



Saving Sky

Diane Stanley

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The country is at war, terrorists strike at random, widespread rationing is in effect, and the power grid is down. But thirteen-year-old Sky Brightman is remarkably untouched by it all. She lives off the grid on sixty acres of rural New Mexico ranch land with chores to do and horses to ride and no television or internet to bring disturbing news into her family's adobe house. Sky's schoolmates think she's a little weird.

Then a string of mysterious arrests begins, and her new friend, Kareem, becomes a target. Sky is finally forced to confront the world in all its complexity. Summoning her considerable courage and ingenuity, she takes a stand against injustice. With humor, hope, and fierce determination, she proves that even a child can change the world.

Saving Sky Details

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From Reader Review Saving Sky for online ebook

Christy Brown says

One of the best YA books I have read recently. I can't wait to teach this book. I plan on using it in conjunction with a book about Japanese Internment camps and one about Concentration Camps. I would love to see the comparisons that my students can find between the three time periods and the three types of imprisonments.

Josh says

I thought this book was ok but I think the message that it sends might have been better served coming out say 5-7 years ago when the 9/11 attacks had taken place and there were prejudice against people hailing from that region of the world. The book revolves around Sky and her family her live an alternative lifestlye in a time were terrorist attacks in the U.S. are rampant and their is rationing of fossil fuels, certain tyes of food, and other non-renewable resources that are targeted. Sky and her family live on farm in New Mexico and live a very sheltered life in hopes of protecting themselves from all of the terrible things going on in the world. The family does not have a TV or computer and relies on an aunt to receive their news via a cell phone. The family also takes advantage of solar power and growing their own produce to help ease the burdens of rationing. Things become interesting when Sky befriends a boy hailing from the Middle East and as the attacks become more severe and frequent the government turns to drastic measures. One day in school, government agents come to arrest the boy and take him to a internment camp similar to what the Japanese saw in the U.S. after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Sky and her family decide to hide the boy at their farm after the boys father and family are taken to the camp. Eventually the agents come to find out that they are hiding the boy and come for him and eventually find him. The end shares a good message as Sky delivers a speech calling for an end to the unjust prejudice and imprisonment of people hailing from the Middle East. I for some reason was not a huge fan it just seemed sort of out there the way the family lived.... and a bit dumbfounding that no one else besides this family, at least as far as the book tells you, was smart enough to build solar panels and still relied heavily on gas, oil, and other fuels at a time where there was rationing.

Tara Chevrestt says

This is a novel aimed at the pre teen crowd. For adults, it is a very short read, but still very thought evoking. It has a very good, strong moral that never grows old. It's about how when afraid, people often need to pin the blame on someone and too often, this finger pointing leads to hate and racism. There are good and bad people in all races, countries, and religions. You really cannot blame them all for the errors of one...

This novel is a "what if" book.. What if the attacks of September 11th didn't stop there? What if it led to a full blown war with terrorists, not in Iraq or Afghanistan, but right here on the mainland? How would we act? Sky is thirteen and during this war, she witnesses hate and wrongful arrests on people of Arab decent. When the United States government repeats history (I'm referring to the internment of the Japanese Americans during world war II) and begins arresting Arab Americans, Sky tries to save her school friend, Kareem. It's Sky and her family versus Homeland Security. Uh oh. What's going to happen to Kareem, Sky, Sky's family?

I also got a kick out of how everyone reacts when faced with no electricity, no cell phones, no gas, no semi trucks delivering food to Albertson's... Gosh, we have become a very dependent society!

I found Sky's family a little weird with their solstice celebrating, hand holding, and blessing chanting, but to each his own. If I had any doubts about giving this story a 5 star rating, Kareem's essay at the end of the book erased them. Beautiful, thought evoking words that make one really sit and think about courage and ask oneself if they have ever been that brave.

Marley P says

4.5

This was a nice short read. It had a good message and if you're looking for an enjoyable short book this would be a good option. The only thing I didn't like was that the ending was a bit abrupt.

