



The Boy Who Couldn't Fly Straight

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Will Grace and her evil coven continue kidnapping teenagers in the greater Seattle area, or will the local witches, determined to live in peace and secrecy, be able to stop them?

Closeted high school sophomore Charlie Creevey and his mother Elizabeth live in the shadows of the Sierra Nevada Foothills, where they tend to their fruit orchards and vegetable gardens, generally keeping to themselves. That is, until one afternoon in late August, when a German shepherd crashes through their living room window and demands that the boy be handed over.

Barely escaping with their lives, mother and son flee California and head to Seattle, where Charlie discovers the secret Elizabeth has been keeping from him his entire life: that he hails from a family of witches, and will soon be initiated into the craft.

Charlie moves in with an aunt and an uncle he barely knows, then has to adjust to a new school and a new life. Soon after, the coven strikes again, barely failing to capture him.

At the same time, Charlie tries to deny that his feelings for popular high school junior Diego Ramirez have become something more than friendship. He learns the hard way that ignoring what his heart wants obstructs his development as a witch, making him defenseless against Grace and her growing threat.

Will Charlie refuse to accept who he is, or will he acknowledge the truth, in order to stay alive and protect the people he loves?

The Boy Who Couldn't Fly Straight Details

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From Reader Review The Boy Who Couldn't Fly Straight for online ebook

Patrick says

This book I thought it was really great storytelling he got a good sense of who the characters were and what they wanted he also got to see magic presented a new interesting style. I like that the main character slowly came into his understanding of himself and that it wasn't like a romance everything just rushes to quickly. This book would definitely be recommend it to anyone who likes Harry Potter or Unnatural or any other supernatural/ magic /fantasy novels.

Kat says

I find it hard to believe that this is a debut novel! It's absolutely amazing and I found myself glued to the story. It's long, but it never felt like it dragged and every bit seemed necessary.

Though I found it being promoted in a facebook MM romance group, there really isn't a huge amount of romance in this first book of what I found out will be a trilogy. The fact that Charlie comes out as gay is a big part of the storyline, but the actual romance isn't. I have a feeling that will be more important in the other books though.

This is more the story of how a young man's powers as a witch come to be. It has magical moments and moments you really, really wish he could use his powers to defeat someone totally. But then, where would the story go in the next books?

As far as the romance goes, I could feel Diego's desperation and insecurity and I totally understand. I didn't feel the same need, want and desires coming from Charlie. Yes, I know he was just coming out as gay, but I just didn't feel much passion in him, especially for a hormonal teenager. He does have a lot going on in his life though, so it's really understandable.

I can't wait for the next book. This will definitely be a re-read series for me. I'm sure of it.

Tracy says

I love paranormal fiction and consider myself well read in that genre. Jeff Jacobson has written a brilliant story that competes with the best in the biz!

The story is full of vivid characters and exciting plots; filled with humor, suspense and real life situations of love, sexuality and WITCHES!

I fell in love with the characters and couldn't put the book down! I was actually crying at one point while reading in a busy Starbucks. That's how deeply I was moved by the story.

Excellent job Jeff Jacobson. I'm impatiently awaiting book 2!!

Phelps says

I had high hopes for this book and it was doing well for a bit tho it was a slow burn. The magic system needs work seems to lack a solid foundation so when characters talked about it they were unnecessarily vague to the point of being annoying.

The plot line was building slowly but surely though it lacked action the character development was good and I felt it was heading in a good direction taking its time to find itself and then it just ended... it ends so abruptly I thought part of the audiobook had corrupted in the download. I can't even call it a cliffhanger just banal to the point of being jarring. I swear author must have had one book the publisher decided was to long for the intended audience so they cut it in half arbitrarily leaving this book without the proper presence of a villain a climax or a conclusion.

Don says

(FROM MY BLOG) Charlie is 15 years old. He lives a quiet, almost reclusive life just outside a small town in the California Sierra foothills. He goes to school, he does his homework, he works hard helping Elizabeth, his young single mother, raise and harvest the vegetables that end up on their dinner table. His family is poor and his social life is limited, but he feels reasonably happy and content.

Then one day, a large dog appears at the door and demands, in good English, "Give me the boy, Elizabeth." Elizabeth refuses, a fight ensues, and mother and son flee north to Seattle.

