

Author: Kassie West
Title: *The Distance Between Us*
Perspectives Category: Socio-Economic Differences

Reviewer Name and Grade: Zahra V., Grade 9

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1. *What is the main plot of this book?*

The plot of this book follows seventeen year old Caymen Meyers, a girl who has known from a young age that the rich are not to be trusted. Enter Xander Spence, the rich boy that Caymen is determined to keep away. However, after his loyalty and attentiveness surprise her, she finds out money was a much bigger part of their relationship than she ever realized.

2. *Which character did you most identify with and why?*

Although my experiences are different from Caymen, I identified most with her because I am around her age and have experienced not fitting in through other aspects of life. While my struggles are different, they are very relatable..

3. *What do you believe is the main message of this book?*

I believe the main message of this book is to stay true to yourself and know that money is not everything. Given her environment and the stark contrast between Cayman and Xander, it clearly shows how money can play a role in a relationship. However, it is important to make sure that is not the defining aspect of how you form bonds with others.

4. *Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too "preachy"?*

I don't think this main message of self acceptance came across as too "preachy." In fact, I found it refreshing to read such a story from a different perspective. Reading this type of story allows readers to understand the nuances that come with socio-economic differences and how money can show status in society.

5. *If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

The two perspectives seen in this book were those who are rich and those who are poor. I agree with Caymen's perspective because it allows people to accept themselves as who they are, and realize that money does not determine your worth as a person. Additionally, the author does not shy away from addressing the differences between her and Xander and how Caymen's attitude towards the wealthy changed throughout the book.

6. *In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*

This book reaffirmed my belief that low-income people are just as worthy and deserving of being in places as rich people. Reading about these different perspectives educated me on how such stories should be normalized so that readers can feel represented and relate to characters like them.

7. *What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*

I don't think any perspective is missing from the book. In fact, I like how this book describes a variety of perspectives. For example, I liked how the author described Caymen working behind the cash register at her mom's porcelain shop as this is the

reality for many students across America. Additionally, I found it fascinating to hear the warnings Caymen's mother gave her about rich people.

8. *Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc., and if so, how?*

Yes, this book encouraged me to pursue the topic of wealth distribution in America because of how much its unequal aspects have been scrutinized and questioned over the past few years. Reading this book gave me better insight on acts of superiority and unconscious bias both sides have of each other due to these differences and how it impacts families, communities, and nations.

9. *What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?*

I would suggest this book to teenagers of all backgrounds to show how much transphobia and homophobia affects people. I would recommend this book to people who are in 8th grade and up as it discusses mature topics that should be understood and be taken seriously.

10. *What other book(s) have you read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography, and why?*

Another book that I think would make a good addition to this category is *Eleanor and Park* by Rainbow Rowell. This book follows two characters and discusses similar themes of socio-economic differences and upbringing between the two main characters as they develop a relationship.