



## A Very, Very Bad Thing

*Jeffery Self*

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## A Very, Very Bad Thing Jeffery Self

From the author of *Drag Teen*, a startling novel about the complexities of identity -- and of truth.

Marley doesn't just want to be labeled The Gay Kid, but he doesn't have much else going on. He doesn't have any hobbies. Or interests. He's the only kid he knows without a passion . . . until Christopher comes to town. He's smart, cute, gay, and . . . the son of the country's most famous, most bigoted television evangelist.

Marley and Christopher immediately spark -- and become inseparable. For a month, it's heaven. Then Christopher's parents send him to a Pray Away the Gay program, which leads to even worse things. Hurt and outraged, Marley tells a very big lie -- and then has to navigate its repercussions.

## A Very, Very Bad Thing Details

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Author : Jeffery Self

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## From Reader Review A Very, Very Bad Thing for online ebook

### Renata says

Hmmmm I meannn this was a fast-paced (maybe too fast? but it was a quick read), enjoyable-enough read. Jeffery Self definitely has jokes. The relationship plot develops so quickly--which definitely happens in other YA novels--but it just made everything else hard to buy into.

anyway it's a big concept that doesn't quite gel together. But it's a quick read and has some funny moments. I liked Jeffery Self's last YA book, *Drag Teen*, more--it wasn't stellar but it was funny and it wasn't aiming for something as dramatic as this book is. I feel like JS--who I like as a comedian/performer--is better served by sticking with comedy.

also sidenote, what's happening on the cover??? The color scheme makes it look like this kid is getting pee splashed on his face which does not happen in this book. At no point does he get any liquid splashed on his face. I guess it's like a... metaphor?? I hate it though. (I know that's not something the author can control but I just wanted to address it.)

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### Martin says

This book turned out to be a very bad thing. It started off sweet, but I ended up having more problems than benefits. Admittedly, a faster than real life developing romance is not unusual in YA literature; however, I think that 225 actual story pages in this case are not enough to develop round characters. Here lies also one of my main problems: the book seemed like something what a stereotypical Hollywood studio would produce. The parents of both Marley and Christopher fell flat and were exaggerated into caricatures of bohemian, esoteric hippies on the one end, contrasted with the fanatic, strict, tv-self-marketed Christians on the other end. Especially Christopher's parents felt like cardboard cut-outs. I wished the author had invested in additional 100 pages to develop characters and the budding relationship between Marley and Christopher, which as is, happened more in Marley's head, seeing that the two did not spend that much time together. The author resorted to telling rather than showing (e.g. we are told on several occasions how 'smooth' Christopher's comments are).

Also plot-wise the book gives the impression of stereotypical rom-com course of action: the lying aspect that is already mentioned in the blurb, is slowly hinted at and thus introduced in a not very subtle way, finds its resolution in a big speech in which the protagonist professes his wrongdoings only to straight afterwards drinking champagne with his best friend, seemingly unaffected by the traumatic events of the past. It is this tragic and unnecessary incident in the book and how it is exploited by both the protagonist and author to shock the reader, which is most problematic. The representation of gay people would fail the Vito Russo test if this were a film or series. Marley is depicted as opportunistic in broadcasting his own vindictive agenda while justifying the means by falsely believing to stand for a greater good. In my opinion these wrong-doings never really were viewed critical enough but promoted a "the end justifies the means" logic with an addition of "but it is okay when you come clean afterwards". All in all the book had the promise to become a 3 star read; however the negative aspects outweigh the positives and I have to deduct stars for that.

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### Robin says

Maybe this book could have been saved if it had had character development? As is, it's one of the most forgettable YA books I've read.

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### Alex says

*I was sent this novel from Scholastic in exchange for an honest review. This does not change my opinion in any way.*

CW: suicide, homophobia, death (graphic).

