



2015

Hellhole

Aylea Stephens

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Book Review

Title: Hellhole
Author: Gina Damico
Reviewer: Aylea Stephens
Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers
Publication Year: 2015
ISBN: 9780544307100
Number of Pages: 352
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Excellent



Review

Max starts his life of crime when he impulsively steals a cat knickknack for his mother who is dying of heart failure. Unfortunately for Max, this means that he's opened himself to the influence of the devil. Or, one devil specifically (one of the 666 devils and is the Associate Imp of Salty Snacks) that he digs up when he's looking for fossils. The devil's name is Burgundy Cluttermuck, but he goes by Burg and promises to heal Max's mother if Max can find him a house. Max learns that making deals with a devil is going to create bad situations, so he recruits Lore from his school to help him find a way to get rid of Burg and to save his mother's life.

Although some people might be disturbed by the character making deals with a devil, the book does show clear consequences of dealing with evil and things do not end completely happily for Max because of the mistakes that he makes throughout the book. Max's mom is an inspiring character because of the way she handles her condition, and Max's love for her is one of the most endearing things about the book. Max's determination to try to stay good even with a devil in his basement and the friendships he has shows the importance of making good decisions and being a good friend. Hellhole is full of dark humor and dark situations, but it's also a laugh out loud book about a character who is in a difficult position that many readers will relate to.

*Contains strong language, making deals with the devil, substance abuse, and violence.