ForeWord Reviews

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

The Glister Journals: Bronze
B. B. Shepherd
China Blue Publishing
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Written with intelligent humor, this tale follows an awkward girl as she enters a new school, forging human and equine friendships that are lifelike and durable, just like bronze.

Allison is an admittedly awkward fourteen-year-old girl who has just experienced one of the worst possible changes for a girl her age—she moved from Los Angeles, the home she has known, to the middle of nowhere in Northern California.

She is starting her first year of high school with no friends in a new place that is completely the opposite of Los Angeles. There is quiet where she is used to noise, dirt instead of pavement, and people who ride horses for fun instead of going shopping. One day she sees a glint out her back window, a glister, and discovers a horse, hungry and wary of people. Allison befriends the horse, and makes new friends as she starts school.

Bronze, the first in *The Glister Journals* series by B.B. Shepherd, follows Allison as she develops her first crush on Dave (though she is more than happy to just be his friend), learns to ride horses, and gains confidence from her new friends, both human and equine.

The strongly written book is directed at high school students and, due to mild swearing, mature young adults. In it, Shepherd has created an enjoyable tale, gently leading the reader along Allison's first year of high school without creating drama for drama's sake. Shepherd writes with intelligent humor, saying, "his lovely Quixotic gestures would find a new, more worthy and outwardly appreciative target." In case the reader does not understand what "Quixotic" means, there is a small glossary at the end of the book to help with more difficult words.

Shepherd has created Allison to be a quiet girl who does not ask many questions, making the reader wait to find out some important details about her family and friends. While most are fine to be answered in books later in the series—such as why Dave's family doesn't talk about his mother—it took more than one hundred pages to find out why Allison moved to Northern

California, and where her dad spends his time. Those answers are things the character obviously knew and should have told the reader in the first ten pages. However, most of the questions drive the reader forward through the book, and only a few hold them back.

Bronze's cover—a bronze-like monochromatic drawing of a running horse—fits the book's theme well. The worn or weathered font used on the cover and for chapter headings is difficult to read. The copy on the dust jacket is about half of the width it should be, as there is a lot of extra space on the flap. Also, the formatting in the book is crowded. The font is normal size, but the margins are narrow, making the book seem to drag on due to formatting, not the writing style. More pages would be desired over word-packed pages.

This is a strong first book, both for Shepherd and for the series. The friendships the characters build are realistic and lifelike, strong, and durable, just like bronze.

Beth VanHouten