



Bad Idea: A Novel {with coyotes}

Todd Hafer, Jedd Hafer

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Griffin Smith is making a long road trip--but it's not a simple case of getting from point A to point B. Along the way, Griffin learns a lot about life from his unlikely band of travel companions and begins to question his own attitudes and beliefs.

Bad Idea: A Novel {with coyotes} Details

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A Michael says

Being a very non-religious person, I really enjoyed this Christian religion-thrmed book. It was a good story with a sincere, positive message.

Ricki says

I just reread this. I'd forgotten how well it was written! This is, hands down, my favorite Christian fiction novel, for soooo many reasons.

Greg Dill says

If you read "Blue Like Jazz" by Donald Miller and liked it, you will like "Bad Idea" by Todd and Jedd Hafer. Had a very similar feel to it... story of young man in high school and college with a lot of humorous experiences that taught him many valuable life lessons. The main character, Griff, is a troubled youth, intelligent, but with a cynical attitude. This attitude begins to wane as he travels with friends and family across the US to be dropped off to begin his freshmen year at a Christian college in California. His biggest lesson? He learns about grace by experiencing it.

I loved the authors use of academic words, cynicism, and quick witted humor throughout the book. Full of many whimsical stories and great humor, truly an enjoyable read for both young teens and older audiences alike.

Andrew Neveils says

This book was directed at teens, but it was still a good read. It made me laugh, even though they satirically talk about serious subjects - such as separated parents, new step-moms, transitioning into college, girls, self-image, and self-inflicted pain. It will make you laugh and cry and will ultimately make your heart go out to teens in these situations.

I loved it and look forward to reading it again.

Ingrid says

Brilliant, witty, and painful, this book touches on aspects of life and faith without being preachy or too 'religious.' It's down to earth, honest, and relatable.

Griffin is ready to embark on what looks to be the worst road trip of his life with his ultra-spiritual Dad, his dad's fiancée (excuse me, I meant cliché,) and his best bud Cole. Things go from bad to worse when all sorts of unthinkables happen that I won't go into because spoilers!

Through the whole experience, Griffin is also remembering events from his past and people that inspired him from high school, which effectively shows us both his character from different angles and his family history.

This book never had a dull moment and didn't fail to make me laugh (and cry. a lot.)

With very human characters, very human flaws and problems, and some more-than human conclusions, I would definitely recommend this book to older teens and up. It's a hard read at times, but so, so worth it.

Chris says

This book's intro promises real characters and compelling, cliche-free storylines. This is false.

Bad Idea's characters are flat and un-original, including a too-young stepmom who talks like she's 15, a main character who laments that his generation's music is awful, best friend who does nothing but agree with other characters until it's his turn to advance the plot, and one of the blandest, most white-bread love interests in the history of college freshmen. The main character's "true-to-life" problems, like his drinking and self-abuse, only enter the story to give him something to overcome. Like the other characters in the story, it's forced and doesn't feel at all real.

And then there's the thing that isn't mentioned at all on the back cover blurb--this story is all about (Christian) faith. It wouldn't be such a bad thing if not for the fact that just a few pages in, Bad Idea already begins to beat you over the head with a large plank labeled "THE MAIN CHARACTER WILL FIND GOD BY THE END OF THIS NOVEL." Every character constantly references God and prayer and Biblical metaphors. It's insufferable. Before long, I was skimming as quickly as possible just to see if this was going anywhere interesting, and it rarely did. Mostly, I wanted to know if I was right about the obvious ending, and for the most part, I was. (In fairness, there was one clue on the back cover--it turns out that if I had Googled TH1NK Books, this novel's Christian book publishing company, I might have gotten a better idea of what I was getting into.)

Also, let's not forget the subtitle, which was the thing that caught my eye and made me pick this up in the first place. Bad Idea: A Novel {with coyotes}. The most interesting part of the coyote story is given away immediately in the book's (totally unnecessary) prologue.

It's a shame that this book has so many problems because at times, there are some legitimately clever lines. On the other hand, there's also lots of observational humor that doesn't work so well. In the end, Bad Idea feels like a made-for-Hallmark movie made by people trying to make a church-youth-group-friendly road trip story. The characters are unbelievable and the story can't stop beating you over the head with its moral.