Charlie -- understandably, in a state of shock -- quickly finds himself living with an aunt and uncle in a large, upper middle class home in West Seattle, near Alki point with views of the Sound and of the coming and going of the ferries. He is enrolled in "Puget Academy," a private (fictitious) West Seattle school, where, although excruciatingly shy, he is quickly befriended by Diego, a popular student leader.

Within the first week or two of his arrival in Seattle, he discovers two upsetting facts about himself. He may be gay. And he is definitely a witch.

In *The Boy Who Couldn't Fly Straight*, Seattle native Jeff Jacobson has written an original and absorbing fantasy novel in a powerfully evoked Pacific Northwest setting. Charlie learns that "the community" of witches exists everywhere, in every nation, and that he himself is a witch's son. The community consists mainly of good men and women who simply want to live inconspicuously, keeping their powers to themselves, without bothering or being bothered by others.

But, as in every group, there are bad apples who use their unusual abilities for evil, and who seek ways to increase their power at the expense of others.

Jacobson's writing is forceful and absorbing. His main characters are well fleshed out -- not cardboard heroes and villains -- and his descriptions of the natural surroundings in the Northwest are vivid and help carry the plot. The author himself may well be a "foodie," because meals are described in mouth-watering detail.

Similarities to the Harry Potter books are obvious. But, to my mind, Jacobson's writing is richer and more sophisticated. While the Harry Potter saga is a rollicking good adventure, it tends to be a bit cartoonish. Jacobson's book, on the other hand, entices the reader into almost believing that witches could well exist. And not only exist, but exist all around us, right here in Seattle -- in West Seattle, Madison Park, Seward Park, Belltown, and the Pike Place Market (all of which serve as locales for the book's action).

Charlie's romance with his school classmate -- the relationship between Diego and Charlie teeters for some time between love and friendship -- is serious to the boys, and is treated seriously, but described lightly and with restraint. This is more an adventure story than a romance, and Charlie's eventual coming out seems to serve primarily as an occasion for Charlie, a novice witch, to demonstrate his willingness -- despite his shyness -- to be completely honest, honest with others, certainly, but especially honest with himself.

The plot seems to slow a bit around the half-way point, as Charlie is mastering the mumbo jumbo of how to be a witch. But we do learn with some excitement during these sections how Charlie learns to fly on a broom (yes, despite cell phones, witches aren't entirely creatures of the 21st century). We are told of the aerodynamic qualities of different types of woods, the way in which the "ignition" spell must be recited (not just spoken, but "felt"), how to go up and down, steer left and right, and how to handle the occasional air pocket.

A nighttime training flight by Charlie and his aunt out over Elliot Bay and the Sound, with a quiet broom landing for a picnic on Blake Island, appears breathtakingly idyllic. I don't recall Harry Potter's quidditch lessons being described as lovingly, or in such realistic detail.

The final quarter of the novel races forward faster and faster, as Charlie and his adult friends within the witch "community" face life and death dangers to themselves, to other witches and their children, and to earth itself. Charlie is forced to overcome not only his shyness, but his own normal teenage angst, angst that feeds upon and enhances psychic confusion from his encounters with his own newly awakened witchcraft powers and his ability to sense the evil in the minds of his enemies. The plot reaches a temporary resolution at the novel's conclusion, but the scene has clearly been set for a sequel already being written.

This YA book is appropriate for any kid in middle school or older -- especially for those who find themselves tongue-tied with shyness, or who suspect they might be gay. Or, of course, for those kids who wonder if they might be witches. Also appropriate for all you adults who secretly read and loved your children's Harry Potter books whenever the kids were away from the house.

Christian Frank says

Can't wait for the second book in the series!

S.A. Collins says

While I'll hesitate to say it is a 'gay' Harry Potter type book, it sort of is. A bit edgier and a little more realistic in that the separation between the mundane and the witching world is intertwined rather than the strong division that was prevalent in Rowling's books.

Jacobson keeps it crisp and moving along. He doesn't dawdle on elements too much - at times this proved to be a bit frustrating. Also the fact that Charlie seemed to have very antiquated ideas of what a gay person would be like (girly clothing seemed to be involved in his head) yet even with his limited access to media under his mother's austere lifestyle when they were in hiding, he still would have been exposed to quite a bit more than what the book leads me to believe. This was the sole element that repeatedly took me out of the moment.

