



By the Creek

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Soon-to-be high school junior David Harper hates his family's move to the country. There's nothing to do, and he misses his friends in the city. But he doesn't have a choice. His mother's job is in Mason County now, so David and his mom are too, and he has to make the best of it.

At first, the only redeeming feature of David's new home is the swimming hole across the field from his house. Then David meets Benjamin Killinger, and suddenly life stops being so dull.

Benjamin is Amish, and cooling off in the swimming hole is one of the few liberties he and his brothers enjoy. A friendship with an English boy is not—but that doesn't stop him and David from getting to know each other, as long as it's on the neutral ground by the creek. After David risks his life to save Benjamin's father, the boys' friendship is tolerated, then accepted. But before long, Benjamin's feelings for David grow beyond the platonic. Benjamin's family and the rest of the community will never allow a love like that, and a secret this big can't stay secret forever...

Gay Contemporary Young Adult/Juvenile

By the Creek Details

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From Reader Review By the Creek for online ebook

Alice says

Boring! The only reason I finished it was because I wanted to find out how the Amish family would react to the big outing. The dialog felt unnatural and David (the non-Amish kid) talked like a 1950s housewife. It wasn't for me.

Eli Easton says

This has been on my TBR pile for awhile. I needed a romantic, boy-meets-boy story without cops, mob bosses or too much angst--this really hit the spot! It's a gentle story about a boy who moves to the country and falls for an Amish boy he sees at a swimming hole.

The author's research on the Amish felt pretty solid and I liked that the romance is of a soul-mates kind that overcomes all odds (though I would not call it insta-love). I would have liked a little more intimacy in the book because it was a big deal to both boys, being their first time with anyone. I have a feeling Geoff Laughton aka Andrew Grey held back on sex because it's a YA, but I have seen YAs with much more, and I think it would have worked well in this story.

In any case -- 5 stars from me! Thank you, Andrew.

Stephen says

When David Harper and his mother move to a rural area outside Ludington Michigan, David is bored and resentful and knows no one in the area. Added to that, he's feeling a bit marooned in that he has no car when his mother is at work.

What David does have is a stream and a swimming hole nearby. Then David meets Benjamin Killinger, an Amish boy his age who just might share some of David's interests...

This novel has an interesting plot-line and touches on just how difficult it is for someone who's been raised Amish to leave that community. However, the novel is handicapped a bit in that there is a lot of telling and not as much showing. That tended to make it difficult to fully engage with the story and to fully empathize with the characters or even to envision them as more fully realized, three dimensional characters.

In addition there are some points where the story strained my credibility. There is a storm scene that just did not "ring true." Not that there aren't big storms in that region, there are. It's just that the characters' reactions did not feel organic. Also David's reaction when he and Benjamin are discovered just seemed too immature for a high school senior. Conversely, the counsel of his gal-pal seemed too worldly for a girl still in high school. Finally, it seemed like the Amish concept of Rumspringa was handled poorly or perhaps not fully understood by the author.

This (debut?) novel is worth the reading time, but might have been better in the hands of a more experienced

storyteller. I look forward to seeing what the author does next.

I listened to the audio-book version of this narrated by Paul Morey. His portrayal of the voices of both boys was well done and his portrayal of the women in the piece was effective if not inspired. Overall, the audio version was a good but there was a monotone aspect to this that I'm undecided about. It may have been a factor of the way that the tell-heavy, show-light, prose was structured as much as the voice performance.

*** Note: I received a copy of this audio-book for free from the publisher in exchange for an honest and impartial review ***

Trisha Harrington says

Lovely, beautiful read.

By the Creek was a very sweet YA mm novel. It had such a lovely story, one that I have not read before in YA. It had an Amish character and an "English" character. Benjamin and David were a really strange couple in a lot of ways, but I loved them together. As far as YA stories come, this is one of the most YA I think I've ever read.

There were zero sex scenes. Benjamin and David did kiss, they groped each other a bit, but mostly it was just about the love they shared. It was innocent in a lot of ways. Even David, the "English" character was very naive towards the relationship. The beauty with the boys was there was no pressure for more. They took things at a slow pace and it was heartwarming to read.

The Amish theme in the story was strong. I hated Benjamin's father. For a man who was so into being one with God, he was a very judgmental man. I am not an overly religious person. But I can say that I do believe God loves us, and that he would want us to love everyone no matter what gender, age, race and sexual identity.

