



Zera and the Green Man

Sandra Knauf

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On the eve of Zera's fifteenth birthday, she's finding little to celebrate. Her guardian, Uncle Theodore (who she's nicknamed "the Toad"), and his frilly girlfriend, Tiffany, are dragging her to the opening of a fast-food restaurant that will feature the Toad's GMO creation "beefy fries," a concept that both sickens and intrigues Zera.

As if that were not enough, Zera is in trouble at school for mysterious events that she neither caused nor understands—and her classmates think she is a freak.

The single light in Zera's dark birthday is a gift from her grandmother that awakens Zera's passion for plants and helps bring to light her family's ancient connection to the natural world.

From there, the battle between those who would violate Nature in the name of greed and those who would protect it evolves--with Zera at its center.

Zera and the Green Man Details

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From Reader Review Zera and the Green Man for online ebook

Simone Martel says

Imaginative and thought-provoking, Zera and the Green Man is a young adult novel everyone can enjoy, but one that's a special treat for the horticulturally inclined, since much of the fantasy grows out of author Sandra Knauf's knowledge and love of the plant world. For instance, when Zera needs to fly across the country, she doesn't just teleport, she floats on a spore. And while the talking Venus Flytrap may be a pure fabrication, Knauf reminds us that in real life plants can communicate with each other in ways that seem almost miraculous. Since a major theme of the book is the way nature is being threatened by short-sighted profiteers, Knauf cleverly underlines the value of what is being lost by grounding the fantasy in the real natural world.

Teenage misfit Zera Green is a sort of female hippie Harry Potter, with a mysterious lineage and a destiny she hasn't chosen. But Zera's enemies aren't the vague baddies in typical young adult fantasy fiction. They're also grounded in reality. Zera is up against greedy, unethical businessmen who risk destroying the balance of nature with their experiments in genetic engineering. Luckily Zera has a cast of colorful characters to help her. The secondary characters are all vivid and memorable: loving but flawed Nonny, Cosmic Dan, the hilarious Tiffany (I think I know her), creepily handsome surgically enhanced Langston Void and the even creepier squid-enhanced young James, and most of all Zera's guardian Theodore who, thanks to Zera, starts to question his participation in the secret experiments.

Britta says

This story started off well enough, but quickly devolved into over simplified pseudo science fiction. A futuristic world is portrayed, but one in which only random things have changed. Many details are portrayed exactly as they exist now. Futuristic communications devices, and extreme GMOs, current travel mechanisms, for example. The focus is on the battle between nature and 'progress', but the latter is displayed in a most extreme, negative manner. What finally prompted me to stop reading was that 1, I didn't care about the characters and 2, there really wasn't much mystery as to what the outcome would be, anyway.

Pat Muccigrosso says

Zera and the Green Man is part science, part fiction, part love story and all entertaining. It's written from the teenage protagonist's point of view but is instantly engaging to anyone who loves nature, enjoys gardening and growing or works outdoors or just likes sitting by a stream on a soft summer day.

At the center of this novel is a young girl, Zera. Not beautiful nor a particularly brilliant student, Zera doesn't quite fit in with anyone at her school. There is something different about her, something you get an inkling of when her biology experiment takes an unexpected turn.

Author Sandra Knauf, whose first book I believe this is, does a wonderful job of engaging readers quickly, adding elements of science and spirituality into the mix and dusting just a bit of teenage romance on top of the story to give it energy, depth and a few very interesting twists.

A fast read, *Zera and the Green Man* looks at what is rapidly becoming a part of all of our lives, genetic modification. While most of the plant GMOs in the market today fall into the agri-business industry, this book takes the next logical step in this highly charged arena, focusing on some plant/animal combinations that are plausible extensions of the science of genetic modification.

Zera and the Green Man is classified as Young Adult (YA) but don't let that confuse you. This book will appeal across age groups and artificial barriers to anyone who enjoys a good plot, good characters and a bit of science fact and fiction.

This is one of those books that you rush to read; you want to get to the ending. But when you get there, you wish that the story would just go on! I'm looking forward to the sequel.

Cheryl Duval says

I thought this was a good book that showed a lot of imagination. The concept was really interesting. It was an easy read with enough going on to hold my interest. Imagine a world in which pretty much anything could be grown on plants...a very dangerous concept. This would be a good YA book and I would recommend it.

