



## TEEN SERVICES COMMUNITY SERVICE TEEN BOOK REVIEW

### *A Very, Very Bad Thing* By Jeffrey Self Reviewed by Mia Li

**Name:** Mia Li

**Grade:** 8th

**Book Title:** A Very, Very Bad Thing

**Author:** Jeffery Self

**Number of Pages:** 225

**Rating (on a scale of 1-5):** 4/5

#### **Character List:**

- **Marley:** Marley is one of the only gay guys in his small town of North Carolina. He expected the homophobic people at his school and his crazy supportive parents. What he didn't expect was to fall for someone else so hard. He also didn't expect for a lie to turn into something bigger and bigger until it was almost unmanageable.
- **Christopher Anderson:** Christopher is the gay son of two very conservative, Christian parents. He goes through life with his parents constantly trying to change him until he fits the "normal" standard. When he meets Marley, it feels like his life is finally complete.
- **Audrey:** Marley's best, and only, friend. Audrey is a loud, confident, girl who loves to be in the center of attention. Audrey has been there for Marley through thick and thin. She's always there to give good advice in times of need. Audrey eventually helps Marley make the biggest decision of his life.
- **Harrison Holbrook:** The owner of a public relations firm. After finding out about Christopher's situation, Harrison finds Marley and decides to bring Christopher's story out into the world. Although he told Marley to keep a really bad lie, he did help him gain more attention.
- **Angela Anderson:** The mother of Christopher. She always went along with her husband, preaching that homosexuality was wrong. After the accident however, she realizes that her son is more important than any belief, and that she should've supported him throughout his life.

#### **Review:**

Marley was almost a typical kid. He went through his school life with one, great dependable friend – Audrey hated school almost as much as he did. One day, a new guy shows up and takes over Marley's thoughts. Over just a short period of time, Marley and Christopher grow closer and closer. They talk about everything, from their crazy parents to what they want to do in the future. As Marley and his parents go through a financial problem and struggle to keep the house they have, Christopher tries to stay sane in a retreat that his parents put him in to turn him straight. A huge turn of events soon leaves Marley alone and caught in a huge lie. Although the situation brings a lot of attention to Marley and Christopher's homophobic parents, Marley knows deep down that lying about something as serious as what had happened to Christopher would not only harm him and the people around him, but disappoint Christopher as well. Can Marley keep his secrets, and Christopher as well?

A novel filled with sadness and a slight bit of humor, *A Very, Very Bad Thing* shows that telling the truth is always the better option. Even if you are bending the truth to help someone or a cause you believe in, you'll always feel better if you tell the truth. The best people will always encourage you to do the right thing, and those are the only people that you should surround yourself with. Author Jeffery Self takes you on a fast paced journey showing two very different kids with two different paths that somehow converge until they're one. While I do think this was a very good book, I also think that it's really short and doesn't give you time to connect with the characters. I would recommend this to a teen or young adult who needs a quick book to read.