

A girl falls into a coma, and a young man, who believes his struggles make it impossible for him to be a knight in shining armor, realizes that he's the only one who can save her.

Parents of younger readers might want to know:

WARNING: SPOILERS

This book is one that I'd hesitate to give to younger readers, even though on the surface it doesn't contain much beyond the other two books. But below the surface, it's a book more appropriate for older teens, though younger readers have read it with parental guidance.

The hero's central struggle in this book is with same-sex attraction, though the words "homosexual" and "gay" never appear in the book. Basically, the hero has struggled with this for a while and has suffered abuse at the hands of an older man who knows his struggles. The hero is determined to live chastely, but feels that his struggles keep him from ever leading a normal life, being able to get married, etc. This story is about how he experiences healing, partly through friendship with other Catholic men who affirm his masculine identity, but mostly through his commitment to help his friend Rose, who is in an apparently irreversible coma.

At one point the hero admits to being assaulted and the villains taunt the hero for having been assaulted "by a dirty old man." The book also contains quite a lot of violence, including an ambiguous flashback of the young man's rape.

There's several fights between the hero and two female doctors, including a climax that involves the hero being beaten and left to die in a burning barn. However, no characters actually die in the book.

In my experience, many readers who are innocent of this particular issue don't pick up on the hero's struggle with same-sex-attraction. They imagine his problems had to do with being abused, which is fine with me and fits in with the story.

This brings up the subject of why I would choose to write a book on such an unsavory topic. Well, I know that sadly, this is a struggle that afflicts many young men in our society today, and I wanted to give them hope. As one youth minister told me, "The other side of this culture war makes their case with blockbuster movies and sympathetic characters in big TV dramas. What do we Catholics have? The Catechism." I do know that readers have gone and bought this book for young men struggling with this issue, so I think that it's safe to say this can be a good resource for parents in this regard.

The Author Recommends this Book: for ages 16 and older

For the Book: *Waking Rose: a fairy tale retold*