

Seven friars who work with the homeless in New York City find a girl with white skin and black hair on their doorstep, who's on the run from a rich lady in Manhattan who wants to kill her.

Parents of younger readers might want to know:

WARNING: SPOILERS

This book contains a reverse of the situation in *Shadow of the Bear*: instead of an evil guy trying to seduce a girl, there's an older woman attempting to seduce a young man. But I've never received any parental complaints about it. I think it's because the woman is so obviously evil and the hero is not at all tempted.

This situation happens twice: once (in flashback) when the hero is a teenager and his resistance of her overtures means losing his home and his father's trust. He refuses her, and she then lies to his father, who throws him out of the house. The second time it happens is even more intense: the choice is between giving into the woman or losing his life. Again, he makes the right choice. The language in both scenes is ambiguous, and I think that most parents feel the young man's heroism in both scenes justifies their inclusion in the book.

In this book, illegal drugs play a large role in the plot. The heroine is framed as a drug dealer, and the main villain is shown using drugs.

In terms of violence, this book begins with the heroine's mugging and has several fistfights and other kinds of fights, including a gunfight at the end that results in the villainess's death.

The heroine undergoes some traumatic episodes of psychological torment, told in flashback, where her innocent friendship with a dying man is portrayed as (but not called) adultery. There's some violence involved, but it's mainly psychological.

The intense suspense in this book makes it a favorite with male readers, and I've never had any complaints on the relatively violent content. Still I can imagine that younger readers would find some scenes frightening.

The Author Recommends this Book: for ages 14 and older