Clarion Review

General

Caught in the Winds
I.D. Wenzel
CreateSpace
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Five Stars (out of Five)

College life tends to be a time of awakening for most students. They are pursuing their dreams and opening their minds to new ideas and their hearts to new friends. Becoming a part of a school's culture gives them a sense of belonging to a community.

However, not all students feel comfortable on campus. In *Caught in the Winds*, student Morrie Schiller finds Bethlehem College to be a foreign environment. The conservative evangelical Christian school would appear to be an ideal place for a born-again believer to meet a nice girl to marry, gain knowledge, and grow in his faith. But Morrie discovers that he will face strong challenges in all three of those areas.

Morrie's romantic adventures begin on registration day, when he literally bumps into the beautiful Tracy Johnson. Morrie's feelings of blossoming love are continually thwarted by Tracy's view of him as nothing more than a Christian brother. His ideas about love, relationships, and personal fulfillment soon take a dramatic turn when he befriends the mysterious Jack Joplin.

Jack's philosophical ideas take root in Morrie's mind, causing him to doubt and question his Christian values. Morrie knows that Jack's concepts are contrary to his own views, but he yields to Jack's persuasive logic and becomes his dedicated pupil. Jack's mystical teachings seem to hold the key to self-realization, and Morrie's understanding of philosophical theories amazes his professors and fellow students. Morrie masters Jack's insights and proceeds toward his mentor's promise of eventually transcending conventional religious thinking.

Along the way, Morrie's evangelical faith seems to be slipping away instead of growing deeper. Morrie becomes conflicted when he tries to reconcile his Catholic upbringing with Jack's beliefs. Meanwhile, radical religious factions threaten to create divisions within the Bethlehem College leadership and destroy the school. Suddenly, the safe, quiet college, long a

refuge for young people like Morrie, erupts into an ecclesiastical war zone. Morrie is caught in the middle of the crisis, a situation that tests his faith and integrity.

L. D. Wenzel weaves an intriguing story that meanders through a variety of thought-provoking topics. Although a few of his characters abruptly disappear, leaving the reader wondering what happened to them, Wenzel generally does an admirable job of character development and creates believable plots that make *Caught in the Winds* an entertaining story.

Jeff Friend