

Parental Guide

Themes: Broken families, friendship, abuse, loss/death, living with the results of one's mistakes, prison, forgiveness, conversion, redemption, discerning God's will for one's life

Educational Value: You can find discussion questions for this novel at the author's website: <https://authorerinlewis.weebly.com/fun-stuff.html>

Positive Messages: Dallas supports and sticks up for his more vulnerable friend, Channing. When a bad decision costs him almost everything, he must learn the value of accepting both God's forgiveness and his own. Responding to scorn and mockery with an attitude of turning the other cheek rather than violence is a hard-won lesson.

Spiritual Messages: Redemption is possible for everyone if they will only admit their mistakes and accept it. God can be found even in the darkest of places, and his mercy knows no limits. God places people in our lives to teach us more about himself.

Positive Role Models: Dallas, who experiences growth and conversion after life-altering mistakes. Father Benedict, a priest who makes prison visits. Channing, who appreciates the little things in life and tries to look on the bright side.

Violence/Gore: Physical and emotional abuse by parents and within a prison environment. Fistfights. Suicide attempt. Deaths resulting from physical altercation with authorities and from a car accident. Description of injuries resulting from prison abuse.

Sexuality: Implied sexual abuse by prison inmates. Two characters have a frank discussion of masturbation through the lens of Catholic moral teaching.

Language: mild cussing (d and h words); "bastard" used a few times; prison slang terms (meaning can often be inferred by context)

Drinking, Drugs & Smoking: Channing's mother is drunk in one scene. Channing recalls sneaking a cigarette from his mother's boyfriend, but he doesn't smoke it. Brief mention of an inmate's brother's drug addiction.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

This book follows the journey of a 19-year-old protagonist and is best suited for those age 18 and older, although a mature 16-17 year old may be able to handle the topics. A large portion of the book is set inside a men's prison among an abusive guard and a few abusive inmates.

Rating Scale: Advanced

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.