

BOOK REVIEW

# SADDEST BOOK EVER?

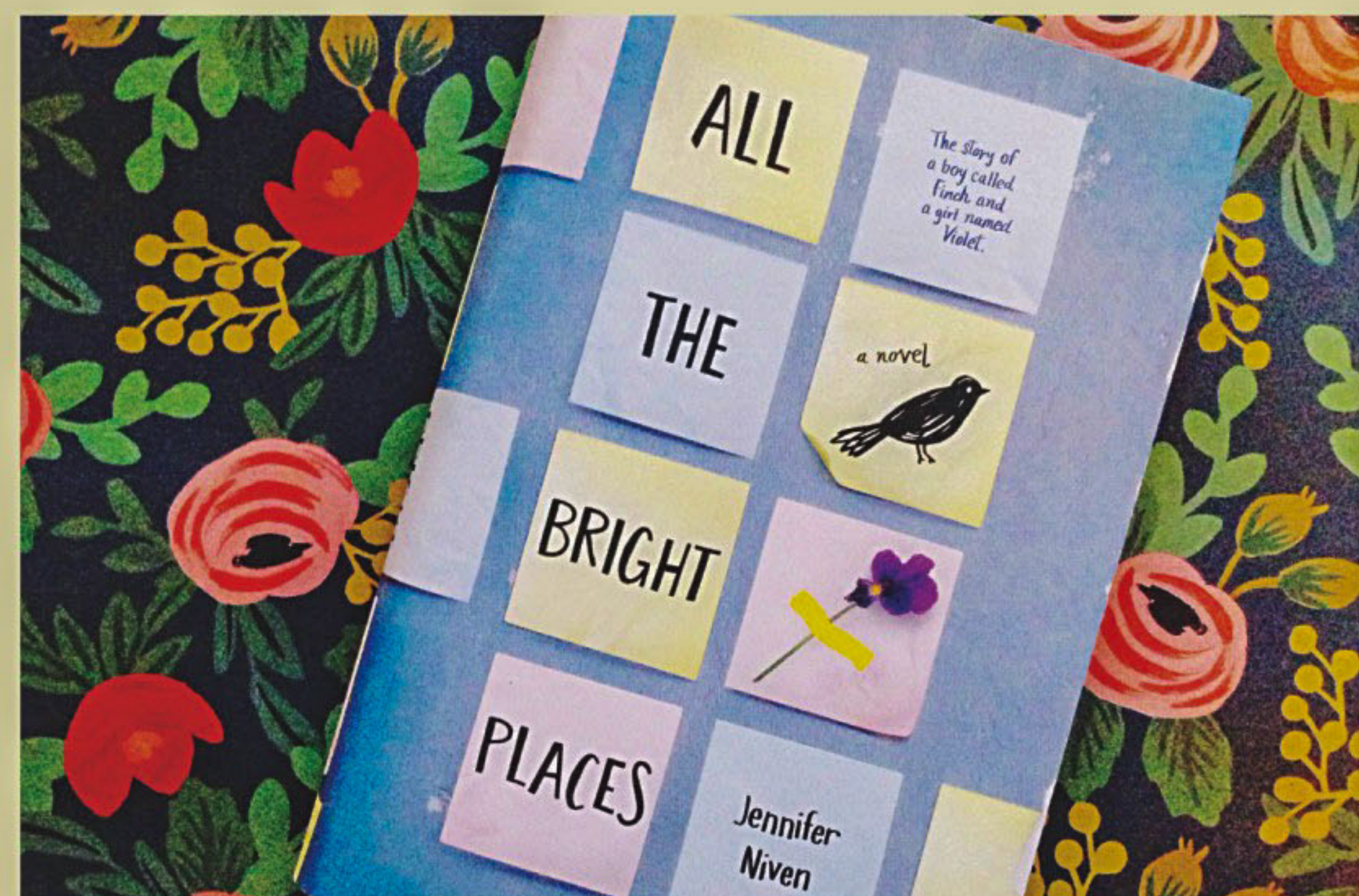
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"All the Bright Places" is Jennifer Niven's first YA novel that came out in January 2015 and is set to be adapted into a movie. I liked how the novel raises awareness about some serious issues that teenagers face, and how Niven turned that into an interesting read.

