

Imogene Botka

**No Place by Todd Strasser**

Todd Strasser's *No Place* is a realistic fiction novel with a hint of mystery. Some of Todd Strasser's more popular books are, *The Wave*, *Give a Boy a Gun*, *Boot Camp* and *Wish You Were Dead*. This story is about modern day homelessness and can show readers the truth about the homeless. The main character, Dan, lives in "Dignityville," a tent city to shelter those in need. Dan was known as the popular kid at school but now that he is labeled as the homeless kid, Dan gets judged and pitied by his classmates.

I loved how I could relate to the text and how the author made it easy to understand Dan's feelings even though I'm not in his situation. Not only does the novel have its intriguing chapters that always end on cliffhangers, making it impossible to let go of the pages, but it also lets you be the character and have a chance to be in that position. For example, Dan thinks, "There's a deep sinking, regretful sensation you get when the bases are loaded and you give up a grand slam. I'd thought that feeling was limited to baseball." (p.104) Not physically of course, but in my head I was right there with Dan.

Although I enjoyed the book, I found that at times the story was becoming more of an informational text than a novel that you fall in love with and reread. As I was waiting for a bright and positive moment, I also noticed that it was becoming sort of negative as the story went along, the situation kept getting worse. For example, Dan thinks, "No. I am so far from okay that I'm not even sure what the word means anymore." (p.223) I feel that Dan needs to understand that when things go so wrong it feels like they will never get back to normal, you can still be happy and you can't spend your life waiting for things to change.

If I were to recommend this book to someone it would probably be somebody mature. Poverty is a big topic that some younger people may not understand. In conclusion, I thought that *No Place* is relatable, yet at times could have been improved, but overall an outstanding book by Todd Strasser.