Destinee Sutton says

I appreciate what Diane Stanley is trying to accomplish with this book: What if the War on Terror escalates and our world is drastically changed? Rationing, attacks, fear, panic, etc. grip the nation and our leaders make some ugly choices. They treat people of Arab decent the same way people of Japanese decent were treated after Pearl Harbor. What would you do if they were going to take your friend away just because of where his parents were born? Would you be brave?

Now let me be cynical: An idealized hippie-agrarian family (the kids are named Mouse and Sky, they live off the grid without TV or computers, they practice some kind of humanist/pagan spiritualism that involves a lot of blessing of stuff) does what any saintly family would do during a crisis and rescues a young boy of Arab descent from racist, Arab-fearing government officials. Sky writes an essay about how messed up the country has become.

I like/don't like this book because it's message is so clear. It would be absolutely terrible to live in a country that openly punished people of a certain ethnicity. It takes a lot of courage to stand up for what's right when everyone is scared and the country is being attacked. The United States is not a perfect nation. Bad things could happen here. Have happened here.

This book is saved from being unbearably preachy by good writing and a fast-moving plot. I enjoyed reading it, even though I rolled my eyes more than once (it was mostly the perfection of Sky's parents that brought on the eye rolls). It would be a good choice for a book club this year or next, but I don't think it will have staying power. It's kind of a modern, speculative version of Number the Stars. The ending is totally open-ended, which is how a book taking on such a big topic manages to be so short. Often, I wished the author would do more showing and less telling.

Nia Tucker says

Sky, who is 13 years old, lives in New Mexico with her parents and younger sister, Mouse. Sky's parents have protected them from basically the whole outside world since it was becoming violent. Especially since

the first attack on 9/11, when a bridge was taken out. The attacks began to happen so often there was steps officially enforced on how to handle the exact situation. Sky lives on a ranch, they don't have a TV or internet. If something happens they have a relative, Aunt Pat, who tells them any important information as far as the attacks go. Not too much later a man, Dr Khalid , a new colleague of Sky's mom, and his son ,Kareem, move to New Mexico things escalate for the worse. Oil lines are starting to be targeted, which begins showing the countries dependence on gas and other resources.Soon everyone from Middle East is rounded up and detained by President's orders. Though Kareem is only in the seventh, he is still on the list. Sky's family comes together on this new task to hide him.When I started reading, I truly fell in love with the book and found it very interesting as far as how each incident was occurring and how the family stuck together and made it work. Sky's family pretty much keeps to themselves. They live away from everything and use solar power. The family is very well good to one another and have a wonderful connection. Sky is indeed a character that can be seen as an actual child by the way she reacts to everything and how curious she can be through out the whole situation. I think the author did an amazing job with Sky as the main character in this book. She really brought a realistic feel to the book. It was worth the reading. I enjoyed every page!

Monica says

I've been reading a lot of YA books lately as my kids bring them home and I try to keep up. I was bored so I picked up this one even though it looked like an odd choice for an 11-year-old boy. The story is basically a near-future dystopia story where the US is under constant terrorist attacks. The government has already carried out an "America for Americans" campaign where undocumented immigrants were rounded up into detention camps and deported. Now in the face of more terror attacks, they are rounding up citizens of middle eastern descent and placing them in camps. Sky, a 7th grader, and her family, help to hide a boy in her class from the authorities.

I don't want to say more than that because the whole book took maybe 2 hours to read. It wasn't like a great work of fiction, but just eerie in its timeliness. Just after finishing it I read a headline about China detaining muslims in camps, and here we are in phase 1 of the *fictional* America for Americans campaign with children in tent camps along the border. I think it would be a great book to read and discuss as a class, because it touches on so many issues that are so relevant right now. It is almost like an Anne Frank story set in the modern day, and it really shows how mob mentality can affect people, and the importance of stepping up for those who are being persecuted although they have done nothing wrong.

