

Parental Guide – unSPARKed main series Book 9

9. A Different Kind of Freedom

Themes: Dinosaurs, Faith, Mental health, Depression, Friendship, Loyalty to friends and family, Grief, Power of the Sacraments, Crime/Thriller/Mystery, city life vs. rural life. Theology of the Body (Purity/Chastity) is presented positively throughout the series.

Educational Value: Appropriate for students studying Dinosaurs, Catholicism/Christianity, Crime, Agriculture, Survival Skills, Rural/Urban culture.

Positive Messages: We shouldn't be ashamed to seek help if we are struggling, especially with mental health issues, we should help and care for others, be patient with everyone and give them a chance, we should be loyal to our family and friends, we should pull together in difficult times and persevere through difficulties.

Spiritual Messages: We should have faith in God's protective help and trust that he has a plan for us. We should not let circumstances and environment prevent us from being reverent and fulfilling our religious duties. Thinking we control our lives is an illusion and we should entrust ourselves to God. Things we cannot help like depression or suicidal ideation are not sins and we should turn to God as much as we can while seeking immediate medical help.

Positive Role Models: Joshua (19) is a positive role model because he's brave and always kind to those around him however inconvenient or dangerous it is for him or however unappealing the person it. He models forgiveness and chastity powerfully. He is also an example of turning to God in trouble and of asking for help to deal with a mental health crisis.

Violence/Gore: An animal attack is described with a brief mention of blood. One character tries to drown another—their struggle is described. Another character is knocked out. A character dies in hospital from a brain aneurysm, 'on stage,' in the presence of a main character.

Sexuality: When Joshua arrives at the prison two men ask him if he wants to be 'friends.' Adults and maturer teens will understand that he is being propositioned. He reacts by driving them away from him fiercely.

It is subtly hinted that one of the characters might have been sexually abused as a child. This is done in such a way that only adults or those teens who already know about such things will understand what is being implied.

On one occasion a character looks at pornography and then offers it to Joshua. Joshua reacts fiercely, throwing the magazine on the floor and arguing against it until the other character puts it away. Joshua hopes he won't be so quick to look at it again. There are no graphic descriptions and the subject is discreetly handled.

Language: None

Drinking, Drugs & Smoking: None

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

This is an exciting unSPARKed installment that delves gently into some deeper themes like mental illness, phobias, and chastity, as well as loss, the sacraments, etc. Suitable for teens and some tweens, but parental guidance strongly recommended for tweens due to the maturer themes.

Rating Scale: Light-Moderate

Scale:

Light- For all readers.

Moderate - Story includes subject matter for teens 13 plus

Advanced - Although not graphic in description, the subject matter is recommended for teens older than 15.