One thing I connected with David about was the loss of a parent. I was younger than he was when I lost my dad, but the same feelings are there. Our feelings were the same when it came to the possibility of having a step-dad. I loved connecting with the character when it came to that.

Overall I would have to say that this is a wonderful YA novel. If someone wanted to read an mm book for the first time, this would be a great book to start on. It is very easy to read and I believe it could be read at any age and enjoyed. Simplicity is the key to this book and I really enjoyed that.

Highly recommend this!

Becky Condit says

BY THE CREEK is well-known author Andrew Grey's first foray into young adult literature, and he took a totally creative route into it. Mr. Grey's Love Means... series is one of my favorites. In his latest book of that series, Love Means... No Limits, one of the continuing main characters, Geoff Laughton, writes a YA novel dedicated to his partner Eli and their son Jakey. The name of his book is BY THE CREEK, and Mr. Grey

actually published the book. To differentiate between his adult and YA stories, Mr. Grey used the character/author's name, Geoff Laughton as his pen name for the YA story. I'm not revealing anything Mr. Grey didn't want known, so don't worry that I'm betraying a trust. So, here goes with a review of Geoff Laughton's debut novel, *BY THE CREEK*...

I ached for the situation both boys are in, dealing with the fear of not knowing what the reaction of others will be and having no one to talk to. Too many gay teenagers are in exactly this isolated circumstance and that is exactly the audience for the gay, YA genre of books. With no access to television, books, or movies, Benjamin naturally assumes he is the only young man to ever be attracted to boys instead of girls, and he is terrified as he prays to his God to remove this condition from him. Instead he finds David, which brings on a whole new set of decisions to be made: the family and community he grew among or the understanding young man who loves him unconditionally.

I loved this book very much and recommend it to anyone as a good piece of literature. If an affirming message comes out of reading this book, that's wonderful, but just as a good book it stands on its own merits. Enjoy.

Please see my complete review on release day, January 15, 2013 at <http://mrsconditreadsbooks.com/index...>

Nick Pageant says

This is a decent YA read. I wasn't thrilled or disappointed either. It's just a nice book. My main gripe is the very unrealistic dialogue. It felt very wooden and forced. Still, nice book with a few feels.

Alona says

I'm going to go with 3 stars.

Just like Nick and Mark said, it was a nice story, but one that didn't get deep into your heart, like we love to when reading a YA romance.

It was a sweet story, about two sweet boys, from two very different worlds.

It could have been a great emotional journey for love and freedom, but it didn't dig deep enough for it to be just that.

Serena Yates says

I have no idea why it took me so long to get around to reading this amazing book, and can only blame my humongous TBR (To Be Read) mountain of books. The only person I deprived of a wonderful story is me, and I really should have known better. It is no secret that I love Andrew Grey's books, and since Geoff Laughton is his pen name for YA novels, I was bound to like this book.

And what a story this is! Two teenage boys from very different backgrounds meet and begin to explore what it means to grapple with being different, deal with potential rejection by their families, and making the first decisions about who they want to be when they grow up. Their two worlds collide, and since being Amish

and being “English” (i.e., not Amish) is mutually exclusive, it can only be one or the other. This is a book about growing up, dealing with being gay, and finding your way in a world that is not very forgiving toward those who are different – no matter whether you’re Amish or American.

David moves to a new town with his mother, and he hates everything about it before he even gets there. He is going to be a high school junior at his new school, so moving away from his friends and everything he knows is a huge blow. He feels disoriented and sort of drifts along without much direction. To make matters worse, there is no TV to speak of with only three stations, and he has nowhere to go during the few weeks before school starts. But then he discovers the swimming hole and the creek behind the house and begins to explore his surroundings. He also runs into Benjamin, an Amish boy who is not even supposed to talk to him. David is very attracted to Benjamin, and ignores any and all cautions about staying away from him so he won’t get into trouble. David has a lot to learn about cultural sensitivity and respecting other people’s limits!