Angie says

Wow! This book is a scary look at a future that could be. It isn't as far off as a lot of dystopian books are. I can truly see how this one could easily come to pass and that makes it more scary than anything I have read in a long time. The plot is good and the characters are even better. They are not perfect, they have their doubts, but they do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. This is a book written for children and it does show this future world from that perspective. There is terrorism and rationing and fear. Scary things do happen and the parents have to explain them to the kids.

The world is not a safe place in this book, but that doesn't mean that we have to do evil things to each other out of fear. The family in the book has the courage to stand up to the system of fear. I think this is such a

timely book. Even though we don't live in quite the same state as the book there is a world of fear out there directed at people who have nothing to do with what is causing the fear. I think the message of the book is to stop and think. Realize what you are doing. Stand up for what is right. I thought this was a great book and I hope the message and the book find an audience.

Jana Tenbrook (Reviews from the Stacks) says

Saving Sky is a good, albeit highly idealistic and slightly odd, story about a young girl growing up in an era defined by war. Against this backdrop, she learns the importance of standing up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

The story is set in a fairly realistic alternative version of modern-day United States. Sky Brightman is a seventh grader who lives outside of town on her family's farm. The farm is extremely environmentally friendly and almost entirely self-sufficient, so when terrorist attacks destroy the region's oil supply and the way of life for most of the community, the Brightman's are not significantly impacted. At least, not because of the sudden lack of many physical conveniences faced by people in nearby cities. Instead, their lives are turned upside down when they take in a young boy, one of Sky's classmates, after his father is unjustly arrested. Despite the fact that Kareem and his family are legal citizens of the U.S., prejudice and fear caused by ongoing wars with their country of origin lead people in the community and government to treat them unjustly. Similar to the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, families of Middle Eastern descent are being taken to detention centers. When Kareem's family is targeted, the Brightman's take him into their home and attempt to hide him.

Throughout the story, Sky struggles to balance her desire to help others who are in need with her own self-preservation. The themes of this book, including courage and putting others before yourself, are clear and noble. The writing is simple, and at times the very writing style made it a difficult to remain engaged.

However, it is important to keep in mind that this book was written for a middle or high school audience, and the writing is appropriate to the audience. Additionally, running through the background of the story is the spirituality Sky's family holds. They carry out a naturalistic, good-vibes-can-save-the-world spirituality. Unfortunately, this way of thinking does not accommodate the reality of their world or ours. While the "blessings" and other ceremonial aspects of their religion initially appear harmless, they create a mentality of self-reliance which carries a multitude of dangers and is incongruous with reality.

I feel for the characters of this story. They are doing their best to help people in need, and they each individually stand up to those who try to tell them that something which they know to be wrong is right. The things they do are good, and the lessons from this book are good. I could even go so far as to say it's good to read about people who believe different things from yourself, to examine what you believe and see how the differences interact. It is still saddening for me to read something like this where the people you cheer for hold fundamentally untrue beliefs.

For the most part, I enjoyed reading Saving Sky. Keeping in mind that it is written on a middle school level, it tactfully addresses subjects such as racism and courage. I cautiously recommend it, as it is definitely not a book for everyone. It is fairly short, and because the writing is simple it does not take long to get through, so it would not be a big time commitment even if you began it and ended up not enjoying it.

Anna Motteler says

A very short read, but such an amazing one that it really makes you think. I relate this to me and one of my best friends who is Persian, she got a lot of crap for being Persian after 9/11 and I always stood up for her.

Still to this day, people judge her for it and this is probably why I love this book so much.

You can't judge a race/ethnic group based on what a few of them did. Honestly? If we did that, we'd be racist against ourselves considering all of the Caucasian people who go around murdering others. You just can't do it. Who cares if someone is a different race or has a different religion, get over it. Life is life, stuff happens, you move on. Someone may have a different skin color than you do, who cares?!

Have your niece read this, your daughter, your nephew, your son. Anyone and everyone you know, have them read this book. It's short, it won't take them very long. It may appeal more to the "younger" audiences, but trust me, the lesson is there no matter how old you are.

