Teenage Wasteland Essay, Research Paper

The Teenage Wasteland, why was it so good?

Growing up in the recent generations is very challenging. Children at such young ages, even younger than teens have been faced with such perilous decisions. It is especially hard for teenagers to find acceptance at this point in their lives. Here is an instance that is so common in this day and age, yet this particular case is only fiction. A teenage boy named Donny has been going through a few changes in his appearance. His parents, Matt and Daisy, are somewhat disturbed yet they don?t say much to him. Then one day Daisy gets a call from Donny?s school administrator and tells her that his grades are attitude are dropping scale. He eventually gets kicked out of private school and does poorly in public school. Daisy was concerned and decided to take advice from the school and psychologist to get help from a highly reputable tutor, Calvin Applebee. Instead of Donny?s parents talking to their son they hire Cal, which tries to handle Donny?s lack of emotion and performance. Donny?s performance didn?t change with Cal, at least in the school aspect, but Cal kept reassuring Daisy and Matt that it would change and to give it more time. In result, Donny runs away after being sent home because he was expelled for being caught with drugs in his locker and months later he still has not returned home. Who is to blame? Should Daisy and Matt been more disciplined on Donny? Well, in Anne Tyler?s short story the Teenage Wasteland this is just what happened. I really enjoyed this story because I feel it really focused on an issue that is so common in our generation. It was easy to read and was straight to the point. I especially enjoyed the role of the dumbfounded parents, Cal?s cynical character, and in result of the all their foolishness, the action Donny resulted in taking.

It was really funny to me to see how Donny?s parents could be so oblivious to all that was happening to Donny. They were very good parents but didn?t but enough discipline on him. They instead let the school, the psychologist, and especially the Cal run the life of Donny. Daisy and Matt should never have given so much control to everyone else over their own son. Daisy tried helping Donny in school, even having to start supper late at times and spending less time around her other daughter. It wasn?t always pleasant because when Matt would come home she would be very ?snappish? and would recite some of Donny?s assignments to him. They were told to take Donny to a psychologist to get tested and the diagnostic was only that ?Donny was going through a difficult period in his life. He required some academic help and a better sense of self-worth.? So a tutor was strongly advised and Daisy and Matt just agree to hire one, wanting only the best for Donny. This not only was a mistake to hire Cal but it also cost them a fortune too. I feel Donny?s parents should have dealt with his problem. All he needed was parents that just had time to talk to him and give him a little leeway at times. Communication is a downfall displayed in Tyler?s short story that is very realistic of parenting that always leads to bigger problems. It is so common for parents to be too busy with their jobs and lives to give their children all the attention and love needed. I feel Tyler truly conveyed a real life message in writing Teenage Wasteland. It was very disturbing to see throughout the story how Cal, the tutor becomes so controlling. Cal at first seemed reasonable in his method of tutoring Donny. Donny came home so happy sometimes after his tutoring sessions. Yet gradually the tension sets in again and Donny is back to his old troublesome self. Cal tells Daisy and Matt not to worry about Donny?s slack of performance. Cal even tells Daisy to let him handle the school if they call and complain about Donny?s grades. Tyler gives me some many different feelings about Cal. Is he a cynical man? Or is he trying his best to help Donny? This is one of the reasons this story interests me so much, it gives me a chance to think about how this really applies to present day people. I feel Cal interferes too much into the parenting of Donny. Daisy and Matt need to be sterner and should have told Cal to back off a bit. But Daisy and Matt were more anger at the teacher that called and said how poorly Donny was doing than at Cal; it?s like reverse psychology that Cal pulled on them. Cal may have made Donny happier at times but overall he just added to the emotional pain Donny was going through.

The ending of the short story was a conclusion not many stories I read have. The end result of this perplexing situation was that Donny was expelled from school and was sent home, but never made it there. There are so many true stories today about runaway children that are never found just like Donny. The outcome of Tyler?s story may not have been happy but it ended as more of a realistic matter. Maybe she decided to conclude the book with the disappearance of Donny to show some parents how important is truly is to communicate and love their children unless they want the same thing to happened to their children that Donny experienced.

I really enjoyed ?Teenage Wasteland? because it displayed a topical issue some parents have actually faced in their lifetime. It was exceptional the way the story was wrapped up. Not that I don?t enjoy happy endings but I am more interested in reading stories that may be written in fiction but that I can actually relate to and imagine it happening. Anne Tyler displayed this real life situation through a fiction tale that has such valuable lessons to be learned. Donny?s just a teenager who was going through a rough time in his life and just wanted to be loved and to love himself. It isn?t always happy the way children turn out but parents do make the difference and communication is a key to success. I feel Tyler displayed this quite clear in her short story so everyone could learn a lesson worth learning to prevent this astounding situation from happening to others.