The book starts at a rather unusual location – atop the bell tower of a school somewhere in Indiana. Theodore Finch – a suicidal teenager – is contemplating jumping off and ending his life. But then he notices Violet Murkey – a rather popular girl – standing at the edge of the same. They don't jump, but [spoiler]. Later, they are assigned a group project where teams of two are to visit different places in Indiana, and Theodore volunteers to be Violet's partner. Thus begins their

getting started on the book, and found that most people compared it with *The Fault in Our Stars* and/or *Eleanor & Park*. As I proceeded with the book itself, I understood why the comparisons had been made. There are certain John Green-esque elements you'd find in *All the Bright Places*, such as road trips and finding and following clues. More importantly, the character of Theodore might as well have been taken right out of a John Green novel. As to the comparison with *Eleanor & Park*, I think that it was mostly due to the sad backstories to the characters and the alternating narratives that give you an insight into both Violet and Finch's lives and perspectives.

I'm not satisfied with how little we get to know about characters other than the protagonists. For example, we know that Theo has two best friends, but that's about all we



adventures and a love story ensues.

The book touches quite a few dark themes, with mental illness and depression being highlighted, and the darkness lingers in the book. On one hand we have Theodore, an eccentric boy who constantly has suicidal thoughts as a result of domestic problems and bullying at school, and on the other hand we have Violet, a writer who has been depressed since a tragic death in the family. The story revolves around their adventurous wanderings, their personal struggles in coping with their respective problems, and of course their relationship. Some may say that there's not much of a plot in this novel; I like to see it as life unravelling, so the lack of an out-of-the-box story doesn't bother me here.

I consulted Goodreads before

know about them. In fact, he seems to have a closer relationship with his counsellor than with his friends. And while we get to know about both Theo and Violet's family members, I felt that there was no real character development there.

In retrospect, *All the Bright Places* is a light read with heavy emotions and a twist that I saw coming. Still, it portrays youth issues in a way most other YA novels can't. So long as you don't actively look for TFIOS elements in this novel, I'd recommend this interesting book, especially if you love the genre.

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# Wrestling that isn't WWE

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Most WWE fans will agree that Vince McMahon's brand isn't what it used to be. Such is WWE's lack of connection with the fans that at the recent Royal Rumble, fans started chanting for Triple H, the storyline villain or 'heel', and booing Roman Reigns, the storyline protagonist or 'face'. But that is not to say you should give up on wrestling. Several wrestling promotions have risen to prominence over the past few years and offer alternatives.

## 1. RING OF HONOR

'Indie wrestling' refers to wrestlers who perform for small promotions in front of small but dedicated crowds. These shows often feature the best wrestling, devoid of the drama and TV elements associated with big time promotions like WWE. Ring of Honor is considered the pinnacle of indie wrestling, taking the very best of the scene and putting them under one roof. Recent WWE stars like CM Punk, Daniel Bryan and Seth Rollins all honed their craft here. You won't get a lot of emotional feuds or storylines that will grip you. But you will get incredibly adept wrestlers putting together great matches. That's worth a look any day.

## 2. NEW JAPAN PRO WRESTLING

Japan has always been a hot bed of wrestling through the years, with almost every legendary wrestler having spent some time over there. NJPW is the culmination of everything all those Japanese companies have achieved over the years. While much of the show is in Japanese, it features several American stars and had, until very recently, TNA icon AJ Styles. The storylines here have a very edgy feel to them and feature the best of Japan. Right now might be a bad time for them since the WWE came in and made a swoop for some of their

biggest stars but expect NJPW to fight back.

## 3. LUCHA UNDERGROUND

Among all the shows on this list, Lucha Underground comes closest to classic ECW. A compact arena, carefully written feuds that become grippingly emotional and fights that more than often spill into the crowd give Lucha Underground a vibe unlike anything available in wrestling today. The word 'Lucha' obviously indicates that a lot of the stars of Lucha Libre – the high flying style of wrestling made most famous by Rey Mysterio – are on show alongside former WWE stars like John Morrison and Chavo Guerrero. The first season was critically acclaimed and is a must watch for anyone missing the edgy product that ECW used to provide back in the day.

## 4. NXT

NXT is technically a part of WWE. But free of Vince McMahon and his whims, WWE's developmental brand has honestly become the best thing to come out of the WWE in the past decade or so. Featuring some of the best young wrestling talent, extremely devoted fans and once again, no Vince McMahon, the show is a stripped down source of entertainment. Triple H runs this place and if his handling of NXT is any indication, he could probably make WWE better if he were given a free reign. But, you know, Vince.

Given the signs, WWE will keep on disappointing. The companies mentioned above will probably reignite your belief in pro wrestling. Give them a shot.

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