Heartbreaking, comical, and a real tear-jerker. This novel was so good and pulled at my heart in many ways. Marley and Christopher have a relationship that I became easily invested in (like Marley). Through flashbacks of two months and the present "now", we learn about Marley's very, very bad thing and his relationship with Christopher, a new student at his school who comes from a famous Reverend, therefore, a conservative family who is very unaccepting of his sexuality.

The characters are very fun and realistic. Overall, I just really enjoyed this novel yet it broke me into a million pieces. It's rare that I cry at a book and it was inevitable by reading the title that I'd cry but I definitely wasn't ready for this tearjerker.

Highly recommend if you're looking for an LGBTQ+ novel.

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### ru ♦\*:?. says

raise ur hand if ur SICK of very, very bad things happening to very, very good gay characters

ugh i'm just.... SO disappointed )))))):

the worst thing was that i truly believed that the author would flip everything on its head, and that instead of the unhappy ending we were being lead to believe we were getting, we'd be surprised with a happy one. but that rarely happens, right? especially when it comes to gay characters. everyone just seems to have a shite time and me - a lil gay - is left depressed and miserable, again

essentially this is the story of marley and christopher. they meet at school and fall for each other super quickly (which, yes, i normally have a problem with, but i thought this was actually done really well), but sadly christopher's parents are super religious and keep shipping him off to conversion therapy. despite this, christopher is just about the loveliest person on earth. he's kind and funny and wants to make a change and help other gay kids and just ugh i'm crying again ??? because of course...(view spoiler)

this review is SO bad wow i can't stop rambling and what are capital letters or punctuation??? but i'm just

really upset because i actually loved the writing and felt like most of the characters were well-written and that the relationships/friendships were well-developed and believable. christopher's fucking aunt is the exception to this. she's his AUNT and she literally did jack shit for him. wasn't she meant to be super cool and accepting ??? why didnt she try to help her nephew more ?? if my friends/family were in christopher's situation i would literally do A N Y T H I N G to help them

the writing was nice too tbh, and provided gems such as: *i fought for something, for someone i loved, and there aren't many things one can do that are as important as that* & some genuine laugh out loud moments, but it doesn't make up for the fact that i just read another book with the (view spoiler) :////

i don't have much else to say except that the real shining star of this book was christopher, and he deserved so so so so so much more than the story he was given

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### **Sylvia Flowers says**

Disappointing. Flat characters, unimaginative dialogue, and a weak plot.

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### **Marie says**

I am not entirely sure what to say about this book. It was alright. The plot was interesting but it just kind of fell flat for me. The relationship was very speedy and not quite believable.

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### **Madeline says**

Bury your gays trope.

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### **Liralen says**

#### **The non-spoiler part of the review:**

-This was going to be three stars and a lot of side-eye, but then I got to the end, so...now it's two stars and a lot of side-eye.

-It seems to be a thing in queer YA fiction for the pendulum of parental support to swing wildly between you're going to hell and yay! You're gay! Let's throw a party! (This book offers both versions.) I'm looking forward to the day that the pendulum spends more time around 'That's nice, dear. Now would you please take out the trash?'

-Pro tip: When someone's idea of a good first date is to use you as bait to infuriate his bigoted parents...you might want to rethink dating him.

-Or, better: When *your* idea of a good first date is to use your date as bait to infuriate your bigoted parents...you might want to rethink.

**The spoilery part of the review:**

(view spoiler)

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## **Morgan says**

SPOILER WARNING!

Rating: 1/5 stars

Let's start with the SEVERAL problems I had with this book:

- The storyline
- The characters
- The execution (too fast and beginning, middle, and end)

A Very, Very Bad Thing by Jeffery Self is a coming of age novel about a gay teen named Marley and his love interest, Christopher. The book is only 225 pages long, thankfully. It took me roughly two or three days to read this book mostly because I wanted it over with. The book felt WAY too fast paced for the story it was trying to tell and I think that's why it didn't tell it well.

