

Content Guide

Life-Changing Love

Themes: Courtship vs. current dating practices, struggling with purity, obedience, finding the beauty within, Eucharistic miracles, supporting a friend faced with a crisis pregnancy, abortion vs. adoption, speaking the truth when it's hard.

Educational Value: Student Study Guide, Parent Study Guide (with answers), and Discussion guide available on the author's website. Characters discuss the development of the baby in the womb.

Positive Messages: Characters learn the importance of practicing virtue and not taking it for granted, because anyone can fall.

Spiritual Messages: Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament and He loves you deeply. He wants us to put Him first in all our relationships.

Positive Role Models: Roland shows concern and sacrificial love for his brother and perseveres in trying to help him, even when rejected. Keefe recognizes and repents of his faults—how he's been a blind follower of his twin—and he makes a commitment to listen to Jesus from now on. Caitlyn and her family offer concrete help to a pregnant teen, welcoming her into their home.

Violence/Gore: A teen boy punches his brother in the stomach. A teen boy punches the driver's seat in his car. Two teen brothers have a rough sword fight.

Sexuality: There is no graphic sexual content, but this story compares the relationships of two teenage girls, one who must practice something like old-fashioned courtship with high parental involvement and the other who has an intimate relationship with her boyfriend. Readers learn through characters' conversations that the second character ends up pregnant, and her boyfriend wants her to have an abortion. A girl takes a pregnancy test.

A boy is shown putting on his shirt in a girl's bedroom. A teen boy kisses a teen girl a few times. It is described as a passionate kiss on one occasion.

When a father tries to talk to his teenage boys about relationships, one boy says, "Uh, we got that in Sex Ed. It was very detailed. Very." Their father insists that they respect girls. He tells them to use self-control and wonders aloud what one of his boys does with his girlfriend when no one is looking.

A mother has a discussion with her teenage daughter, where the mother admits to having gone too far as a young woman, even though "I had no intention of giving myself away before marriage." She encourages her daughter to protect her virtue, and she laments that her own parents had not discussed these things with her and how easy it was to make a mistake. She also explains how the culture has cheapened the gift of sexuality, separating it from true, permanent, self-donating love.

Language: Bad language is indicated with phrases like, "a harsh curse word ripping out" and "he let loose a stream of curse words." A parent uses the phrase, "When hell freezes over,"

when he discovers that his teenage daughter is pregnant and wants to place her child for adoption.

Drinking, Drugs & Smoking: A troubled teen smokes cigarettes in several scenes. The same troubled teen spikes drinks with alcohol at a get-together and is challenged about his behavior by his twin brother.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

The West family is not a perfect family. Years before the story takes place, Mrs. West passed away and Mr. West stopped trusting God. The effects of that are seen throughout the series, beginning in this story. As a result of the example of friends and the power of prayer, the West brothers grow in faith, one by one, over the series—and their father too. The beauty of the Catholic faith comes to life in each of these stories.

Rating Scale:

Moderate – Story includes subject matter for teens 13 plus.