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Mrs. Potter

Senior English

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*The Testing*

Cia worked all of her life to get chosen for the testing; passing the testing means she can go on the the university to become a leader of the United Common Wealth. But her father, a graduate from the university, give her pause with a grim warning of “Cia, trust no one” (Charbonneau 46). Cia’s knows going to the university will be life changing, but she couldn’t imagine how much so it truly is. One of the few constants in her life in the testing is Thomas, a childhood friend who turns out to be more important to Cia then she could ever imagine.  From the chapter to the last page of the third book, this series was compelling, addictive and just straight out a great read

        The Testing trilogy is written by Joelle Charbonneau, a hit mystery novelist, and is her first young adult novel. With a well-crafted plot that keeps you on edge, the trilogy is book that you can immediately relate to. *The Testing* has numerous life lessons and lessons in leadership which makes this book a must read for all.  Charbonneau managed to pack a lot into these books but makes it an easy and exciting read with a consistent fast pace.

The testing is set in a deadly post war world.  The “Seven Stages of War” annihilated life as we know it, leaving in its ruins a toxic, hostile, chemical laden environment. With water overloaded with chemicals like bioengineered cyanide as well as various neurotoxins, and mutant hostile animals on land, the earth is more reminiscent of a barren wasteland from.  Various homestead like colonies of “normal” civilization emerged protected with massive fences are made possible by University graduates, like Cia’s Father, genetically engineering new crops and removing toxins from others that thy developed in response to the harsh environment.

Cia, a headstrong intelligent girl is embarking on a journey that, as she discovers, is all designed to push her to her limits mentally and physically. One simple miscalculation would result in failure. Unless Cia analyses everything, what it was intended to test her on, and reacts appropriately the consequences will be grave.

This Novel has numerous themes. Including Trust, perception, and morals. The first book, *The Testing*, immediately questions trust and as you go on, its advantages and its disadvantages. The second novel is based around morals and their importance. The third and final instalment, *Graduation Day*, talks about perception. “Control is an illusion. Only a handful of people have the ability to shape their lives and the lives of those around them.” (Independent Study 397) The lessons on perception, judgment, and control are some of the most important lessons on reality that the book teaches.

I immediately connected with Cia. She follows her instincts and manages to not loose herself in the challenges of the testing and the world around it, which is one quality that I admire above all else. When everyone else discovers their bad sides, she ignores it and, with extreme caution, follows her heart. She is able do what is right, and knows that it is not always easy. She also recognized how something that is good in some aspects is bad in others and creates a gray, she identifies them as wrong but yet still knows that they are good. “Where my beliefs were once black and white, I now see shades of gray. My father must have seen those shades, too.” (Graduation Day 757) The grey is the easy way and that there is a good alternative.

Once I started reading, I couldn’t stop.  I ended up binge-read the whole series.  Iam delighted to recommend this book to all Dystopian Young Adult readers. It is a great read that makes you ask yourself ‘what would you do’, but it’s one flaw is that it is missing a long lasting ‘after taste’ that makes you ponder it for weeks. I have taken so much from this book and I hope others will read it and get as much meaning and enjoyment as I have out of it.