There are better coming of age stories, better road trip stories, and better faith finding stories, and I don't see this book's place in any of those categories. I could *maybe* see this novel resonating with teens who, like the main character, grew up households that were very religious but not very stable, but even then--there's just other books that would do it better.

Don't be enticed by the promise of coyotes and real characters--skip this one.

Teri Hartstern ozarowicz says

Not sure what I was thinking and why I would want to read this book. It is directed for teenagers or coming-of-age boys, thought I would think outside the box... It was certainly not a bad storyline but just nothing I could really identify with at this stage!

Marina says

Bad idea, indeed.

Griffin Smith is your usual fucked-up teenager, well not so teenager anymore because he's about to start college and his dad has the most brilliant idea : let's all drive from Kansas to Griffin's university in California. The whole thing doesn't fill Griffin with joy as he's forced to share the ride with his dad, with whom he has a very complicated relationship, his dad's new girlfriend, 20-something-years younger than him, his little brother that he really doesn't want to leave behind, and his best-friend that he loves but who is obviously better than him in all the things that should matter to an eighteen-year-old guy.

The story seemed good, I mean, I'm always a fan of any road-trip-related things, so I obviously wanted to read this book. And I liked it, at first.

The prologue was really great, funny and sarcastic and witty. I loved Griffin instantly and, to me, he appeared to be a book representation of what Stiles seems to be on Teen Wolf, minus all the supernatural shit. The main character definitely appeared to be an asshole, but the kind of asshole that you can actually bring yourself to love in real-life, and the kind that you completely go crazy over when it comes to fiction.

Then, I don't really know what happened, but he started to irritate me, and the other characters (except Colby, he's a cupcake) started to annoy me even more than they've been annoying me since the beginning of the book, and what should have been a pleasant experience, a pleasant reading with a diversity of characters, and real-life situations (albeit the tiniest bit cliché), simply left me indifferent and eager to be done with it.

There is the fact that Griffin is too self-centred, and focuses too much on his problems. I know the whole point of a book is specifically to make you like a character, and when you think about it, the fact that he's too self-absorbed is his main character flaw, himself is aware of that, but it still makes you feel unsympathetic toward the main character to the point where I actually started to down-right dislike him.

And you know that when that happens, it's not a good thing.

Also, to me, the dialogues seemed a bit forced. I don't want to be a bitch, and I'm not even trying to, but it just wasn't smooth enough for me, not real enough in terms of structure. I don't know, it didn't feel complete, like I was somehow reading the unedited version.

The last point I wanted to make, and I want to emphasize the fact that, if this book didn't work for me, it's probably because people like me are not supposed to be appealed by this kind of books, fuck I'm a horrible person, but the omnipresent religious tone was obnoxious. This made me hate the reading as well as hate

myself, because I'm not a religious person, and I wish I were as open-minded about this as I am about other subjects, but there's just something about religion that just makes me close off instantly and, I think, that's probably why reading this book was such a struggle, because the characters' faith (not just Griffin's) is everywhere, and it felt like the authors wanted to teach me something, it felt like they were trying to push their faith down my throat and I didn't like that.

I think, as future reference, I should just stay as far away as possible from any literature picturing or coming from the "Dirty South", because this part of the USA and me are way too different.

On the whole, I don't think it was a book for me, but that doesn't mean it wasn't a good book, it had a few good moments, and anyway, my opinion is only worth so much. Still, if they turned it into a movie, I would totally vote for Dylan O'Brien as Griffin, that was my first thought when I read the prologue and I stand by it.

Jamie says

Fast paced, funny moments, and well written but geared towards a younger audience than myself. Would've liked a little more character depth.

Heather says

While I admit some possible bias in my review, I have to say that I ended up loving this novel. I am not a member of the target audience for young adult Christian-themed fiction, but I picked up this book because Jedd Hafer, co-author, is an old friend. I was struck by the insight and the compassion found in this novel regarding the mind and experience of a troubled teenager--the writing was amusing and witty and yet touching and thought-provoking as well. I wish this novel had been around when I was a teenager, heading down my own very rocky and turbulent path . . . perhaps it would have given me a better understanding of the forces that were at work within me, and would have done so in a way that was non-threatening and non-judgmental. This book resonated with me, regardless of the surface differences between my own life course and that of the main character.

Jenna O says

I read this a couple years ago and forgot to rate it. I just didn't enjoy it. I didn't like the main character, which is pretty important to liking a story.
