



# This Side of Paradise

*Steven L. Layne*

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## **This Side of Paradise** Steven L. Layne

Something wicked this way comes--in this case, it's highschooler Jack Barrett's father, who forcibly relocates his family to Paradise, a village owned by Eden Corporation's CEO. Delving into the secrets of the community, Jack soon learns how high the price for perfection can be.

## **This Side of Paradise Details**

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Author : Steven L. Layne

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# From Reader Review This Side of Paradise for online ebook

## Dominic M says

LOVED IT

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## Elise (TheBookishActress) says

This book is **embarrassing**. Seriously. I am fucking embarrassed that this got published. And moreover. I'm confused as to how this wasn't a parody? You could've sold this to me as a parody and I would've fucking loved it.

This book is literally written like a robot wrote it. I've never read something so terribly written. It feels like a ten-year-old trying to imitate adult writing wrote this. know a girl who was writing better stuff than this at ten. I'm pretty sure I wrote something better than this at age ten.

Every single character is a trope. The grandmother can kick your ass. The brother is a complete fuckboy. The dad is a creep. The mom is a robot. I mean that literally, she's replaced by a robot halfway through.

Every plot twist is completely predictable, to the point where I don't think the author was trying to surprise anyone.

Yeah. Terrible, don't recommend.

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## Whitney says

Interesting story; writing was ok; pretty violent for a kid's book

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## Brian says

How many questions does this book raise? Here are some:

1. Why do books for young adults always have an unusually high number of photographs on the cover? I am quite serious when I say this--I have seen more fiction books of this kind with full facial photographs on the front than I have seen fiction books in other genres with any cover photographs.
2. Has anyone considered whether the low standards of YA novels might jeopardize the imaginations of their readers? By "most YA novels", I do not mean Harry Potter, Inheritance, or The Hunger Games, but rather this work, Twilight, Percy Jackson, and the plethora of derivative works that seem to propagate in the genre faster and more catastrophically than rabbits in New Zealand.
3. Someone in their review of this book mentioned that this book would work well for reluctant readers. I am

not sure whether this is really true or not, but if so, why do so many books for reluctant readers have to be stale and derivative to the highest degree?

(More to come...)

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### **Joy says**

This book was an incredible letdown. It was an interesting idea, but I really wish the story was in somebody else's hands.

The story is told in the first person by seventeen- year- old Jack. I know of no human being who talks the way he does, and certainly no high school juniors who sound like that. The people don't sound like real people when they talk, either. I really was very interested to find out what happened, but the way the book was written bugged me so much that I could never really enjoy the story. The author wasn't very good at expressing emotion, either. Those parts that were supposed to be touching were phony and awkward. And this is from the person who cries every time she reads a book.

As for the general idea of the story, it was original, but it wasn't very believable because the whole thing was set in the present day.

I will give this book points for the characters, who had very distinct personalities, but they're still not enough to bring my rating above one star.

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### **Elaine Sloan says**

I agree with what the other reviewers are saying that also rated the book below 3 in that Layne's characters' voices are not genuine. Layne writes the voice of his 17 year old character in the way that a college educated, highly intelligent, professional speaker would talk. I read about this book in the introduction to his professional book, *Igniting a Passion for Reading*. The two teachers writing the intro seem to actually worship Layne. They said their sixth graders couldn't put this novel down. I then borrowed twelve copies from other schools in my district and started a sixth grade book study on it. My sixth graders are very low socio-economic level kids. A few of them are reading it, and a couple have returned the book and said it didn't interest them as much as they thought it would. I didn't realize the book was self-published until I started reading it. I'm embarrassed that I shared this book with my kids, but will still do the book study and talk about the plot, voice, and characters in comparison to better books. It's an example of utopianism and could be compared to *The Giver*.