### **THE STORYLINE:**

All in all, A Very, Very Bad Thing had a great concept. It's what drew me to the book in the first place! Be not fooled by the description, though, for this book does not pull through. I will say this, I was holding this book on top of a pedestal of all the other LGBT books I've read this year. Books like We Are the Ants by Shaun David Hutchinson, Simon v.s. the Homo Sapiens Agenda by Becky Albertalli, and all of Adam

Silvera's books, so my hopes were pretty high. My expectations fell short in several ways, though. One being the storyline.

The storyline, for all it's worth, wasn't horrible. It wasn't HORRIBLE, but it definitely could have been told better. The story jumps between the present and the past. This is a fine story mechanic, I'd read another book a few weeks before that had jumped between present and past. This aspect of the story didn't completely suck, I will give the book that. Sometimes, though, the timelines can get a little confusing. In the past, it tells when Marley and Christopher were in high school, while the present tells of how Marley is getting ready for a speech. During the present moments, you get hints that Marley has concocted a lie that got a little too out of hand. You figure out what this lie is around the 150-page mark, and it wasn't that well told.

This lie is because of something that happened to Christopher and how Marley reacted to it. From the beginning, you can tell that Marley didn't react correctly. Marley tells a straight up LIE when the police and ambulance show up to the scene of what happened. This was because of his shock, which is something I'll give him. That's really my only big nitpicks from the storyline.

#### THE CHARACTERS:

This is an aspect of this book that I absolutely despised. We did NOT get to know the characters enough in this book. Really, we only knew Marley, and we barely even knew him. The characters were the biggest pet peeves that I had. Audrey was a character I couldn't care less for, along with Marley's parents. Christopher died and honestly? I didn't even care. Which is saying A LOT because character deaths usually hit me right in the feels. Christopher's death felt like it was added for the shock factor and to stir up drama, though. It felt like it was just placed there to be there. I physically I had to close the book and walk away after I read his death scene. THIS IS NOT GOOD.

I'm going to focus on Audrey, in this paragraph. Audrey felt so bland to me! It felt like the only thing she was there for was to be a supporting character, which she is, but shouldn't feel like. Audrey should have felt like a character I would like to like and actually care about, but she didn't. She barely felt human at all, which I absolutely hated. It felt like Audrey only had one interest, theater, and that was all she cared about. It also felt like everything she focused on was about herself. Now don't get me wrong, there are characters like this, but they usually have other defining traits and interests. Audrey was a supporting character that could have been much more.

Now, for Christopher. Christopher dies more than halfway through the book. His death felt way too rushed, but I'm getting ahead of myself. Christopher comes from a family of conservatives and his father is Reverend Jim, a very homophobic preacher. With Christopher being gay, his parents have sent him to many "pray away the gay" camps. This is a very real problem in today's society, so it felt great having this represented in a book. Christopher feels like a regular kid, maybe a little too bland, and his looks are like a cardboard cut out of what you imagine every surfer dude looking like. Christopher is also overly optimistic, so optimistic I actually wanted to punch him in the face. YOU DO NOT WANT A CHARACTER SOMEONE WANTS TO PUNCH IN THE FACE! Now, what I mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph, Christopher's death. Christopher does die around the page 150 mark, and it is so slow and boring. There are zero emotions when Christopher is killed off too! We barely even know him when it happens, because he is absent for so much of the book. Watching this character die filled me with a sense of dread because the killing of the gay kid's boyfriend would lead to the sad weeping boyfriend, which would have been fine if it didn't turn into the focus point. I am all for killing characters off, as long as it's necessary, but this felt so...forced. Christopher didn't have to die for Marley to face obstacles, Jeffery Self could have written obstacles in so easily. There are so many problems that could come with Christopher's parents being extremely homophobic, Christopher

did not have to die.