Benjamin, on the other hand, has a lot of guidance about what is right and wrong as well as many rules to follow. His upbringing has been strict, and his father’s word is law. Thinking for himself is a new concept for him, and he feels very uncomfortable about it. But talking to David is fun, and when he begins to discover that they share an interest in boys rather than girls, the real conflict begins for Benjamin. If he wants to be who he is, if he wants to be honest about himself, he has to leave the Amish community. Blindly following his father’s rules is no longer an option for him now that he has begun to think for himself. But how can he do that when everyone he knows and loves is a member of that group?

If you’re looking for a story about growing up and choosing your own values, if you want to find out about two boys who deal with questions of conscience and issues that many adults have problems with, and if you’re looking for a read that is as sweet and gentle as it is honest and fascinating, then you should read this novel. It shook me up, pulled me in, and I loved every page.

NOTE: This book was provided by Harmony Ink Press for the purpose of a review.

Aine Massie says

First off, I love dedication. If you don’t know already, Geoff is one of the main characters from the Love Means... series by Andrew Grey. Geoff gets his chance to not just share his story with us, but he now gets to write his own books for his son, Jakey.

By The Creek is a wonderful story of two young men coming to terms with their sexuality and with the world around them. For David, this is mostly an internal struggle but for Benjamin, a young Amish man/teen, this is more than simply dealing with his confusing and forbidden feelings, he also has to deal with how his family and community view homosexuality.

For some, the fact Benjamin is Amish might make them think it’s one of those “their” problems, but being abused, shunned, disowned, etc. happens all around the world, constantly to LGBTQ teens and adults who decide to be true to who they are and fight to love whom they love. What I hope everyone that reads this book finds is a touching romance that gives hope and shows what a little love and support can do for those struggling. (Mind you, even without the ‘moral’ this is simply a wonderful read!)

I can’t wait to read more from Geoff! He has a great writing voice and I, personally, think we need more

LGBT YA and NA books out there. Straight teens have heroes to look up to, to see that things do get better, that they can overcome and still have love and a great life... this is what Geoff gives his readers in *By The Creek*.

T.M. Smith says

Original book review from January 2013...

When I first took this book for review I asked the author to tell me about the story. He said he wanted to write a YA novel with a gay storyline because there really aren't any available. I have to agree with him, atleast not where the entire story is based on the two young men. This isn't a sexy steamy M/M novel, this is a well written YA novel about young love, that love just happens to be between two young men.

David and Benjamin happen upon each other one afternoon at the swimming hole that lie's between their properties. David has recently moved into his ancient country home with his mom, and Benjamin is a member of the Amish family that lives in a homestead across the road from David. The pair move at a steady pace starting with a friendship that is forbidden at first, then accepted due to David's actions, moving into something kind of like love. It's not an instant overnight love, and it's not a slow burn, it's pleasantly steady and happens exactly when it's supposed to.

Benjamin is wildly curious about the outside world and David is more than happy to fill him in. The swimming hole becomes their sanctuary where innocent conversations lead to looks of longing and ultimately, that first kiss. It's during one of these afternoon frolics when the boys are locked in a passionate embrace that Ben's father finds them. David is inconsolable as his mom and two best friends rally at his side. Will Ben come back to him, or will he ultimately choose to stay with his family.

Laughton has a way of conveying emotions from pen to paper that is really unique in books today. I was seriously drawn into David and Benjamin's reality, I grew with them, I fell in love with them, I cried with them.. it was fabulous!

I was reminded of one of my favorite movies while reading this book, *Latter Days*. There is a line in *By the Creek* where Ben questions if the love that he and David share is a sin, David quickly tells him that to be loved and love someone could never be a sin. At the end of *Latter Days* Jacqueline Bissets character has one of the best lines in any movie ever "So, your church forbids drinking and homosexuality. Well, forgive me for not joining, I can't imagine Heaven without both of them." That line is so perfectly, David and Ben!

Highly recommended! Well written. Characters have depth and realism. Overall an emotionally fabulous read!!

Updated audio review...

David is all but forced away from his home, job and friends due to his mom's relocation for her job. Miserable to say the least, and slightly bored with isolation, he ventures to the creek that lies between his home and the local property of the local Amish community. It's here that he meets Benjamin, an Amish teenager that knows nothing other than the life he has been taught to lead. Through his friendship and mutual attraction to David, Ben starts to question the life he is meant to lead. The two teenagers build an

unbreakable bound and love that will last a lifetime, by the creek.