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### **Chase Wullenweber says**

Jack Barrett's father has a fixated drive for perfection. He works for a mysterious Eden Corporation, and his is forcibly relocated to a village called Paradise, a town that is literally owned by Eden. In this town, Jack unwittingly uncovers a secret plot that threatens the lives of everyone he loves. As Jack falls further into the secrets of this remote village, he discovers the lengths his father and fellow villagers are willing to do to achieve perfection. Soon, Jack is confronted with a moral, and ethical decision. Should he expose the terrible secret in this Utopian society and risk losing his father, or does he expose the secret and reveal to the world

the depths and depravity of this disasterous world? Layne raises ethical questions about the drive for perfection and the pacing of technological advances being made by our society. Withing the depths of this novel many questions left unanswered cause readers like myself to question the very society we are apart of today. Is there some small or even a unique possibility that our very own government is run from behind the scenes, and that our elected officials are noting more then a symbol. These were questions that raced my mind as I read this novel. Overall I enjoyed this novel and have made it one of my favorites, and to conclude I would not underestimate this novel for one bitt because "reason is resolved when questions left unanswered are finally understood" Steven Layne

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## **Oksana \*Bookaholic\* says**

### **Rating: 1.5**

As a person not very adoring of debate authors that are self-published, I was hesitant. The thing is, self-published authors often don't edit their books or work too much upon it.

Needless to say, this book needed a lot of work. I loved the plot, really. A crazy dad with a multi-personality disorder? Whoo! Also, a kick-ass grandma? That's just BEGGING to be read. So, I started getting into the book. But there was still something missing.

Oh yeah... Characters with PERSONALITIES. Is that too much to ask, really? Even the gram got so fake it made me want to become friends with the nearest trash can. The main character, 17-year-old Jack, didn't act his age. Never ever EVER write a book for teens and then screw up the characters that are their age. That's like setting a death wish. I don't know... I couldn't connect with Jack. He didn't think or act like a teen and that's just... ARGH!!

Even the Grandma character got a bit... Exasperating, to say the least. The personalities were bland and more than a bit boring.

Oh wait.... You can't have a bad book without a bad romance! Jack and Jory by themselves were annoying, but then Jory's sister and Troy??? How in the hell-o is it appropriate for two brothers to date two sisters. Ugh. Haha I just didn't get that.

It did have a good thing though. It was fast-paced, and I guess that's why I'm giving it an extra .5.

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## **Pinder Buckley says**

This book has a very good plot, but not a decent way of presenting it. I often got bored even when important events were happening and I dislike the writing style. The plot was literally the only thing causing me to finish the book. If it were written better, it would probably have four stars from me.

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## **Karin says**

Jack's father has always been a perfectionist, but lately, his need to control every aspect of the family's life has stepped up a notch. Mr. Barrett, Jack's dad, has been offered a wonderful opportunity with the company he works for, the Eden Corporation. Eden owns a gated village in Paradise, a nearby town, where only the most successful and devoted employees are invited to live. The village is all inclusive and there is no need to ever leave. The village even has a school for the children of the employees.

Mr. Barrett's family isn't handling the news of the move very well. His wife has been drinking more and more since Mr. Barrett's controlling nature has intensified. Troy, the youngest child, has used his rebellious attitude to spark conflict within the household. Gram, Mr. Barrett's mother and the boys' biggest protector, doesn't mince words when it comes to how crazy she thinks moving the whole family to a strange community is, and Jack, the oldest son, tries to keep the peace by attempting to please his father and trying to keep Troy under control.

Eventually, the day comes and the family packs up and moves to Paradise. Jack's mother has gone ahead in order to get the house ready so it is just Mr. Barrett, Jack, Troy, and Gram following the moving van. Once they reach the entry gate, Jack sees a site that leaves him speechless. Jori is a beautiful girl that works at the entry gate of Paradise and a girl that he definitely wants to get to know better, but for some reason, Mr. Barrett doesn't want him to have anything to do with her. His exact words are, "She doesn't belong in Paradise." This statement is just one of the things Jack, Troy, and Gram consider strange when they get settled in their new community. Everyone seems too happy, their mother hasn't been seen since they've arrived, and Mr. Eden, the owner of the Eden Corporation, has been sneaking into the Barrett's house at night and taking Troy somewhere after knocking him out so he won't wake up. The boys, with a lot of help from Gram and Jori, attempt to get to the bottom of all the mysteries and find a way out of Paradise.