Izzy P. says

This book was pretty short and I did read through it quite fast. It was a sweet, emotional story with fun characters.

Kai The Onion says

I really loved the book because it was really action packed. I couldn't stop reading it. But the reason why I gave it four stars is because some parts are boring or that I didn't understand the conflict. Still, I would recommend reading it.

Kristen Herzog says

Saving Sky by Diane Stanley is an interesting book that takes place in the near future. Sky's family lives in New Mexico on a farm. Her mom is a nurse in Santa Fe, her dad is an artist but because of the war currently shows horses. Sky also has a younger sister, Mouse. This family of four lives out in the country and lives very conservatively due to the fact that there is a war going on. They depend upon solar power to heat their water and provide electricity. They heat their home with a wood stove and rely on hand wound lamps and flashlights during the evenings. They do not have a television or a computer so internet is not an option they rely on their Aunt to call if there is any important news or wait until they go to school or work. Terrorists are continually attacking America therefore things are in high demand and anyone who is of suspicious origin or associations are being arrested. Sky's family decides to help Kareem whose father and cousin have been arrested. They bring him to their home and risk being caught helping a fugitive. Sky finds herself in several tight spots during the story as her family is trying to help Kareem and she learns that standing up for what you know is wrong is one of the most courageous things a person can do. I enjoyed the read but have to admit that it is kind of hard to believe that a group of people could go from blaming anyone of suspicious origin and throwing them into an internment camp to all of a sudden realizing how wrong they were and wanting to make a difference just because of one paper that a teenager reads at an essay contest awards ceremony.

Nancy says

Superb story on social injustices. Reading this through the discerning lens of a Biblical worldview, however, this leaves me with a distaste for the worldview of this author. Includes moon worship?, winter solstice ceremony, good spirits watching over us and speaking blessing over strangers who have died. The Bible says Jesus is the light of the world and brings light into the darkness. Also, Romans 1:25.

Michele says

I liked this book: it was interesting, and moved very quickly (I literally read it in about 2 hours)! The two main characters feel genuine and I swiftly became engaged in what would happen to them.

Sky is a twelve year old growing up in a hippie-style, off-the-grid New Mexico family during a not-too-far off time in which terrorists have gained an upper hand in the U.S. After attacks on the oil production facilities, all citizens with suspect ancestry are arrested and sent to deportation centers, including Sky's new friend Kareem and his family. The plot of the story centers around what actions Sky's family chooses to take in these troubled times.

There are many timely elements in this book: the fear of terrorism, the irrational blaming of all of particular national descent, and even the energy crisis. There are also many questions taken into consideration: how would you react in a time of crisis, how should we use our resources, and how do our personal belief systems affect our daily actions.

However, while I enjoyed reading the book, there are a few things that bugged me. First, the line between realistic and imaginary fiction is almost too close in this book--so many aspects of the present are in the book, but the author stretches them just enough to escalate the plot. Oil production has been destroyed recently in the U.S., but the news tells us this was an accident, not a terrorist attack. People can be picked up off the streets for suspected terrorist connections, but it isn't an all-in-one-day secret government action. While this is fine for me as an adult who pays attention to the news, it could be confusing to children--which part of the story has actually happened, and which is just suggestive? It is especially confusing since it takes place in New Mexico, where people in a deportation center are more likely come from south of the border rather than from the Middle East.

Secondly, I cannot decide what the author is trying to convey with Sky's family. Why is the book entitled "Saving Sky"? Sky feels she must do more to help, yet she really doesn't know much about what is going on, due to the conscious choice her parents made to keep her in the dark. On one hand, Sky's family should be praised for being forward-thinking and tolerant, but on the other hand, they want to isolate themselves from being a part of the craziness of the world and seem to need the validation of saving others in order to be sure they are correct in their world view.

I would recommend the book as it has good characters, a suspenseful and engaging plot, and a theme which hits home. However, if I was giving it to a child I would sure to point out the fact and the fiction. I also would like to know other people's reaction to Sky's family.

