

Taming 7

By Chloe walsh

Basic synopsis from the Internet:

Taming 7 by Chloe Walsh is an emotional young adult romance in the Boys of Tommen series focusing on Gerard "Gibsie" Gibson and Claire Biggs. It explores the deepening relationship between the comedic, trauma-scarred Gibsie and his childhood best friend Claire, who helps him confront his dark past. ☞

Key Themes and Plot Points:

Trauma and Healing: *Gibsie hides immense pain and past trauma behind a humorous, "class clown" exterior, which begins to shatter as he confronts his demons.*

Friends to Lovers: *The story follows their transition from close childhood friends to a romantic couple, though it is marked by intense emotional struggles.*

Characters: *The story explores the close, often protective relationship between Claire (the "sunshine" girl) and the vulnerable, yet devoted Gibsie.*

Heavy Subject Matter: *The book deals with intense themes, including past abuse, grief, and the need for support, which some readers found to be quite dark compared to earlier, more lighthearted portrayals of the characters.*

Will started the meeting by questioning the reviews such as "Best book ever written". One review declared the book "an emotional and addictive romance"!

Is it a brilliant reflection of teenage emotions and angst? Are those teenagers 6th formers? The language spoiled it for him. Wondering what the author was trying to achieve when using so much bad language, he asked if it was an attempt to reflect reality? Was it a social commentary on today's world?

On the positive side he felt that the tension between individuals was well expressed.

Lastly, he wanted to know if the half-brother was arraigned for his crime?

All present at the meeting made it clear that the book was a difficult read. A number of us gave up after the first 100 pages or so. All of us struggled with different aspects of the book. The heavy use of 'bad' language, made us question whether we are just too old to appreciate that kind of book (clearly written for younger readers – albeit not recommended for under 18!). Also questioned was the credibility of the story line. Some of us could not identify with the characters. Some of us found the events too extreme and therefore not credible. Others felt that, sadly, all of the situations the characters were in are perfectly credible, and the psychological problems encountered also very real. We discussed the impact of bad parenting.

The book made us feel uncomfortable, not only by its excessive use of bad language but by the life events the characters as children have witnessed, endured, taken part into.

It was agreed that the strength of the book was the reality of some people's lives.

We also discussed:

- our preferences to read books where we can relate to the characters
- our preference to read books that are more cheerful or at least depict some hope
- the age of the readers: are we (u3a readers) too old to read such books as Taming 7?
- our dislike of restrictive use of vocabulary amongst young people,

- the evolution of a language and its vocabulary
- the question of literary quality or lack of it
- Was the book not appreciated because of its content or its poor literary quality?

At the end of the meeting some of the members who had either given up on the book or not finished it, decided that they might read on. In other words, some of us became curious to know the rest of the story and its ending. The discussions and feedbacks encouraged some of us to give the book another go. This is where a book club such as the Realm of books comes into its own. We all recognise the importance of being exposed to books we would not choose to read which sometimes take us outside our comfort zone. Thank you Will!

Personally, I simply could not get on with the book. I, too, tried to persevere but I found the style unreadable. My first obstacle was the encounter with Claire supposedly age 5 at the start of the book. Her analysis and voicing of her own feelings were totally unbelievable. They could have been attributed to an articulate and perceptive teenager but not to a 5-year-old. Even as the story developed, I found the book devoid of literary quality. I simply could not bear the endless dialogues of those young people. For me I don't mind any subject matter provided a book is written skillfully, in good prose, with a good plot and relatable characters. I found Taming 7 very much lacking.

Sabine

I found Taming 7 totally uninteresting. I got no sense of the characters of the children involved or of developing interactions between them. I also did not enjoy the style of the writing. I struggled through the first 75 pages then gave up and read another book then I tried again but could only get to page 100 at which stage, to my great relief, the library requested I return the book because it was reserved by another reader.

Stephanie

I have persevered for over 100 pages and to be honest do not want to continue with this book. It is for teenagers or young people not for people of U3A age.

Alix

It took me a little while to get into it but I did enjoy it at the end.

I found some of the language a little over the top, especially the descriptions of how wonderful Claire was and also her feelings for Gerard (I confess I skimmed some of this) but appreciate that as they were all teenagers, emotions are bound to be high.

Some of it was difficult to read, especially what happened to Gibsie – it really explains his actions and made me feel for him. I wonder how his mother explained her marriage breakdown to him, or if she even did, and how much she tried to get through to him.

I thought all of the young people showed flashes of great maturity in dealing with their many issues, but I was concerned about the amount of drinking they managed!

It was an interesting insight into such a close community and how the children supported each other.

Elaine