



Approaching the Speed of Light

Victoria Lustbader

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It's said that the flapping of a butterfly's wing can start a chain reaction that leads to an unstoppable storm. In the same way, random twists of fate and transitory acts of kindness and cruelty can shape our destinies, just as we affect the people around us . . . sometimes in ways we can't possibly imagine.

Jody is a likable young man getting by in New York City at the turn of the millennium. On the surface, he seems to have it together, with friends, family, a decent job, and a steady string of girlfriends. But a secret history has left Jody scarred and broken inside, lacking faith in the future or himself. Like the ceaseless pull of a black hole, his buried secrets hold him back, defining him, until his trajectory crosses the path of three very different women, who, in their own ways, hold out the tantalizing possibility of healing, connection . . . or self-destruction.

VICTORIA LUSTBADER's *Approaching the Speed of Light* is a thoughtful, deeply moving tale about the things we cannot leave behind—and how, sometimes, we have to go through the black hole to come out the other side.

Approaching the Speed of Light Details

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From Reader Review Approaching the Speed of Light for online ebook

Christen says

The book was a 5-star book for me right up until the end. It was a sad, yet beautiful book. I don't know what a better ending would have been, but I did not enjoy the ending.

Patty says

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By
Victoria Lustbader

My "in a nutshell" summary...

This is Jody's story and it is the story of his very sad disturbing life.

My thoughts after reading this book...

I really am sort of silenced by this book. It was truly enlightening and truly sad. It sort of took my breath away.

It is the story of Jody...whose first nine years of life were horrible! His mother hated him...he had no real father...his grandfather hated him...and the man he thought loved him turned out to be nothing but a horrible drug ridden sexual pervert who abused him...let's back track...not only did he abuse this poor trusting boy sexually...but also physically. I repeat...it was one of the saddest books I have ever read. And to make it even more haunting Jody was always reading The Yearling...another book that makes me cry. I didn't have a chance at not being sad while reading this book.

I am not sure that I liked this book but I could not stop reading it. Jody was adopted and appeared to lead an almost normal life with his adoptive family. Jody is haunted by his dreams and can't establish normal relationships with women and the only thing that saves him is his dog Einstein. He meets four women who have an effect on him but I am not sure if it is a lasting effect.

The book was loaded with flashbacks and sections where Einstein the dog seemed to be talking. Einstein seemed to have the role of healer to Jody.

Oh my...

Final thoughts...

Haunting writing, an incredibly heartbreakng story...I still am not certain how I feel about this book. On one hand...it was fascinating...on the other...desolate. It's not the writing that bothers me...it's the subject matter...I ended up liking two characters...Evan and Einstein.

Barbara Justiniano says

Excellent read. Be warned, there are quite a few tough scenes in this book that may be upsetting to some people. I cried quite a few times during the reading of this novel, but definitely an excellent story that really got to me.

Steph G says

This book was disturbing, traumatizing, mystical and above all, heartbreak. I needed to skim some pages. I had to toughen up, but I think it was worth it.

Cathy says

Hard to read at times but a very compelling book. I didn't think I would like it (tough subject matter) but it kept me engaged and I'm glad I went outside my box. This book makes you look at life a bit differently. Makes you appreciate your own. Past, present and future. I would recommend this book, even for the faint of heart.

Lucinda Schelton says

First the book had an other worldly feel I enjoyed but the child abuse line took me by surprise and frankly would not have chosen it if I had known beforehand. That being said, it left me feeling bereft and sad. Not uplifted or hopeful. It's well written but hopeless. So think twice before undertaking this novel.

Paula Hess says

Horribly depressing read. Had to finish it just to see what happened.

Caitlin says

This was the single, hardest book I have ever read.

This book is not for the faint of heart. It deals with child abuse on a scale that is disturbing and will keep you up at night. Unfortunately, I was already invested in this book and in the life of little Christopher, before the scenes escalated to this level. I had to skip whole sections, because I couldn't take the imagery. Had the abuse been on that level in the beginning, I would have given up on the book, knowing what it would do to my mind and my sleep. On another level, I am almost glad that I finished the book. It was so well written,

and such a story to tell. Please, just, if you have kids yourself, or you do not do well with violence against children- think hard before you start this book. It will be haunting me for a long, long time.

The story of Christopher (Jodie) is a heart breaking one, that you just hope has some amazing break through, where his life ends up happy and free of pain. You keep reading for that reason. You want to see his dawn emerge, his miracle happen. You want everything to turn out perfectly for that little boy. It becomes so hard to read that you can't stand it any longer, and yet you HAVE to find out if it ends up ok. You are so invested and in love with this sweet boy, that you can't bear to put the book down and not know that he is ok. That he survives his life.

Ugh...anyway...I will be haunted by this book. I already have a hard time falling asleep having finished it. Well done, Victoria, writing a book that affects the reader so psychologically, that they literally cannot sleep from the images you masterfully put onto paper.

Did I enjoy this book? Honestly, no. I hated it. But it was a good book. I hated it for the way that it made me feel, and yet I couldn't put it down.

Alexia says

This is a very hard book to say 'I liked it.' I picked it up for \$1 at the library book sale - had never heard of it or had any idea what it was about. Turns out it is a harrowing story of child abuse and the lifelong ramifications of abuse. Parts of the book are very well written but other parts seem more pulled from a Lifetime movie. While it is not a bad book, I don't recommend reading it.

Olivia Eliza says

Emotional turmoil should be the real title of this book. It's beautiful, heavy, challenging, sweet, heart-wrenching, with an unlikely yet perfected predestined love story, and an ending that will leave you changed, and speechless. Read if you dare.

Janice says

If you read to get away from the news about the horrendous way people treat others, then this book is not for you. I went back to read the inside jacket to see if I missed what this story is about but, for the main character, it referred to a 'secret past'. I wouldn't be giving anything away if you read the other comments - the secret past is child abuse. The story deals with how abuse damages a child and defines their adult life. The depictions are upsetting. But when you listen to the news, are unfortunately true. It is deeply saddening to know the cruelty man inflicts on others.

Wanda says

Sad beautifully written

Cathie says

This was the most difficult book I have ever read. The mortifying details of repeated child abuse, the fight for survival and love, the solitary relationship between a damaged kid and his dog.

Reading this book was so emotionally difficult, I thought I wouldn't be able to continue.

I'm glad I did.

Heartbreaking, but oddly inspiring as well. Perhaps love can overcome anything, and truly does live on forever.

Shirley says

I was enjoying the beginning of this book. But right now my MS brains can not finish it. I have brain fog and I was getting confused reading it.

I will try it again, if I remember.

Darcia Helle says

This is a difficult book for me to rate. Some parts are beautifully written and poignant, many are heartbreaking, and other parts feel overly contrived.

Sadness permeates this story. The characters, particularly Jody, are so weighed down by the emotion that it has nowhere to go but into the reader. I found myself falling into that pit along with him, and I would have liked something to grasp to help me float along the way.

Despite this overwhelming sadness, the story is well told. We get right inside Jody's character, which is why it's so easy to get lost with him.

At times, the prose felt too flowery. Maybe obscure is a better word. There is a lot of literary beauty here, but there are also long-winded sections that begin to feel redundant.

One of my biggest problems comes with the character of Fern. I'll do my best to explain why, without giving any spoilers. I just did not find Fern's character or her actions believable. At all. And, because her behavior becomes pivotal, the story lost me at that point. Her behavior and the results felt too convenient and didn't hold the realism of the other characters.

Overall, this story is a powerful statement about child abuse and society's utter failure to protect these children. It's both difficult to read and hard to put down.