Moving on to Christopher's mom. Now, I didn't mind his mom all that much, she felt fine and she really was fine. I think I only think she was "fine" because we barely saw anything of her. If we did see her, she was dead on silent. The only time we really hear her ever speak is in her e-mail to Marley and at the end of the book. I feel like Christopher's mom could have had so much more depth put into her, she could have been an actual good character. She felt pushed to the side, though, like she was unimportant. Christopher's mom could have been a very useful character to push the story on if she was ever presently there. Near the end of the book, we learn that Christopher's mother accepted her son, despite her husband not. Christopher's mom expresses to Marley how much she loved her son. This is something that occurs at the end of the book between Marley and Christopher's mom:

"Christopher's mom steps closer to me and looks me directly in the eye. I wonder what she'll say. Will she slap me? Forgive me? Say something cruel? I deserve any and/or all of it.

But instead she wraps her arms around me, pulling me into her. I am struck, at first, by how she smells a bit like Christopher...

"Thank you for loving my son," she says into my shoulder, her breath hot and a little stale from nerves and coffee. "Thank you for doing what we couldn't do."

This shows that while Christopher's mom deeply cared about her son, she did NOTHING to stop her husband's actions. You could very well make the argument she had no power too, which would be a straight up lie because she even mentions wanting to stop her husband:

"I don't know why I went along with it all for so long. Why I allowed Jim to treat him so horribly. Why? Why didn't I do something? Why didn't I fight for him like?" With every word she speaks, her voice gets more and more frantic."

Also:

"After I saw that photo of you two, at that dance, I couldn't take it. He looked so happy. I was his mother and I had never seen him smile like that. Isn't that awful? I'd never seen him smile so happily." She shakes her head. "And I said, 'Jim, what are we doing?' And he said we're standing up for God. I said, 'But what about standing up for our son?' He didn't have an answer. All that fighting and never once for our boy."

Christopher's mom never even tries to fight back before that. It's only after she sees Christopher's photo of him and Marley at the school dance that she thinks she's doing something wrong. While Christopher's mom is definitely not my most hated character, she has several flaws in her character, which wouldn't be bad if they weren't so prevalent.

Now we face the lovely Reverend Jim, my least favorite character of this whole entire book. When Reverend Jim is moving to Marley's state of North Carolina, a newspaper called the North Carolina Times states his well knownness like this:

"Reverend Jim has been a television staple for many years, known for his syndicated infomercials, on which he sells his numerous books and DVDs. Over the years, he has made headlines for opposing abortion rights and gay marriage, as well as being a strong defender of the controversial "pray-the-gay-away" movement and a proponent of prayer in schools."

We get a vague sense of what Reverend Jim is like. Reverend Jim is also Christopher's dad which causes problems at home. All we really know about Reverend Jim is that he does not support his son and constantly sends him to pray away the gay camps. We also know that Reverend Jim is quite religious and that he opposes absolutely anything that doesn't match his views. At one point in the story, he takes away Christopher's phone and grounds Christopher for texting Marley. This also happens when Christopher brings Marley over to his Aunt's house for her birthday right after Christopher sang Firework on the karaoke machine:

"As the song ended and everyone cheered, I looked over and saw Christopher's parents darting out to their car. Their faces had gone from orange to red with anger, and they hadn't even said good-bye to Aunt Debbie, who simply watched them go, shaking her head in unsurprised disappointment."

This is clearly not the first time this has happened. Why would Christopher's parents even come to this party if they knew they were just going to leave? Reverend Jim clearly knows what is going to happen, so why doesn't he just not come?

Reverend Jim also refuses to acknowledge that his son is gay. He refuses to agree, even after his son dies, that he was gay. At this point in the story, Reverend Jim should realize that if he does not come clean about his son being gay, things are going to go wrong. Especially since the lie that Marley continued to build upon was that Christopher had killed himself. At this point in time, I fully believe that Reverend Jim would be realizing that his son is gay and his reputation is already ruined.

