



Displacement

Thalia Chaltas

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Home is supposed to be a place you belong. It's supposed to be parents who are there and siblings who bug you and a life that feels comfortable. It's not supposed to be an absentee mother or a drowned sister. But that's Vera's reality, and she can't stand it anymore. So she runs. She ends up in an old mining town in the middle of the California desert. It's hot, it's dusty, and it's as isolated as Vera feels. As she goes about setting up her life, she also unwittingly starts the process of healing and-eventually- figuring out what home might really mean for her.

Displacement Details

Date : Published June 9th 2011 by Viking Juvenile
ISBN : 9780670011995
Author : Thalia Chaltas
Format : Hardcover 364 pages
Genre : Young Adult, Poetry, Fiction, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Displacement for online ebook

Cheri Williams says

Tragedy spurs Vera to leave everything she knows for small-town desert living. But is she living--or running?

I don't typically read books written in verse so I'm no expert, but I loved the way no word was wasted, no cliches regurgitated. *DISPLACEMENT* is beautifully written, fully developed, thought provoking and satisfying to the very end.

arc provided by publisher

Sally Kruger says

Vera needs to escape the chaos at home. Her younger sister disappeared and is presumed drowned. Her mother spends more time in foreign countries than with her children, and her older sister is focused on her own life without enough left over for anyone else. Vera's love of geology leads her to the desert where she hopes to occupy her time with rocks and not the memories that haunt every moment.

When she arrives in the tiny town of Garrett, she is welcomed by a conglomeration of interesting people. There is Tilly whose lisp makes every conversation a challenge. Lon is half Indian, breathtakingly handsome, and he runs a questionable business shipping Indian artifacts. Vera quickly connects with Milo, an artist whose pottery making skills are incredible. Life in Garrett is slow-paced, and Vera falls into life there easily.

As the summer passes, Vera works for Lon keeping records and eventually earning his confidence to help pack artifacts for shipping. When memories and imagined glimpses of her dead sister threaten to overwhelm her, she heads into the desert to calm her nerves. No one questions her reasons for being there, but sometimes Vera wishes someone would.

When Vera discovers someone has been inside the house she is temporarily calling home, she sets about trying to solve the mystery. When she finds the answers, she is shaken and begins doubting whether this is the place she belongs. Will time help heal the painful past? When will she be ready to go back to her previous life and pick up the pieces?

Author Thalia Chaltas explores the world of love and loss and what it takes to pull a life back together. *DISPLACEMENT* is written in verse and beautifully tells Vera's story as she attempts to rebuild her life. Chaltas is also the author of another novel in verse, *BECAUSE I AM FURNITURE*.

R. J says

This book was written in verse, which to me made it a quick read. I found the story to be engaging &

enjoyed the story as it unfolded.

Karissa says

I don't usually read books in verse. I say this every time I read a book that is in verse, but it's true. I can count on my hand probably the number of these books I've read. They are starting to grow on me, but I don't think I'll actively seek them out. One of the pros of reading a book like this is that you can read it in one day, like I tend to do.

Vera has to get away. It doesn't matter where. She just needs to be as far away from home as possible. She ends up in a small dusty town, taking up residence in an abandoned home and finding a job with an artist and with a small "second" packaging company.

The purpose of her running away is so that she can heal. Her mother is an absentee mother, always flying off somewhere. Her older sister has taken the role of mother all their lives, cooking and cleaning and caring for the two younger girls. Vera's younger sister is...well, she's gone. And Vera needs to figure out what she wants to do with her life in this small town with a box full of unsent post cards.

There wasn't much back story, just enough to get you by, and I found I liked this approach. It helped to make the book a good read, and you still enjoyed the characters of the town without having to know too much about them. And you really only needed to know what was going on with Vera. It was a good, quick read in verse that was actually enjoyable.

Joanna Hahn says

I don't know, I could never really get into this book. Just okay.

Yolanda Dégraff says

Another Great Book By Thalia Chaltas!!

Displacement was a great read!! The main character, Vera, is quirky and authentic. The story held so many great passages. I didn't want it to be over!! Excellent descriptions and excellent characters. A must-read.

Marinda says

This book was hard to read at first. It's supposedly written in "prose" but it's just jittery nonsense half the time. It took me about 3 hours to finish it.

Amanda (Born Bookish) says

Having read Chalta's first book, *Because I Am Furniture*, I was a little worried this would be another heavy-subject story, beautifully written but upsetting. While *Displacement* does tackle the heavy subject of losing one's sibling it was not as emotionally upsetting as I was expecting.

How often do you meet a main character who's a seventeen year old girl, studying geology, who runs away from home to the desert because she's excited about the geological possibilities? Vera was such a refreshing MC, super smart, honest, hot-headed at times but usually for good cause.

Along with the desert setting came some very unique characters; Milo, Pearl, Dempsey, and Tilly. Only one of them was a main-ish character so while the others weren't fully developed, they played their role of odd small town characters. The way Tilly talked was SUPER annoying, here's a short example of what I mean.

"Thet down, hawney. I'll gitchoyou thome tea."

OR

"What kind of job you think we got in thith plate?"

I really can't tolerate slang, dialect, and accents in books. I just can't, but luckily Tilly doesn't appear often.

