

# Starseeker by tim bowman essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

A novel that I recently read and enjoyed is ' Starseeker' by Tim Bowler. The genre of this book is that of adventure/mystery; however, the author also tackles issues of loss, love and healing. The story is set in present times, in a quiet village called Upper Dinton on the edge of Buckland Forest.

The main character – Luke Stanton – is bullied into breaking and entering an old woman's home – Mrs Little's – to steal her jewellery box so that he can prove that he is part of a gang of bullies. When Luke enters the house, he hears the sound of weeping and it appears the noise is coming from the attic. Luke then follows the sound and discovers a young girl. He is so terrified to see her he flees the house with nothing.

The next time Luke is forced to break-in, Mrs Little catches him and tells him that the little girl is her blind granddaughter Natalie. Mrs Little also tells him that Natalie is 10 years old but has the mental age of four. She explains that Natalie was in a car crash 2 years ago in which her parents were killed. Mrs Little then states that she is Natalie's only living relative, and that she had to steal her from a Special Needs Hospital because doctors told her that, due to her age, she would not be able to give Natalie the best care.

One of Luke's better talents however is that he is an amazing piano player. When Natalie hears him play Douce Rêverie by Tchaikovsky, she changes into a different child, one that is much calmer and quieter, and they begin to form an extremely strong bond. Still being bullied, Luke searches for the jewellery box again and finds it. Inside there's an identity bracelet with the name Barley May Roberts on it along with a telephone number. Recognising the name from somewhere, he keeps the bracelet and later looks the name

up on the internet. Here he finds a website claiming that the name belongs to a girl who was separated from her parents 2 years ago. It also contains a photo of the child he knows as Natalie.

Luke decides to phone the number on the identity bracelet and, on finding out that the people he is speaking to are Natalie's parents, he tells them to meet them in the lay-by near Buckland Forest the next afternoon. Luke then goes back to Mrs Little's home the next morning to play the piano and manages to steal Natalie from Mrs Little in order to re-unite her with her parents. Once Luke takes Natalie to meet her parents, the Roberts thank Luke with all their hearts and decide not to press charges against Mrs Little.

I think this novel has been written brilliantly, with lots of drama and emotion, and different examples of love. It relates to real life as Luke is being bullied so that he can join Skin and his gang, when really they just want to use him for something they want – Mrs Little's jewellery. This sort of bullying could affect children today, for example if somebody is led to believe that they will 'become part of the gang' if they do things to please the person(s) bullying them, or to prove that they can actually do something.

Another feature of the novel I enjoyed was the author's reference to peer pressure, for example, when Luke was sitting in the tree house with Skin, Daz and Speed, and Skin had taken some of his father's whisky and cigarettes. They all started drinking and smoking, and were trying to get Luke to have some even though he hated both. "Speed took a couple of swigs and passed the bottle to Luke. Luke only took one small swig, though he tried to make it look like more. He had no taste for whisky. They'd made

him drink some the last time they met in the tree house and he'd felt so queasy and light-headed that he'd nearly slipped when he was climbing down". Again, this type of peer pressure is something that many teenagers may face today on a regular basis, in order to be ' accepted'.

I also think the plot is fantastic as it tells so many stories at the same time. It describes Luke's ' friendship' with Skin, Daz and Speed. It also considers Luke's relationship with his Dad (who died of cancer about two years ago) and how he often senses his Dad around him. Later it reveals that Mrs Little was lying about Natalie, and also that Luke hates his Mum's new boyfriend – Roger Gilmore – because he feels his Mum cannot love two men at the same time (his Dad and Roger). Luke hates Roger because he believes he is trying to replace his Dad. He thinks the situation is harder for him than any other teenager who has lost one of their parents when the living parent finds love again, especially as Roger (or Mr Gilmore!) is his schoolteacher.

I think it is great how there are so many stories in one, yet they have all been bound together and are intertwined. For instance, when Luke, Daz, Skin and Speed are sitting in the tree house Luke " wondered again what he was doing here. He wasn't part of this gang. He wasn't born here like the others. They'd grown up in this village and been in and out of each other's pockets since primary school. He'd only been drawn in since Dad died two years ago". Another main theme in the book that has further links to bullying, centres on how Mrs Little stole Natalie and all the secrets she managed to keep hidden. When she catches Luke she already knows that he is not acting of his own accord, " Don't even think of running," she said. " You'll only make it worse for yourself. I know exactly who you are. You're Luke Stanton.

You hang about with those louts from the village...Losers, every one of them. Influencing losers ...”

The characters in the novel are very realistic and are exactly like some people in real life. It's the kind of story you hear about everyday, i. e. the bullying and parents finding another love, but this book has so many different twists to it. It keeps on surprising you throughout the whole story and I love the way the writer does that. For instance, when you are told about Natalie, you discover that the little girl is a completely different person to who you thought she was. Although Natalie knows she is Barley, because of her blindness and mental age of four, she cannot really understand nor do anything about the situation. According To Mrs Little, “ She had enough problems as it was before the crash but now – especially not being able to see – she's become very confused and frightened. She's unsure of everything”.

I think the way the writer gives you information is very clever because he doesn't just tell you a person's name and then reveals everything about them, he keeps giving the reader little bits throughout the book. It rather makes you want to find out more about the characters and the plot so you keep on reading. The book is extremely engrossing and deals with many issues relevant to everyday life.

The ending was expected because the book had such a good beginning and middle. It almost gave you the impression that it HAD to turn out well. Barley was thankfully re-united with her parents. Roger saved Luke when the bullies had beaten him up and chased him to the top of the tree house. Although

they set the bottom of the tree on fire and left him to die, Roger found him and saved his life so Luke forgave him and let him and his Mum get married. Mrs Little accepted what she did was wrong and became more involved with the outside world. Luke and Miranda started going out with each other and became boyfriend and girlfriend. The ending was definitely the best ending the author could ever give this story. I felt so happy the minute I closed the book after finishing it, it was almost as though the whole shebang had actually been real!

I loved this novel mainly because it felt so real when I was reading it, things kept happening all the time so it kept you reading more and more. It definitely lives up to it's comments at the back of the book, " It is extremely powerful and mysterious. It's very strange to find a book that moves the heart, touches the spirit and yet remains so well grounded in everyday life" I definitely recommend this book to teenagers or adults and I am looking forward to reading more books by this author.