Other than that it was a well crafted tale. The book leaves it open ended for a series (which Jacobson intimates) and I am sure we haven't seen the last of Grace the red-haired baddie from book one. After all, it is clear that they have Charlies beloved Diego in their grasp now in the epilogue.

The only other thing that rankles me, thought it is no fault of Jacobson and more of an overall observation is that the YA genre (and particularly the GLBTQ variety) tends to infantilize the romance elements of YA books (limiting it to kissing only and some light petting) when we ALL know that is the furthest from where hormonally charged teenaged boys would be in real life. Again, not specific draw against TBWCFS, but still another point that had me tsk-tsk-tsking over that missed or unrealistic element.

I get that Diego is out and more forceful, but Charlie's character seemed a bit too reticent. It strained credibility for me. Yes, I get that we want to see him grow and evolve, but I am not sure that this path was spot on with how modern teenaged boys really are in this era of internet and it's plethora of abundant information. That part of the story seemed a bit dated for being a 'in the now' sort of tale.

Doesn't dissuade me from picking up volume 2 but just a general observation. I believe Diego's actions far more than I do Charlies long drawn out am I or am I not... with the amount of kissing going on he'd have to be a fairly dim bulb not to catch on that yeah, kid, ya are.

Looking forward to the next in the series. Despite my misgivings (that I've mentioned above) I strongly recommend the book. It's a fun romp and a welcome addition to the witching world of literature. We have our gay HP, now let's see what the kid can do.

laura? says

Cute, well-meaning, full of heart, with a sweet, soft-boy protagonist whom I really liked... but ultimately not a very well written or plotted or crafted book. I very very very much wanted to like it! But the weird dissonance in tone, the shoddy character voices, the confusing and regrettably bad world-building... they all left me cold.

I will probably read the second book in the series, since this one ended so abruptly, and I feel like I want to give this a second chance. But my hopes aren't very high.

Aaron Barnes says

Wow

This was perfect. I'm still at a loss of words for the ending. I hope to read more from this author. Truly a

brilliant piece of literature.

Ulysses Dietz says

The Boy Who Couldn't Fly Straight

By Jeff Jacobson

Four stars

Except for the fact that I really hated the cliff-hanger ending, this was a brilliant book.

Five stars except for the very last paragraph.

This is the Harry Potter book that every gay teenager wished J.K. Rowling had written. It's sure the book I wish she had written (and I wish I'd been a teenager instead of middle-aged when I read "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone").

It is edgier, faster, less whimsical, and very much an American story. There are many, probably intentional, parallels with the Hogwarts books, but they are there simply to acknowledge that we're dealing with teenagers and magic. It is not a copy, or even an homage to Rowling's work. It is unique and creative and all its own thing—the same premise in a very different world with a very different point of view. Here we have a more realistic approach to witches and ordinary folks and how their worlds intertwine.

Charlie Creevey is a character that every parent of a teenager (including me) will recognize; a character that every teenager dealing with coming out and accepting who they are (including me, 40 years ago) will understand.

There is a denseness to the writing that outshines Rowling's sometimes sloppy romanticism; there is an unromantic quality to the narrative that, while disappointing in some respects (after all, I read gay romance novels for a reason!), gives the book an authentic feel that works to its advantage.

While I am pissed at the decision Jacobson made to end the book on just that particular cliff-hanger, I get his point. It effectively forces everyone to wait for and buy the next book. But I think cliff-hangers are a cheat. Rowling (oh, come on, everyone will compare it, so back off) always ended her story cleanly, while never losing sight of the traumas to come. This ending was not necessary. I would have bought the next book anyway. But now I'll buy it grudgingly, because I have no choice. I got tricked into buying it and I resent that fact.

Actually, the book is full of powerful moments of free-will and making choices. Charlie's character is shaped by the choices he makes as he comes into his own over the course of the action. Jacobson should have had faith in his readers and their free-will.

We would have bought the next book anyway.

Peter Murphy says

A great read.

A great idea. I liked this with world. Dialogue is well done but I felt like I always wanted more. Story was well placed and the ending is appropriately ambiguous. Looking forward to what Charlie does next. The only negative is that the book feels over edited.

