

Content Guide

I Am Margaret

By Corinna Turner

Themes: Self-sacrifice, faith, martyrdom, pro-life and the dangers of eugenics (the culture of death), forced organ donation, population control, Christian Persecution.

Educational Value: Appropriate for students studying Ethics/Morality, Religious Persecution (present or historical, especially Elizabethan England on which the persecution is partly modeled), Medical Ethics, Government/Civics. Theology of the Body (Purity/Chastity) is also shown positively in the series, specifically, in book one, the struggle involved in holding to pure values.

Positive Messages: Keeping faith even in the face of martyrdom, thinking of others even in the worst situation, fighting for what you believe in no matter the risk to yourself, affirming the worth and right to life of all, regardless of disability, race, gender, etc.

Spiritual Messages: Eternal life with God is more important than worldly life or possessions.

Positive Role Models: Margaret is a positive role model for girls because she is determined to do what is right even when she is scared and although she is not perfect she usually manages to do so. Although she is involved in action scenes and is known as the best shot in the group, she is a feminine heroine.

Jonathan is a positive role model because he is brave and kind and very resolute in his beliefs, despite his blindness making everything harder for him. He works hard at remaining chaste in a very difficult situation.

Bane is a positive role model because despite his uncertainty about God he is fiercely loyal and very brave, always prepared to put his life on the line for others. He is also prepared to acknowledge when he has made a mistake and got himself into a bad situation.

Violence/Gore: Substantial, sometimes intense but almost entirely non graphic. In the novel, teenagers who are reassigned for organ harvesting are ‘dismantled’ and ‘Conscious dismantlement’ is used as a punishment. On two occasions this happens ‘on stage’. What is happening is mostly conveyed through Margo’s reactions rather than through graphic descriptions but could be challenging for more squeamish readers. Elsewhere in the novel, some boys try to kill another boy – this is only described after the event. There is some fighting at the end of the book but it happens off-stage. One character briefly tortures another by cutting them (no graphic description). Another character stabs someone and kills them ‘on stage’ to protect someone else.

Sexuality: There is an intense but sweet kiss between two characters after they become engaged.

Elsewhere, two characters who are not romantically involved feel they must pretend to be intimate in order to protect their families and many other people from being unveiled as Christians and executed. When the pretence leads to strain and temptation they take action to maintain their purity.

A guard tries to assault the main character but she escapes.

The fact that older teens feel an increasingly strong interest in the opposite sex is frankly acknowledged in the book, with chastity and waiting for marriage presented in a positive light as the desirable and right path.

Language: Words like heck and darn are used.

Drinking, Drugs & Smoking: None.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

This book explores in deep and moving ways what it means to be Catholic under duress, and shows young adult Catholics making hard and heroic choices to defend life and to live out their Catholic faith. The themes are mature and the novel is emotionally intense, making it most suitable for older teens, though some mature younger readers will benefit from it.

Rating Scale: ADVANCED

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.