

IP Book Reviewers!

Fiction/Young Adult

Blindsided

E. Marie Sanders

2012

Create Space

165 pages

Blindsided is the story of a young woman's whirlwind relationship with a young man who appears perfect on the surface, but whose immaculate shell quickly cracks and ultimately crumbles. E. Marie Sanders, author of *To K(no)w Avail* (2010), offers readers a meaningful look into the rapid paced couplings of high school students and sheds light on the excitement and danger inherent in these relationships. When Marlena, a rising sophomore meets Jason, a rising freshman, the chemistry is immediate and intense. Marlena attempts to maintain the moral and religious standards her parents have set for her as she tentatively opens herself up to the idea of Jason being her first boyfriend. But like so many young girls, Marlena gets caught up in the thrill of being with Jason and misses the signs that could have saved her from heartache.

Sanders ratchets up the conflict by interjecting opposing gangs and intimate family problems into this story of young love. Marlena is a smart girl with a strong foundation, but she loses herself so quickly in her feelings for Jason that she misses signs of his faults and finds herself in harm's way on more than one occasion.

The author's portrayal of high school students is believable and actually brought up memories of my own teenage experiences at a summer program similar to the one described in the book. Sanders integrates spirituality into the story in a way that is not preachy or overbearing. She also does a wonderful job of creating balance in her protagonist. Marlena is a good girl who is confident on one hand, but also unsure about how to manage her conflicting desires to please both her parents and the boy she loves. This story allows the reader (especially young readers, hopefully) to see in Jason what Marlena misses. It could serve as a tool for opening the eyes of young women and men who are moving too fast in a relationship that may actually be more than they are ready to handle.

Blindsided is a terrific combination of romance, suspense, and inspiration. I highly recommend it.

Melissa Brown Levine

for

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