I'm going to talk about Marley's parents as one because they are essentially the same person, just in a male and female body. Marley's mom and dad are both described as extremely artistic and spiritual. Not only do they annoyingly try to solve the fact that they might lose their house with spiritual healing, they don't even try to fix the problem. They continuously talk about how this is tragic and scary for them, but they don't ever talk about fixing the problem. Marley's dad is messy and unorganized and it's all his fault that they might be losing the house that Marley grew up in.

His mom is deeply dedicated to theater and is definitely more organized than Marley's father, but she wants to solve everything with spiritual healing. At one point, his mom would know that now is not the time for spiritual healing! She is going to lose her house if she does not do something! Marley's father is also doing nothing to help, he had known about it for MONTHS and didn't tell his wife so maybe she could help. Marley's parents also aren't really there to listen, they're there to fill in as much as they possibly can.

Finally, we come to the main character, Marley. Sweet, sweet Marley. Please, note my sarcasm. Marley genuinely did only want the best for everyone, but that got him absolutely no where but creating a lie that got out of hand. This lie made him famous and made him feel guilty. A character with guilt on top of grief would be an interesting character if both the grief and the guilt were written well. Marley has his moments where I do like him, but most of the book is so focused on him I want to throw him in the garbage sometimes. Please, let me focus on other characters and build them up. Give them strong personalities and give them good reasons to be on Marley's side and reasons to not be on Marley's side.

Yes, of course, Marley is the main character we have to see a lot of him, he's what's driving the book! I can hear you saying it now. Marley spends so much time alone, though. We could easily fill Marley's alone time up with some time building up Christopher's character, Audrey's character, even his parent's character! We never get to build those characters up, though, because the book is so focused on Marley. We know that Marley and Audrey are close, but we never really see how close, we never get bonding moments, we never get memories. Marley thinks his family is too overbearing, and they honestly are, but we never see him

confront them about this. Marley's character, too, is never even built up.

I was not emotionally connected to any of these characters and could really care less about them. These characters were poorly written and poorly portrayed. Marley, Audrey, and Christopher don't act like regular teenagers, especially Audrey. Audrey is so prissy and acts ways to sophisticated and top notch to feel like a real teenager. The characters that were supposed to be teenagers didn't feel like teenagers.

#### THE EXECUTION:

Now, don't get me wrong, we all have ways we like of writing. There are all kinds of styles and this one just might not have been my fix, but I can say full well that I did not like the way this book was written. There were some killer one-liners that made me laugh out loud, though, like this one: "Regardless, something about this kid was alerting my internal radar of deep, proximate homosexuality." There were several good one-liners, but good one-liners do not solve the problem of how this book was written.

This is a short novel, like I said it breaks only 225 pages. This novel tries to do so much in 225 pages that it really should not. It tries to cover a death in less than 100 pages, which is difficult even if done correctly, and it tries to cover a relationship. A relationship that ended too early, for that matter. The writing felt fast and too choppy at points, those sentences were very annoying to read and really sent me into a frenzy. The occasional short sentence is okay, but they occur so often in this book that I could not ignore them.

This book also feels like it's quite squeezed together. It's not a page turner, not by far, but it is something you could finish in a day if you really wanted to. At points, *A Very, Very Bad Thing* feels like it just drags on and on and on. Some points just feel like they're there for filler, and that's exactly what they are, filler. Filler isn't a bad thing, not at all, sometimes it's necessary for character development. When you're not using that filler for character development and the main character is just wallowing in self-pity? Where's my check, I can't handle it. There is so much filler in this book, it felt like. Even important plot points felt like they dragged on and on. This is not how important plot points should feel. The climax of this book is when Christopher dies, which yes, is important, but we barely see any part of Marley's healing before he's whisked away by news sources and media outlets. As someone who lost someone recently, it does not easily take a week for someone to get over someone even though it may look like it. I would have really liked to see how Marley was deeply affected by the death of his boyfriend, but I didn't get too.

