't share much of any message, in my opinion. Maybe I misconstrued the intent of this book? I was hoping that it would not only help readers who have gone through this, identify with Emma, but perhaps it would point them to Christ, the only source of help we can rely on in times of crisis. I would have liked to have seen Emma and her family come to know Christ, establish a solid relationship with Him and possibly reconcile with each other. Or maybe the parents could have made some type of effort to work things out - that scenario would at least give some hope. This story basically writes off one parent who slowly disappears from the scene, while the other plows through life, relying on alcohol to cope. I didn't find it necessarily uplifting nor encouraging, which I expected from NavPress.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from NavPress Publishers as part of their Blogger Review Program. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

This is marketed as Young Adult. I recommend parents read it first before handing it to their teen. I'm sure (geez, it's been a long time...) the teenage years are harder now than they were "way back when", and I'm sure Emma doesn't feel anything a "normal" teenager wouldn't feel given all she goes through. However, I'm not convinced this story does a good job of showing that Emma "turns to God". She argues with Him and basically doesn't think He's caring for her until she gets a part in a play she loves. I'm not even sure what the author's intent is in the book. It's ended abruptly and gives a lives-happily-ever-after feel in a relatively short amount of time to struggle. Emma is a typical self-centered teenager and is actually well written. I just wish the author would have gone into a salvation experience, a youth group, a worship service or something. She talks about "youth group"

once and states that it wasn't the week to go. The youth group at my church meets twice a week. There is nothing in the story to suggest any reverence for family, marriage, sobriety or God. I'm quite disappointed. I received a copy of the book from NavPress in exchange for a review. No additional compensation was received and all that was required was to be honest.

Emma is devastated by her parents' divorce. Her life quickly spirals out of control as she struggles to cope with the ugly, far-reaching tentacles of divorce. Will Emma learn to turn to God before she completely implodes? *Angry* hit me on a couple different levels. I'm a divorced kid. It doesn't matter that I'm 29 years old and my parents broke up a hundred years ago. A divorced kid is always a divorced kid. It informed such a huge part of my childhood and adolescence that I can't help but ache when Emma does. The hardest part is watching Emma try to deal with this situation without God (which was also my experience, as there was 10 years between my parents' divorce and my salvation experience). I wanted to climb into the novel and tell Emma that, trust me, painful moments are easier with faith. Downright bearable, in fact. *Angry* is a quick read, perfect for older teens. I don't say older teens because I think the writing will be too difficult for a younger audience, but simply because there is some mild profanity in the book. Parents will want to use their discretion on this. Hey, if your kid goes to public school (or pretty much hangs out in public AT ALL or watches any TV or listens to the radio, etc.), they've heard all these words before. We're not talking about the f-bomb here, and Smith doesn't use them in a gratuitous, sensational way, just at a few key moments when Emma can't seem to articulate her feelings any other way. But you make the final judgment call. There are also some touchy subjects in play here. Obviously, divorce is one. We also touch on alcoholism and more-than-hint about infidelity (the horrible, blatant, unrepentant kind). Emma's also very open about her own questionable sexual past. I think you probably get a lot of the backstory on this issue in *Hot: A Novel*, which is the second book in this series from Smith and deals directly with that topic. *Angry* is the third. Anyway, you'll want to use your discernment here, too. This could be a great resource for Christian girls struggling with a messy divorce in the family, and perhaps anger about any number of issues. But I think it'd be especially helpful for girls who have friends dealing with this issue. Perhaps the window into Emma's mind would allow those who have never experienced this level of hurt (plus anger, betrayal, abandonment, and all the other fantastic things divorce incites) to understand what their friends are experiencing. There is a free discussion guide available from NavPress that I think is awesome. It deals with the biblical perspective on the issues Emma is facing, as well as her unbiblical responses to her problems. Because the book is written first-person from Emma's point of view, we can only hear whispers of

author Laura L. Smith's perspective coming through (which they do, but more so at the end). The discussion guide is a must-have, even if you're reading this book alone. Bottom Line: Worth reading, especially if you're dealing with these issues or know someone who is. Bravo to Smith for tackling a difficult, controversial topic from a teen's point of view.

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