

Reconsideration Scenario #2

How was this material brought to your attention?

“My 13-year-old daughter had checked it out after reading the book flap. After reading the book, she was disturbed and asked me to read and comment on it.”

Are you concerned about this item as a whole or a specific part?

“As a whole. This book is in the young adult section. It should be in the adult section or not even kept in the library at all.”

What specific objections do you have to the item?

“The book is a disturbing, bizarre, un-artful, often trite, rambling of sex, group sex, comments on drugs (that apparently one can just stop taking and switch to another drug as the mood strikes), eating disorders, bizarre spiritualism and just when it is really weird, the group sex duo are actually ‘vampires’ and Echo needs to see them just once again, so they can bite her neck and suck her blood. The book is not a metaphor for anything as far as I can tell. The writing attempts to be artful, but then becomes trite. At one point, Echo comes home to find her mother naked and lying on the kitchen table with crystals applied to her body in a ‘healing ritual.’ Also the illusion that drugs can be used or not so casually is against what they are or what our kids are taught in school. This book truly has no redeeming feature.”

SLJ Reviews 2001 August

Website: <http://www.cahners.com>

Gr 9 Up-Echo is the daughter of a magically angelic mother and a painter. When her father is diagnosed with cancer, the family's world turns on end. While she intensifies her search for self, for someone or something to make her feel beautiful and real, her mother is preoccupied with healing her husband. The teen's search propels her to dance with the demons of anorexia, leads her to dabble with sexy vampires, introduces her to rock stars and fairies, and finally takes her to New York and an angel she once knew. Echo's tale is chronicled in a short-story format; in fact, Block's fans will recognize characters and scenes from "Blood Oranges" and "The Box," which have been retooled here. Like many of the author's books, there are layers of meaning hidden among the lush, eccentric L.A. environs that Echo inhabits; rich textures, fabrics, smells, sounds, plants, and feelings surface as her life flows over the pages. Time is flimsy and Echo's world swirls as readers get caught up in this melancholy love-story adventure. Block devotees will be thrilled, and readers new to this author may find themselves going back to her earlier books. A fine tale written in a style only this author could finesse. -Angela J. Reynolds, Washington County Cooperative Library Services, Aloha, OR Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information.

Kirkus Reviews 2001 August #1

The sorceress of iridescent language is back again in a tale a bit sparer and a bit darker than her usual. Once again, Block (*The Rose and the Beast*, 2000, etc.) takes a story and illuminates it from the perspectives of all the interrelated protagonists. Once again, the glitter of Los Angeles is a major character, and in this case the duller-in-contrast metropolis of New York is a minor one. Once again, fantasy elements act as grace notes against a gritty if spangled reality. Echo feels shut out of the intense love story of her parents: her mother's gentle perfection and her father's adoration of his wife. When her father is dying of cancer and her mother consumed by his care and her impending loss, Echo escapes to self-starvation and alcohol. She longs to find someone who will love her as her father loves her mother. As the story winds on, readers see Echo's parents' courtship, the mysterious boy—does he really have wings?—who rescues Echo from drowning, the connections of people named Smoke and Thorn and Eden with Echo. Intense but not explicit eroticism, the lure of wrong choices, and the ultimate redemption of love at the right time will keep readers mesmerized until the last page. (Fiction. YA) Copyright Kirkus 2001 Kirkus/BPI Communications. All rights reserved

PW Reviews 2001 July #3

Website: <http://www.cahners.com>

Block (*The Rose and the Beast*) moves to a new level of complexity without sacrificing accessibility for this exquisitely wrought coming-of-age story. The subjects, settings and semi-magical tone will be familiar to Block's readers as Echo, an artistic L.A. teenager, overcomes various forms of rejection in her search for selfhood and true love. Echo lives among angels, false and true, mythic and real, among them Echo's mother, whom Echo thinks is perfect but who appears blind or impervious to her daughter's needs; a famous-artist father whose love for his wife seems to leave no room for Echo; girls Echo wishes she could be; and a nameless, wounded boy who saves Echo from drowning and whose memory sustains Echo as she meets men incapable of loving her. As in previous works, death hangs heavily over the heroine: parents die young, vampires prey on the innocent, children fight terrible disease. Block's structure and imagery, however, manifest a new

sophistication and subtlety, as passages and metaphors "echo" one another throughout. She delicately shifts the narrative to show different partners (the heroine's grandparents; the lovers of Echo's friends; a sibling pair) facing similar conflicts, but she quietly varies the individuals' responses. Lyrical passages, such as Echo's descriptions of her mother's extraordinary beauty ("She is like the da Vinci Madonna with a crescent moon hung on her mouth") ripple beneath Echo's life-and-death struggles. This begs not just to be read, but to be reread, and savored. All ages. (Aug.) Copyright 1999 Cahners Business Information.

VOYA Reviews 2001 October

Echo's life has been one of love and sorrow, joy and tragedy. From the moment of her birth, she has been worshipped by her parents, who would give anything to keep her safe and happy. The realities of Echo's existence, however, cause her to be flung out on her own to search for her own happiness. Before she can discover tranquility, Echo must find the joy within herself. Caring parents, friends, vampires, and even an angel will enter Echo's life as she searches for love and peace. Block again demonstrates the power of magical realism in telling a completely real story of one woman's search for herself. The magical elements of her tale serve as powerful metaphors. Vampires represent those who befriend others for what they can drain from the relationship without giving thought to the well being of others. Friends willing to give unstintingly of themselves are angelic in their deeds. The one quality that has been the hallmark of the author's previous works is again present-lyrical language that reads more like poetry than prose. What is new, however, is that rather than settling for a more formulaic tale, Block presents the story of Echo from multiple perspectives. These seemingly separate stories are linked through the character of Echo. By seeing the disparate viewpoints, sophisticated readers will be able to assemble a more complete picture of this ephemeral young woman. High school students who can appreciate the nuances of this genre are sure to enjoy Echo's story.-Teri S. Lesesne. PLB \$14.89. ISBN 0-06-028128-6. 5Q 3P S Copyright 2001 Voya Reviews