

Book Review: Choices by Dianne Wolfer

By Rachel Loveday

Our lives are all about the choices that we make.

Whether they are choices we make by force, or sheer free will. Choices that we instinctively know are going to be for the better. And choices that we instinctively know are going to turn out not-so-great, but we just have to take the leap of faith and hope that it all works out.

And with all these choices come the “*What ifs?*” “*What if I had chosen differently?*” “*What if I had done this instead of that?*” Or even something simple such as “*What if I had turned left instead of right?*”

And that’s where Dianne Wolfer’s; *Choices* comes in.

Choices is a novel that not only gives readers a real, powerful and honest portrayal of the controversial topic of teenage pregnancy but also gives readers a glimpse of how the choices we make in life, or even just one choice we make can seriously change and affect our lives.

Choices tells the story of Elisabeth McCrae, a seventeen year old girl who finds out she’s pregnant and knows that she has to make a choice. She can either choose to keep the baby, be a mother and give up on school and her dreams for the future. Or, she can choose to have an abortion, pretend nothing ever happened and get on with her life.

The novel and Elisabeth is split into two parts. *Part One* of the novel tells the story of Elisabeth’s pregnancy and *Part Two* is after the birth. Elisabeth is “*split*” into *Libby/Beth* to reflect the choices that she has made. “*Libby*” keeps the baby and “*Beth*” has an abortion.

With *Libby’s* choice to keep her baby, we see her struggle with teenage pregnancy, her relationship with her parents and her boyfriend, who is the father of her baby; Darren deteriorate and we also get an insight into her mind during this turbulent time, which includes Libby wondering whether she did make the right choice.

With *Beth’s* choice to have an abortion, we see her suffer the psychological ramifications that come with choosing to terminate her pregnancy which include depression, anxiety and stress. And we also see her struggle to move on with her life after the abortion and subsequently breaking up with her boyfriend. And we later see her go off to university to pursue her dream to become a professional musician.

Dianne Wolfer's use of parallel storylines to depict Elisabeth's life after she chooses to keep the baby/have an abortion as well intertwining these storylines throughout the novel made me think of all the choices I have made in life, big or small and wonder how my own life would be if I had chosen differently. And Elisabeth's human reactions, as well as the ups-and-downs in her life that came with the choices that she has made, makes her a likable and an easy character to relate to. These qualities, as well as many more, makes the novel a great read, so great, in my opinion, that I have read this novel several times over the last five years, which is when I first discovered it in my school library.

I recommended this novel to anyone who has enjoyed the film; *Sliding Doors* which also uses parallel storylines to depict how life can drastically change due to the choices that one has to make. I also recommend it to anyone who has had to make any big decisions in their lives and is wondering *what if?* And also for the thousands of students who are completing their HSC, which is also present in the novel who also have to make big decisions about their futures.