The perfect marriage of narration and writing, Morey gives Laughton's words a voice, he truly brings David and Ben to life. I love when I can listen to a story that I've already read, and find something new within the story or the characters that I missed in black and white. While I was so drawn to this story because of the passion and pain that was written into the relationship, hearing David's pain at possibly losing Ben at that point in the story just took it to an entirely new place for me.

These two young men were the very definition of endearing, the story just utterly engaging and now with the addition of Paul Morey's voice to give the words new meaning, one word... Flawless! This is a YA story, but I believe it is written and conveyed in such a way that fans of all ages will fall in love with David and Ben and their journey.

Definitely a must read AND a must listen!

* I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review through <http://mmgoodbookreviews.wordpress.com> *

V says

I like it don't get me wrong, I think this would have been perfect for me when I was very young, I think I'm too old for these innocent stories, I'm too kinky for this kind ;)

Sophia says

I was so pleased to have the opportunity to read this one when I was given the opportunity. I'm not sure I would have picked it up on my own, I'm ashamed to admit, because Young Adult Contemporary is still a little explored genre for me. However, it was placed in my hands and I trust the author so I gamely plunged in. Sooo glad I did. This was such a good for the heart coming of age story that thankfully was devoid of unnecessary angst or the love triangles that get me nervous about YA literature.

The story begins when a highschool boy, David, who lives with his widowed mother is forced to move yet again at the end of his school year so she can take a better job position in her company. This move is not terribly far away as in actual distance, but its worlds away from the difference in city life to country life. David now has a whole summer stretched out before him with no car to leave the house, no job, and no friends while his mom works.

But lo and behold there is a ray of light. Across the road is an Amish family and after a brief misunderstanding he becomes acquainted with Benjamin who is his age. They meet down by the creek on a hot summer day when Benjamin comes for a swim to cool off. The Amish don't mix with the English (non-Amish) so its all rather tentative and cautious on Benjamin's part at first. David realizes that just the contact with him is slightly overwhelming for Benjamin so he must be patient. With time, a friendship begins between the two boys that must remain secret with snatched moments together. That is until an act of kindness on David's part allows Benjamin to openly acknowledge him as a friend. In the meantime, David

starts to make friends and feel comfortable with his new school.

Being with Benjamin and even more so thinking about being with Benjamin reinforces what David has learned about himself already. He is gay and beyond that, he is attracted to Benjamin. David has no idea what to do with this truth so he keeps it to himself. But like all truth, it eventually comes out. David takes a big chance by telling Benjamin the truth about himself and he tells his mother. This was very hard for him, but eventually it also settles things for him when Benjamin not only accepts him, but admits that he has feelings for David.

Much of the story then becomes a time when the boys grow a closer relationship, but also makes them realize that Benjamin has a really huge choice ahead of him because unfortunately he cannot have it all. He must choose the Community and that way of life or choose to leave it and be shunned to live in the world where he can be true to himself.

The plot for this story is told all from David's perspective and that works out fine because David relates Benjamin's side of things well. The pace is gentle and thoughtful as this is no ordinary friendship and relationship. Each little movement forward is a huge step.

The characters were easily loveable. David and Benjamin were both good and good for each other. David's mom and friends were great. I'm envious of David for his friendship with Lynn because she had the best advice. I got a kick out of how Benjamin's little brothers seemed to always pop up just when the boys finally got some time together. It was also cute how David had that epiphany moment when he realized that his mother really cared and offered him solid advice and warning (yes teens they do understand you better than you think. Haha!).

I have to say that I was pleased how the Amish point of view was handled. I respect their life choices and though its not for everyone, it is a worthy way to live. Not to say that I wasn't moved by the heartbreaking decision that Benjamin was forced to make or that I condone possible abusive behavior, but I appreciate that this was not taken as a moment to slam a culture.

As I do with any YA review, I'll say that bad language and violence are absent with mild sexual overtones present.

I recommend this to those who enjoy a gently paced m/m contemporary coming of age story.

Thank you to the author for providing me my copy in exchange for an honest review.

Tailtiu says

I loved it and will keep my eye on this ~~not so~~ new author please keep writing Geoff!