Logan says

I know I haven't posted in a while, after the last series I read I definitely was drained and needed a breather. I just finished a book and I wanted to post a review for it while it's fresh. This book was an excellent read. Well worth the money. The main character felt very real to me and his sexual orientation really and honestly took a backseat to the story. It was there and he was dealing with it in a very realistic way but that wasn't the only thing going on in his busy life. It makes me feel as if people can be seen for more than who they choose to love. There was a lot of depth to Charlie and I'm excited to read more about his journey. I felt like the author did a fantastic job and it is a must buy. I don't want to give the book away so you will just have to read it. Jeff, you have cemented another fan for sure! Way to go!

Suze says

The Boy Who Couldn't Fly Straight has been sitting on my Kindle for almost 6 months. I just never really felt like diving into it. But lately, every time I go to borrow a new Kindle Unlimited title Amazon will sort of subtly say "Why don't you just return this one? You'll never read it. Let it go!" and over the weekend the guilt got to be too much.

So, I finally read this book. And I loved it.

I loved the characters, I enjoyed the author's writing and the story, and I really hope this series isn't over yet.

Charlie's character was so realistic for me. He wasn't a Bella Swan, moving to a new town and suddenly loved by all for his awkwardness and endearing flaws. He wasn't a Harry Potter, thrust into the wizarding world and taking to it naturally. He was shy, and he had trouble expressing himself sometimes, and he felt overwhelmed by life. He did frustrate me at certain points – I just wanted to reach in and say "talk to them, Charlie!", but it's probably more realistic for him to be introspective as a teenager.

I really liked the dynamics in Charlie's family, and how they changed and developed over the course of the story. I loved Randall! Supportive parental figures are my jam, so Randall and Beverly were my favourite characters.

The author did a good job of bringing this world to life. Charlie learned things bit by bit, and so we did too. I don't read fantasy often, so this book did seem slower than I am used to. I don't think this was an issue with pacing, though – I have just gotten into a habit of reading books where the romance is the main plot, and the

romance in this was more of a sub-plot.

Speaking of romance, I really appreciate that this wasn't a sexy book. For me, YA books have to be a good balance between realistic (the characters *are* teenagers) and chaste (the characters are *teenagers*). I'm probably a bit of a prude that way, but I just don't want to feel perty while reading about characters who are underage. Also, Charlie was a shy character, and spent much of the book coming to terms with himself and his sexuality. It wouldn't have made much sense for him to suddenly be really bold and uninhibited.

I had a few issues, but they weren't enough to change my opinion of the book. I would have liked for Charlie to have made a few more friends his own age, but I understand that it wasn't a focus for him. And I really would've liked for there to have been a resolution to the bullying problem. Oh, and what was the deal with Tony? His character was just... strange.

All in all, while there were some loose ends and some things were lacking, I enjoyed it and am glad to have read it. I certainly won't be forgetting it any time soon!

John Sontag says

This is a great take on a much used story. The main character, Charlie, is more than fully developed. He becomes a friend of the reader. And you are taken for one wild ride. The story never drags, never loses direction and always remains exciting and entertaining. I'm sorry that the entire novel couldn't be contained in one book, since now I must wait for books two and three. I'm an impatient person, and now I'm sorry I read book one. I should have waited for the full trilogy. Another thing, the price. To be sure, this is worth a lot more than the \$2.99 kindle price. I'm surprised that it didn't go for much more, considering the length and the amount of research and time the author obviously put into this novel. It comes over as a gay Harry Potter, but I think that's also a poor comparison. I'm not a Harry Potter fan, and consider it too juvenile for my taste. That is not the case here. The author has crafted a parallel universe in fiction that I'm sure I never expected to find.

My only problem with this book is that it needs better editing and proof reading. I found numerous errors that stood out, although they did not detract from my overall enjoyment of the work. **THIS IS DEFINITELY A MUST READ FOR ALL AGES.**

Simon says

4.5 stars rounded up. Thank you to Ulysses Dietz for recommending this novel, his review says everything I would wish to say in my review, so why plagiarise.

The cliff hanger ending didn't offend me so much, I am looking forward to the next instalment.

My only niggle, and this is a slight niggle, parts could have been edited down more. The WIT (Witches In Training) camp dragged on a little too long for me, and the gay teenager angst, the kissing and fumbling around, whilst sweet, again could have been edited down. There is no sex in this novel. This is a Gay, Teenage, American Harry Potter-style story.

Loved it.
