



The Edge of Everything

Jeff Giles

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This is a brilliant and imaginative novel, filled with poignant scenes and sympathetic characters.

Suspense, romance, and supernatural elements come together in Jeff Giles's *The Edge of Everything*, a novel that stands out brilliantly and imaginatively in its originality.

The book's heroine, Zoe, lives in the Montana woods with her mother and little brother, Jonah. The whole family is still reeling over the loss of Zoe's dad. One night during a terrible blizzard, Zoe's mother is unable to get home. That same night, Zoe and her brother are attacked in the woods. They are rescued by a bounty hunter, whom Zoe dubs X.

X was born in a type of hell called the Lowlands, and it is his job to go out and grab souls on Earth. He and Zoe fall in love, though their very different origins lead to many difficulties in their relationship. The depth of their separation is deepened through the use of alternate sections in telling their stories.

It is easy to care about all the many characters in this novel, even, even those living in the Lowlands. Giles makes effective use of contemporary humor that is likely to appeal to today's young readers. Jonah, Zoe, and even the adult characters infuse the plot with funny dialogue that's completely believable and incorporated well. This comes through particularly in scenes such as when Zoe tries to teach X to speak less formally, and when her mother sits in on Zoe's police interrogation.

But *The Edge of Everything* is not all fun and games; there are poignant scenes as well. When the narrative goes into detail about why souls are being sent to the Lowlands, it becomes easy to root for the bounty hunters too. The last few pages don't wrap everything up with a neat bow, hinting at a possible—and welcome—sequel in which lingering questions may be answered and happy endings may be found.

KELLY THUNSTROM (Winter 2017)

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