

You Can See More from up Here

Mark Guerin

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In Mark Guerin's *You Can See More from up Here*, a nineteen-year-old and his father face up to a conflict of generational ideologies when a workplace incident sends reverberations through their small town.

In 1974 in Belford, Illinois, Walker Maguire's ex-military father, Michael, forces him to take a summer job at the automobile factory where he's the plant physician. Walker moves heavy machinery across the warehouse and fumbles through building car parts on the assembly line, supervised by his ex-girlfriend's father, Norm.

Then Walker witnesses an altercation between Norm and a Mexican employee, Manny. He fears that there will be consequences if he tells the truth about the incident to his abusive father. Both Manny and Norm could be punished: Manny may be an undocumented immigrant, and Norm was drinking on the job.

Alternating between that summer and winter thirty years later, as Walker sits at his dying father's bedside, the book examines the dichotomy of a strict father and his conscientious son, both products of their respective times. Its mood is retrospective at first, as Walker reconciles his dying father with the disciplinarian he knew. Sections from the past soon envelope the book, though, and are meticulous and absorbing in their details.

The characters and settings shape each other, and tension among characters results in the suspense that propels the story. Foreshadowing connects one chapter to the next. By working toward doing the noble thing and making amends, Walker helps his father confront his own internal dilemmas. The book's end is cathartic, bringing all of the emotional subplots to a head. Racial issues are handled with honesty.

Mark Guerin's debut maneuvers through heartbreak with grace, navigating family expectations, a community's pervasive racism, and how peoples' actions shape others' opinions.

AIMEE JODOIN (September / October 2019)

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