THIS SIDE OF PARADISE is a science fiction thriller reminiscent of *The Stepford Wives*. It was awarded the Hal Clement Award for best science fiction novel for young adults in the United States. This is Steven Layne's first novel and is far from perfect, but at the same time, has many characteristics that will appeal to young readers.

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## **Cara says**

The summary of this book sounded great, and I was excited to read it. I was expecting something like *Point Blank* by Anthony Horowitz, where students are cloned to be perfect. This story, however, was just too

crazy. It had great potential, but as it went, it got more and more stupid. I only finished for the sake of it; I don't like to not finish a book and give it a chance, but this was terrible.

It was also slow and boring, and the characters weren't that great. The main character didn't seem to act his age, and even the writing in general felt like it was written for a younger audience than the plot suggested, and I found it annoying. For one thing, the use of exclamation points was ridiculous, especially considering they were used during narration, not in dialogue. Overall, it felt like as he was writing, he was simply checking things off his list to write about, without really developing the story or characters...like he was just going through the motions, but not really getting anywhere. There's no depth at all.

Jack and Jory's relationship is laughable. You don't basically fall in love after one meeting and only saying a couple of sentences to each other. It was a bit over the top.

I didn't like this book, and I can't see there being any more in this series. That's just crazy. I will not be reading them.

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### **DJ Rudd says**

I read this aloud to my class of 7th graders. We thought the story was mediocre and the dialogue was terrible. We were not fans.

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### **Christina Knowles says**

After reading *Mergers* by Layne, I was not looking forward to reading this book; however, it is a much better read. It loses points for originality in that it is a *Stepford Wives* rip off. But it gains points because I love *The Stepford Wives* and think it is a great idea to write it for children. Of course, it loses the sexist theme in this version because the town of Paradise is full of robots of all genders, and the primary target is "Mr. Eden's" son, Troy.

Still this could have been written so much better. Layne's character development is lacking, especially (and oddly) when it comes to his first person narrator and main character, Jack. Layne lets us get into Troy's head much more than Jack just through Jack's descriptions of him. The grandmother is likable but over-the-top and not believable. Also, what's up with her "make-up bag?" Does Layne seriously call a rolling suitcase which can magically hold anything you may need in any situation, a make-up bag?

I actually enjoyed the first half to three quarters of the book, despite all this, but the climax and descending action deteriorate into nonsense. Layne does not even attempt to explain the science on which it is loosely based or his crazy resolution, for that matter. He seems to rush through the end in an unsuccessful attempt at intensifying the suspense. The lack of realistic emotions over the mother's death and the part where Troy's eyes pop open as soon as the girl speaks to him just seemed stupid and superficial. I felt like Layne was trying to meet an impossible deadline and just needed to finish the book.

So, even giving it a break for being a young adult novel (and a lower reading level to boot), I think it was a little less than impressive. As a teacher I've read a lot of young adult fiction, and there are many who don't seem like they were actually written by eighth graders. Even as a teacher, I would hesitate to give it to a

student because Layne feels he has to overtly state his theme and explain it, which I think he didn't even get right. This is not a Dystopian novel. It's a novel about being a control freak perfectionist and about how people's flaws make them valuable as individuals. I guess the bottom line is that this book had potential and some entertainment value, but falls very short of its intentions.

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## **Jennifer Wardrip says**

Reviewed by Karin Perry for TeensReadToo.com

Jack's father has always been a perfectionist, but lately, his need to control every aspect of the family's life has stepped up a notch. Mr. Barrett, Jack's dad, has been offered a wonderful opportunity with the company he works for, the Eden Corporation. Eden owns a gated village in Paradise, a nearby town, where only the most successful and devoted employees are invited to live. The village is all-inclusive and there is no need to ever leave. The village even has a school for the children of the employees.

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## **Brittany Hull says**

I met this author when I was in elementary school and thought this book was great. I just reread it and it is amazing how time gives new perspective. It's an interesting storyline idea but the writing is choppy and the characters are under developed let alone unrealistic in their actions and thoughts.