The time-jumps are important to the story, also. The past is telling you what led up to the present, and the present is preparing you for the end. Clearly, these two parts of the story are pretty important. Maybe with background information, maybe if we had started with the past, I would have understood the beginning a little better. The beginning of this book is so confusing, though. You are introduced to Harrison, who you later learn is Marley's manager (who I would have complained about in the characters section, but didn't have enough information too) and Christopher is name dropped so many times. In the first chapter, he's mentioned four times. You don't even know who he is yet! You can offhandedly mention characters we haven't met yet, but the way this is done is so confusing. You learn about Harrison in this way:

"Harrison, my manager and media consultant, whatever that means)...Harrison has left me with the speech I'm to give, accepting my Leading Change Award. Harrison wrote it for me, because despite being a genuine mess, Harrison is a good writer."

What a way to introduce a character, truly. Really, the only three things we ever learn about Harrison, personally, are that he's gay, he's from Salt Lake City, Utah, and that he's a good writer. In this first chapter, we're introduced to two characters (not including the main character), and one of them just by name. We're

also told that Marley is at a venue for something he doesn't deserve, according to him, and that he doesn't want to be at. We also know that Marley is getting the Leading Change Award for something, but what? This mystery won't be solved until nearly the end of the book! I wouldn't have minded this as much as long as the story was told well enough.

This book is very fast paced. I would expect no less from a book this short, but it is too fast paced. One moment Christopher is alive and then the next he's dead! There is no time to really let it sink in that Christopher is dead. There's also no time to get to know the characters because THEY'RE NEVER THERE! Audrey is there every few chapters, Marley's parents are there most chapters, Christopher is barely there, and Christopher's parents are practically ghosts who pop up every so often. These characters need attention. They need light shown on them, too, since they play a big part of the story. Audrey is the one who pushes Marley to tell the truth at his award ceremony, his parents are always there for him and support him, Christopher was his love interest taken to soon, and Christopher's parents are supposed to be the people we hate. The book deals with situations that take time to not only weave in, but get over. It does not do them justice either, and it does not deal with them well.

The beginning of the book is meh at best. It catches your attention and keeps you drawn in for a bit, but there isn't much to say about it. The middle, though, is where we start to have some problems. We start getting hints that something is wrong in the present, they were very subtle hints in the beginning, and it's a little worrying. You start to pick up on the problem rather quickly, though. So quickly, that when it happens, it's not as shocking as it should be. Once you know the problem, the book is pretty dead set on making you think what Marley did was a good thing. In some ways, it was. It helped those who have suffered problems like this realize that they weren't alone in their suffering. It just feels extremely messily put together and it stumbles over the subject matter. The ending has to be my favorite part, not only because it ended, but the ending was decently good. The ending felt like there was actually going to be a good outcome, that this would tie the story together, Oh, how I could be so wrong. The ending feels a bit abrupt, not satisfying, but not horrible either. I think I was more happy with the ending because thank god, this book was finally over.

Those are all the problems I had with *A Very, Very Bad Thing* by Jeffery Self and why I give it a 1 out of 5 stars. I absolutely hated this book with every fiber of my being, but not as bad as Johnny Tremain. It's up there, though. If you enjoyed this book, good for you! There are so many other LGBT+ love stories that are better than this one. I really wanted to like this book, but I genuinely just could not do it.

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## **Elliot says**

JAN 10-JAN 11 2019

3 Stars

ARC Copy

I came into this book with little expectations, as I didn't know much about it. Occasionally, in the case of this book for example, I have thrown books onto my shelf to read simply because they have LGBT themes.

I enjoyed the journey. It was a pretty quick read, It quite reminded me of when you watch a random indie film Youtube has thrown at you, and similarly the book actually has a sort of an indie film type feel.

