

Title: *Pet*
Author: Akwaeke Emezi
Genre: Sci-Fi

Reviewer Name and Grade: Karan S. 8th grade

Date reviewed: March 26th, 2020

Pet is a story based on a teenage girl named Jam, who lives in a town called Lucille with her parents Bitter, Aloe and her best friend Redemption. Jam has an anxiety disorder that means that she often finds herself unable to speak and uses sign language to communicate instead. Jam's parents, Bitter and Aloe, are doting and supportive, even when she asks them questions about angels. Her mother points out that in order to succeed, the angels had to do things underhand, dark things, You can't sweet-talk a monster, good and innocent is not the same thing, they don't have the same face. Jam's mother, Bitter, is a talented artist, One day, Jam gets hurt and starts to bleed from some razor blades. She accidentally gets a drop of blood onto one of her mother's paintings and out of it emerges, Pet, a monstrous creature with ram's horns and metallic feathers and claws. Jam is surprised as well as terrified. She immediately shares the news of Pet's existence with her parents but her parents, Bitter and Aloe, are not surprised and confess the same situation had occurred with them many years ago when her Bitter's paintings had come to life. Pet explains that it is here to hunt monsters, and it needs Jam's help in order to get into places where it can't go. Her parents ask her to send it back, but when Pet says the monster is at Redemption's house, Jam allows Pet to stay to keep her best friend safe. Jam asks Redemption to help Pet find a monster but does not reveal that the monster is actually in Redemption's house. They later discover that his younger brother, Moss, is the victim and that Redemption's uncle, Hibiscus, is the monster. Pet and Redemption decide to kill Hibiscus in their anger but Jam urges them to let their parents handle the situation. Hibiscus is terrified that he confesses the truth about what he had done to Moss. Jam considers Pet as an angel in spite of his monstrous looks.

Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for non-fiction) keep you interested? -

Yes, I was very keen to know what happens next, especially how they find the monster.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right? -*I felt that the pace of the book was just right.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for? -*This book is good for students in grades 5-8.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to? -*I would recommend for someone who likes to read mysteries.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book? -*It is important for teens to know that everyone has a dark side and a light side.

4 stars: I enjoyed this book and found it worthwhile reading.

Reviewer Name and Grade: Manasa C. 8th grade

Date Reviewed: April 3, 2020

In this influential book, the aspects of an ideal, futuristic world with concepts of equality and justice are strongly highlighted. Jam, the lead character in this all-black cast story, is a trans girl who has a perfect family, speaks selectively, and has a solid best friend. She has no trouble whatsoever from people about her race or gender identification, and in fact, everyone welcomes her into the community. Some of the closer people even learned sign language for her, so that shows how welcomed she is. She inhabits the town of Lucille, where all monsters were banished by angels, or that's what Jam is taught. Jam is very sweet, as she is always polite and gentle with everyone. She is also curious about the monsters and the angels, and what they were. Her best friend, Redemption, is very beloved to Jam. He supports Jam in what she does, and tries to advise her against what is wrong. Jam's world was just fine, until her mother painted an angel.

Jam's mother, Bitter, painted an angel, but when Jam looks at it, she thinks it's a monster. This makes Jam more and more curious about monsters and angels. Finally, after a few days, Jam heads down to the studio to examine the painting. As she was looking at the painting, Jam became scared, and fell on the painting, and when she tried to support herself, her hand scraped against razor blades. The rest isn't something to spoil, but Jam embarks on a journey in a desperate attempt to fight the evil, and help make sure that loved ones are safe.

In this book, one of the important aspects that is meant to be derived is that utopias, like Lucille, cannot exist without someone fighting for them. You have to banish the evil that you find, staring in your face, without fail, so that these "perfect worlds" can exist. Being overly content in the world and failing to notice and dismiss the noticed evils is wrong.

Did the plot keep you interested?

The plot of the book was very straightforward. The hunt for the monster, and what happens while the hunt is presented in a very understandable way. But, the events were very interesting, and while you read the book, you tend to want to know the ending. So I was very active in reading the book.

Was the pace for the book too slow, too fast, or just right?

The pace of the book isn't so slow that you'd quickly be disinterested, and it isn't so fast that you wouldn't understand. Considering the fact that the book has about 200 pages, I would say it is on the faster side, but it was comprehensible enough to understand the theme and the basic plot.

What grade levels is this book appropriate for?

The book includes a child that had been abused by an adult, so it is recommended for grades 7 and up. Although that was one aspect of the rating, another aspect is the fact that there's a lot of new gender and sexual identification terms. Younger children might not fully understand the terms, because it also does include pronouns for the person as well ("their" might be confusing, because it children may think it is more than one person being referred to). But as we are

working toward a more represented future, younger children with more insight about these terms may be old enough to read this book (grade 6).

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this book to readers who are concerned with human morals, and people contemplating about a "perfect future". Also, if you want a read that has an impact on you, this is a great read.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

Teens who want a good, quick, Sunday read should definitely read this book. It has aspects of an utopian future, so it might be part fantasy and part everyday life. Anyone who wants a mix of these genres could bet on this book. Also, if you're sensitive about gender identifications/terms, or your religion prevents it, I wouldn't recommend this book to you. But if you are someone who wants a more diverse, and "utopian" future, this book may be for you.

Rating: ☆☆☆☆ 4

I rate this book out of a 4, because it was like something I have never read before. It talks about how evil may hide in plain sight, and when people refuse to look for evil, things get dire. The concept/theme of the story is *very* unique, and it has maybe never been written about before. But one thing that made me cut back from 5 stars is the hunt- I think there should've been more "meat" to the rising action. In my opinion, when there are more events that happen before the ending, there's more suspense and more eagerness to find out the ending. Therefore, the rating is fair in my terms, and now, it's up to you!