Overall, this was refreshingly unique and totally unpredictable. The verse format lent itself perfectly to Vera's story of loss, family, friends, and ultimately how to move on after the death of a loved one. I look forward to whatever subject Chaltas decides to tackle in her next book!

Hannah says

Vera has run away from everything. She has decided to go where nobody knows her and what she has been through. Her younger sister Amy was declared dead after she went on a night swim with a bunch of kids from the wrong crowd. Vera had talked to her older sister, Roley, about getting Amy away from the bad kids, but Roley said to lighten up about it. So after Amy's death Vera needed to get away from everyone and everything. It didn't help that her two best friends who had made summer plans with her decided to start dating and went to Europe without her, but dealing with Amy's death is something that Vera doesn't know how to do. When she gets to Garret, an old mining town, she decides that is where she needs to be. Her love of rocks drew her to Garret, even if there is no work with rocks happening there. Vera ends up working for two people in town, Milo who makes pottery can only offer her work once a week, but Lon the cute half Hopi Indian guy who is about her age offers her a job doing accounting for his repackaging business. With something going amiss with the repackaging and seeing Amy everywhere she turns Vera has her hands full.

This really could have used more character development. I don't feel like I know who Vera really is. Yes, I understand that her younger sister never came back from a night swim and she blames herself and her older sister for not stopping her from hanging out with the wrong crowd, but the whole her friends started dating and went off on vacation together after graduation felt tacked on. It was kind of as if the author tossed that in there to make it more dramatic and really it kind of ruined the story for me. Told in verse I do think it is a good story about dealing with loss.

Danielle says

Good story, also a quick read since it is written in blank verse. I found the poem format let all the important details through and allowed the reader (me) to better focus on the story without being weighed down with lengthy descriptions. This was also a nice contemporary follow up to the last book I read, *Survival*; I wasn't in the mood to read anything too upbeat and happy. Not that I'm saying there isn't a happy ending; I would call it an everything works out, good ending. Definitely check this out if you like contemporary, growing as a person stories.

Wendi Lee says

Reviewed for ALL WHO WANDER Book Blog...

A novel written in prose can be a hard feat to pull off. I have to admit, I'm always wary about reading one -- it's so easy for the novel to be more about making a statement and less about actual substance. Also, I'm incredibly picky when it comes to poetry, I've been to one too many bad open night mikes!

Displacement was a quick read, in part because of the prose style. But I also found myself drawn into the world of Vera, independent enough to uproot herself from her home, travel to a random town (well, more an outpost, really) full of other misfits and colorful characters, and immediately find a home and a part-time job. Vera is grieving for her sister, whom she starts 'seeing'. But Vera is also very much a teenage girl -- she complains about the only diner's bad food, crushes on her new boss, and angsts about her clothes.

The other characters were a little less well-drawn. I liked her non-crush boss, a middle-aged man who threw pots for a living and was dealing with his own traumatic events. Her crush, a handsome Native American young man named Len, was much less likable. He breaks into her home not once, but twice, accuses her of stealing, and then has an encounter with the potter that showcases an ugly streak of homophobia. Vera never seems upset enough with him. She even goes back to work for him after the first time he breaks into her home (and steals all of her cash!). I just didn't understand that!

Overall, I liked *Displacement*. Vera's voice is very strong, and the novel ends in a way that is hopeful without being saccharin. I also felt the prose writing lent itself very well in this circumstance.

Ashley says

it wasn't BAD, i just feel like nothing much really happened. it kept me reading, but nothing exciting or too intriguing happens

Martha Schwalbe says

When I talk to student about making connections, I made lots of them in this book. Vera buys a drawer full of post cards and uses them to mark points in her search for herself. When I was younger I had a collection of post cards, not that I bought at once but when I went places. I did not write on them about what I did, but looked on them after I returned and thought of all the possible things I could have done. The funny thing is, upon reflection, is that many of the possibilities were romanticized and the reality of those trips is definitely my own.

On my first trip to Europe, my second day in London, I was accused by a crazy man of being a spy. Young and naive, I saw his influence in Paris too. I did not want this to be the reality of my trip, although it's much more interesting to me now. It is not the trip most people have when they travel. Each time Vera looked at a post card, I was reminded of events in my past. Perhaps that's the point of post cards.

The use of desert as a character impressed me. Nothing can be hidden in the desert; it's too stark or prickly or dry or unpredictable.

I'm not sure students who read this book will have the same experience with it that I had. Maybe it's a good starting place for everyone.

Just as an aside, I remember getting out of my car at Owens Valley and everything was silence. I wanted to cut loose with a scream but didn't dare, what happens if a girl screams in the silence and there's no one around to hear?

This book is a good read for students who enjoy novels in verse. I have one student in mind already.

Rebecca McNutt says

I don't understand all the bad reviews! *Displacement* was a first-class YA novel, really gripping and emotional, yet down to earth and believable. I can certainly relate to the small-town mining setting and I loved the characters.

Deborah says

Sometimes in life one has to get away from everything to be able to recharge whether it is from the stress of a job or a death in the family or a questionable relationship.

Vera has to get away. She is suffering from a loss which she is having trouble dealing with. She leaves her home on the west coast and travels to a small, remote mining town in the desert to think through her problem only to encounter more problems. While here she is unsuccessful in finding solace and realizes she really needs to be home surrounded by a family who really loves her.