*“If you could come back as anything, what would it be?...I’m just saying, who doesn’t smile when they see a ladybug? People just like them for who they are.” (Quote from ARC Copy!)*

Synopsis: Marley may have been fawning over the new boy-- The super well known, ultra-conservative, TV-famous-- preacher's son. Christopher. Marley *might* have been staring at his pretty face for days, but no doubt the entire school was as well. And first impressions shouldn't just happen in the grocery store, shopping for your mother tampons. *Except that's exactly what happens.* And as everyone knows, falling in love with the preacher's son is never an easy relationship to keep. But best friends are always there for a reason, and sometimes parents just need time. *Yet* other times, maybe sometimes you have to do things on your own, when hoping is not enough-- and only then, maybe there's a chance things can end as peacefully as they should-- *but at what price?*

I enjoyed both the fluffy, real and intense interactions between the characters. The unexpectedness is always a factor I believe is not often used well enough in novels to create a desirable effect within stories -- but this one was able to do so. I appreciate not being able to predict the book at every turn because of cliche and unoriginality within our culture now. And so I applaud the author.

On the topic of originality, this is *NOT* your typical *I-fell-in-love-with-the-preacher's-son* story. Though considering the father is conservative, there is some predictability on that part, but otherwise, *Christopher* surprisingly exceeded all expectations.

The only thing that felt out of place and unnecessary, was (SPOILERS:) (view spoiler)

Prepare yourself. I recommend this one as a read-all-at-once novel.

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### **ellie says**

a list of things that are NOT okay

- this book
- honestly don't read it
- it made me way too sad
- please don't read it
- is the book's title talking about itself

Reading this is like walking towards a nuclear bomb with people you love. It's kind of weird - the characters aren't extremely likable and the writing isn't great, but it felt real enough. I got so attached to the characters, and I sensed that feeling that this will all end badly (see: nuclear bomb) but I tried to pretend it wasn't going to happen. I loved their interactions, their relationship, and how it grew, and it was so cheesy but so sweet and I enjoyed it. But then we get to the part where he basically says that it won't work out and after that, reading every interaction felt so excruciatingly painful.

All the pain you feel through the book is because you knew it was going to end. I don't know. I just felt so let down. I really felt like my heart had exploded and I couldn't even bring myself to cry because it was all for nothing, I felt like we read all that for nothing. I just do not even want to think about this book again. So that's that. I don't recommend it. I think the author was trying to talk about morality and whatever, but this wasn't done well. It felt like a romance book that fucked me and all the other characters over. I originally rated this two stars because I felt like a book that gave me this emotions deserves some recognition, but honestly? it doesn't deserve them.

original review:

I'll write a full review when I'm not this upset. // (view spoiler)

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### **Rick says**

Listened to the audiobook, read by the author, Jeffery Self. Loved this story.

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### **Elise (TheBookishActress) says**

When I first read *A Very, Very Bad Thing*, I thought I should have enjoyed it. But the more I think about this book and all it entails, the more confident I become that this is something a little worse – it is one of those lgbtq books that is not written for queer teens, but for those looking for a little Suffer Porn.

[I'm tired.]

I'm going to try to explain this as best I can. When a book starts out as a somewhat-romcom with no substance [i mean...], it does not end in a tragic ending. Right? Unless it's a book about queer people, and then it always seems to end in someone dying or being violently outed. In this case both.

My issues with the execution of this utterly tragic awful book can be summed up in two points: 1) this book has a tone problem, and 2) it's way too short and not nuanced or developed enough.

In terms of the first complaint: the book takes too long being a sappy romance without a hint of darkness. **Around page 150, the book takes a really dark turn with barely any buildup.** If more suspense and tension were built up in the first act, the transition could've at least been powerful [if tropey and overdone]. As is, the twist makes the book feel messy and disjointed.

In terms of my second issue: this book does not develop its characters or its romance plot. None of the characters have depth.

The message of this book is important in *theory*, and I *wish* I had enjoyed it. But books — especially bury-your-gay trope books — cannot stand on the facade of being important when the execution falls flat. Maybe with some more editing, I'd enjoy this more.

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### **Peter Monn says**

Omg this book! So powerful, so profound and so important. I'll be posting my full review on my booktube channel at <http://Youtube.com/peterlikesbooks>

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