

right behind you gail giles

Right Behind You is a compelling novel by Gail Giles that delves into themes of identity, trust, and the consequences of choices. Published in 2003, this young adult fiction resonates with readers through its intense narrative and relatable characters. The story explores the fine line between safety and danger, as well as the complexities of human relationships. In this article, we will examine the plot, themes, character development, and the overarching message of Giles's work, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of this gripping novel.

Overview of the Plot

The narrative of *Right Behind You* revolves around the lives of two teenagers, a girl named Kendra and a boy named Kade. Their lives are marked by a tragic incident that sets the tone for the rest of the story. The plot unfolds in a series of events that highlight Kade's troubled past and Kendra's struggle to find her own identity while grappling with her feelings towards Kade.

1. **Kade's Background:** Kade has a history of violence, stemming from a traumatic family situation. He is haunted by his past actions and the consequences they bring. His character serves as a representation of how one's upbringing can influence behavior and decisions.

2. **Kendra's Perspective:** Kendra is introduced as a strong-willed character who initially sees the good in Kade. However, as the story progresses, she faces dilemmas that test her loyalty, trust, and ultimately her judgment about who Kade truly is.

As the tension escalates, both characters find themselves at a crossroads, leading to a suspenseful climax that leaves readers contemplating the nature of forgiveness and redemption.

Thematic Exploration

Gail Giles's *Right Behind You* is rich in themes that resonate deeply with young adults. The exploration of these themes not only drives the narrative but also encourages readers to reflect on their own lives.

Identity and Self-Discovery

The quest for identity is a central theme in the novel. Both Kade and Kendra are in stages of self-discovery, trying to reconcile their past with their

present. Kade's struggle with his violent tendencies and Kendra's journey towards understanding her feelings for him highlight the complexities of youth.

- **Kade's Internal Conflict:** He grapples with his violent past and the fear that he may not be capable of change.
- **Kendra's Relationship with Kade:** As she discovers more about Kade, she must decide if she can accept his past or if it defines him forever.

Trust and Betrayal

Trust is another pivotal theme in the novel. The relationships between characters are constantly tested. Kendra's trust in Kade is challenged by revelations about his past, leading to moments of doubt and betrayal. This theme resonates with the teenage experience, where friendships can be fragile and loyalty is often tested.

The Consequences of Choices

Giles emphasizes that every choice has consequences, a lesson that both protagonists learn the hard way. Kade's choices lead him down a dark path, while Kendra's decisions regarding her relationship with him affect her life in profound ways. This theme encourages readers to consider the impact of their actions and to be mindful of the choices they make.

Character Development

The characters in *Right Behind You* are well-crafted, each playing a crucial role in the development of the story's themes.

Kade

Kade is portrayed as a deeply flawed character, whose past is marked by violence and trauma. His internal struggle makes him a complex figure:

- **Background:** The novel provides glimpses into Kade's difficult upbringing, showcasing how his environment shaped him.
- **Transformation:** Throughout the story, Kade seeks redemption, but this journey is fraught with challenges. His character arc raises questions about

whether true change is possible.

Kendra

Kendra serves as a counterpoint to Kade, representing hope and resilience. Her development is equally important:

- **Strength and Vulnerability:** Kendra's strength is evident in her determination to understand Kade, yet she also displays vulnerability as she confronts her feelings and fears.
- **Growth:** The challenges she faces ultimately lead to personal growth, forcing her to confront difficult truths about love, loyalty, and self-worth.

Writing Style and Narrative Techniques

Gail Giles's writing style is accessible and engaging, making *Right Behind You* appealing to a young adult audience. Her use of first-person narration allows readers to intimately experience the characters' thoughts and emotions, fostering a strong connection with them.

1. **Vivid Descriptions:** Giles employs vivid imagery to create a sense of place and atmosphere, immersing readers in the characters' world.
2. **Pacing and Suspense:** The pacing of the narrative is expertly managed, with tension building gradually. This keeps readers engaged and eager to uncover the unfolding drama.

Critical Reception

Right Behind You has received positive reviews from both readers and critics. Many appreciate its honest portrayal of difficult subjects such as violence, trust, and redemption. The novel has been praised for its ability to address serious issues while remaining relatable to young adult audiences.

Educational Value

In addition to its literary merits, *Right Behind You* is often included in educational settings. It serves as a valuable resource for discussions surrounding:

- **Mental Health:** The book opens up conversations about trauma and its effects on behavior.
- **Relationships:** It provides a platform for discussing the complexities of

trust and the dynamics of friendships and romantic relationships.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Right Behind You* by Gail Giles is more than just a story about two troubled teenagers; it is a profound exploration of identity, trust, and the consequences of choices. Through the characters of Kade and Kendra, readers are invited to reflect on their own lives and the complexities of human relationships. The novel's themes resonate deeply, making it a significant contribution to young adult literature. As readers journey through the pages, they are not only entertained but also encouraged to think critically about the world around them, ensuring that *Right Behind You* remains relevant and impactful to this day.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'Right Behind You' by Gail Giles?

The main theme of *'Right Behind You'* is the exploration of trauma, guilt, and the consequences of one's actions, particularly focusing on the impact of violence and the quest for redemption.

Who are the central characters in 'Right Behind You'?

The central characters are the teenage protagonists, who deal with the aftermath of a violent incident and their evolving relationship as they navigate their feelings of guilt and responsibility.

What audience is 'Right Behind You' aimed at?

The book is primarily aimed at young adult readers, but its themes resonate with a broader audience due to its emotional depth and complex character development.

How does Gail Giles address the topic of bullying in 'Right Behind You'?

Gail Giles addresses bullying by showcasing its devastating effects on both the victim and the perpetrator, illustrating how unchecked aggression can lead to tragic outcomes.

What literary techniques does Gail Giles use in 'Right Behind You'?

Gail Giles employs techniques such as dual perspectives, flashbacks, and vivid imagery to enhance the emotional intensity of the story and deepen character insights.

Is 'Right Behind You' part of a series or a standalone novel?

'Right Behind You' is a standalone novel, focusing on its own unique narrative and character arcs without being part of a series.

What critical reception has 'Right Behind You' received?

The book has received positive critical reception for its thought-provoking themes, well-developed characters, and its ability to engage readers with difficult subjects in a sensitive manner.

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