Feel The Book says

Recensione a cura di Cleo per Feel the Book

Trasferitosi da poco insieme alla madre in una casa di campagna, lontano da tutto ciò che conosce, David

trascorre le pigre giornate estive in cerca di qualcosa da fare, combattendo la solitudine e quella consapevolezza che si sta facendo lentamente strada dentro di lui: la sensazione sempre più forte di essere diverso, in qualche modo. Senza più amici, tutti rimasti in città, non è ancora pronto a confidarsi con la madre, e non vuole di certo che la cosa si sappia nella nuova scuola che dovrà frequentare, quindi resta solo con i propri pensieri e desideri. Finché un giorno, poco lontano da casa, fa un incontro, lungo la sponda di un ruscello. Conosce Benjamin, un coetaneo che vive nella comunità Amish lì accanto, e ne resta subito affascinato.

L'amicizia tra i due sboccia lentamente, mentre nuotano tra le acque di quel ruscello che divide le proprietà in cui abitano e segna anche il confine tra i loro mondi, che non potrebbero essere più diversi.

Avere il diritto di un'opinione diversa dai propri genitori è una problematica centrale, per un adolescente, e l'autore affronta l'argomento in modo onesto, senza attribuire ai due protagonisti idee troppo mature per la loro età, o certezze che solamente il trascorrere degli anni potrà far loro acquisire. David e Benjamin passano dall'amicizia a un timido innamoramento con dolcezza e naturalezza, attratti dalle rispettive solitudini e da un confronto continuo tra i loro stili di vita. Senza alcun giudizio, ci vengono proposti due modi di pensare contrapposti, e attraverso i ragazzi arriviamo a comprendere come non importa l'ambiente in cui siamo stati cresciuti, perché alcuni dilemmi affliggono tutti durante la crescita. In questo senso David e Benjamin sono uguali e su questa affinità si costruiscono le basi del loro rapporto.

Mi sono ritrovata in una frase, in particolare, che esprime quel profondo senso di solitudine e alienità che tutti gli adolescenti hanno vissuto, a maggior ragione se come i due protagonisti sono consapevoli di appartenere a una minoranza purtroppo ancora discriminata dalla società umana.

L'amore reciproco è la spinta che aiuta i due a superare le paure, ma la famiglia e la comunità di Benjamin restano un ostacolo insormontabile. Pur descrivendo con assoluto rispetto la società Amish, l'autore mette bene in chiaro che l'omosessualità resterà sempre un peccato imperdonabile per loro, qualcosa di proibito che nemmeno un legame familiare potrà far accettare.

Il tempo passa e i due ragazzi affrontano separazioni e difficoltà, trovando infine quella felicità che meritano, per quanto venata dalla necessità di Benjamin di abbandonare tutto ciò che conosce se vuole riuscire a essere se stesso.

Storia molto dolce, questo romanzo ha forse un piccolo difetto nel dover affrontare qualche anno della vita dei ragazzi, che necessariamente hanno bisogno di questo tempo per maturare fino al punto da essere pronti a compiere scelte drastiche che influenzeranno tutta la loro esistenza. Ecco che quindi troviamo spesso dei salti temporali piuttosto rapidi, che tagliano soprattutto pezzi di vita di David, in quando la narrazione segue il suo punto di vista. Nuovi amici compaiono un po' dal nulla, nella storia, dal momento che il ragazzo li ha incontrati e ha stretto con loro legami molto forti durante questi salti temporali. Una volta accettata la necessità di questo stile narrativo per poter portare a compimento la vicenda dei due protagonisti, la faccenda si supera, anche perché comunque la storia è sempre focalizzata su David e Benjamin, i loro momenti insieme e quelli in cui sono costretti a restare separati.

Una lettura piacevole, che affronta in modo credibile e tenero l'amore tra due adolescenti senza farli comportare da adulti prima del tempo.

Editing recensione a cura di The Goddess per Feel the Book

Mr. says

This was a truly unique piece of young adult writing, and I do not mean that in a negative way. Not even in the slightest. This book – amongst a sea of gay Young Adult fiction that follow the formula: Gay-nerd-meets-seemingly-straight-jock-and-nerd-doesn't-like-himself-because-he's-a-nerd-but-jock-loves-

him-because-he's-beautiful – provides a refreshing and different take on the genre. For my full review, go to **Greedy Bug Book Reviews-**

<http://greedybug.blogspot.com.au/2013...>