Heather says

I surrender. This book was going along fine and interesting until the plants started talking. I felt like I jumped into a children's book. Ugh!! I can't take it anymore. Quit at 73%. Maybe you will like it better than I.

Jami says

Really cheesy story. I enjoy sci-fi but this just seemed to blow over things they couldn't explain. It definitely touched on some important topics but then ruined it by going too far. By the end I was mostly just happy it was over.

Penny Luo says

So at first I thought I was absolutely wasting my time reading this weird sci-fi novel. I was almost 150 pages in and I was still finding the plot kind of slow and going nowhere. But what eventually drew me in is how the author interweaves the fantasy of the natural world and the prominent issues of GMO products in our modern era. It's not exactly new to see authors bring life to Nature and plants but to visually depict the horrors behind GMO products was what takes the cake here. When adults talk about the problems about GMO in our society today, we throw out names like MONSATO, the different effects of pesticides, genetic cross-contamination and lots of scientific terminologies that many find boring and too complicated to comprehend. But since this story is a young adult novel, a sci-fi specifically, the author keeps those scientific mumbo jumbo we are used to a minimum. Instead, I love how she uses very vivid imagery to describe some of the horrific GMO products developed in this bio tech lab in the story. For example (since this was

mentioned in the Amazon synopsis), "beefy fries" in the story were made from taking a gene from a cow and inserting in the genome of the potatoes. When they made fries with these GMO potatoes, it not only oozed a little blood, but it tasted and felt like a piece of steak. Of course, there were many more grotesque products developed in the story which was what makes it so intriguing to read. She breathes life into the wildest imagination of what GMO products would look like if it did not look "normal".

Sharon Debrunner says

Ezra and the Green Man

thoroughly enjoyed this book. It was an exciting and fun story, Zera is a wonderful character and the storyline was easy to follow.

Barb Lawrence says

I enjoyed this! I gravitate to books with a hint of magic (Joanne Harris, Sarah Addison Allen), and a meaningful message.

Heather says

I really did not like Zera and the Green Man. I very rarely give a book 1 star, but this one earned it. The first half was pretty much okay. And then it just went nuts. I felt like the book was trying to be multiple types of books (and failed miserably at the combination). Sometimes it was sci-fi. Sometimes it was mystical fantasy. Sometimes it was a thriller. Sometimes it was a heavy-handed lecture about how horrible genetic modification is and the dangers of global warming. The writing was not very good, particularly when the lectures droned on. I was hoping the ending would redeem it, but no such luck. The ending was extremely poorly done and rather dumb. I most definitely do NOT recommend this book.

Bruce says

The spunky fifteen year-old heroine of this young adult novel catapults from loneliness and misery into a series of mysteries that lead her to question the future of humanity and the planet. Along the way, she discovers powers that she had never imagined--and maybe a way to prevent world disaster.

An exciting blend of science fiction and fantasy, ZERA AND THE GREEN MAN raises important questions about genetically modified crops and the impact they'll have on people and the world now and in the future. Are genetically modified plant/animal hybrids possible? Will corporate greed result in a world full of grotesque and destructive biological monstrosities? Her guardian, "the Toad," may not care, but the plants themselves, Zera discovers thanks to an amazing gift from her grandmother, are worried about these

questions.

This well-written book should appeal to readers of all ages. I read it to discover what happens next, because the subject is fascinating and important, and because I felt that Zera is an appealing, intriguing heroine.

Alethea Bothwell says

At first I really loved it - the Green Man is one of my favorite personages (I am a gardener), but it did drag on a bit. And I didn't find the up-in-the-air ending reassuring.

I liked it that the villains were viewed with compassion, but I worry that they will get away with everything!

Lorrie says

So much more than just the Green Man! Loved the story. It was thought provoking especially with regards to some of the risks scientist are taking with modifying foods, etc. anyone who loves nature will enjoy this read. Though a serious topic, parts are fun filled.

Kaye Booth says

Read my review of "Zera and the Greenman" here:

<http://www.examiner.com/review/zera-a...>

Cindy Cunningham says

A bit too preachy

This novel held my interest enough to make it to the end, but I felt that it tried to address too many issues. It was also overtly didactic in the realm of environmentalists. I am a believer in saving the planet, but sometimes this novel became too preachy. I was not sure if this was science fiction or a tract on listening to nature....I wanted more of zera and her thoughts on all that happened.
