



# Gives Light

*Rose Christo*

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"Skylar is my name, tragically."

Sixteen-year-old Skylar is witty, empathetic, sensitive--and mute. Skylar hasn't uttered a single word since his mother died eleven years ago, a senseless tragedy he's grateful he doesn't have to talk about.

When Skylar's father mysteriously vanishes one summer afternoon, Skylar is placed in the temporary custody of his only remaining relative, an estranged grandmother living on an Indian reservation in the middle of arid Arizona.

Adapting to a brand new culture is the least of Skylar's qualms. Because Skylar's mother did not die a peaceful death. Skylar's mother was murdered eleven years ago on the Nettlebush Reserve. And her murderer left behind a son.

And he is like nothing Skylar has ever known.

## Gives Light Details

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Author : Rose Christo

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Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Young Adult, Lgbt, Contemporary, Disability

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# From Reader Review Gives Light for online ebook

## Kat says

Only a few weeks ago, Susan got dragged into a kinky BDSM-y buddy read with us. Little did I know that Susan may not be a fan of BDSM, she surely has a neat little sadistic streak. According to her, revenge apparently is a dish best served in the form of sexless YA.

Vengeance at its finest!

Not only don't I like YA anymore, I'm shallow. I want my gay sex cake and eat it too. But I suppose that one who forces kinky books upon others must gracefully accept the consequences... So looking at those burly toddlers on the cover of Gives Light, I took a deep breath and dove in, fully expecting another melodrama fueled childish angst-fest.

...and was blown away instead.

When you lose your vision, your ears will pick up on more sounds, your nose will distinguish more scents. When you take away sex as a means and a climax, will you cling to the simplest of touches? In the expert hands of this author, yes. A kiss no longer is a rushed foray into something more, but an earth-shattering experience. A meaningful look becomes more penetrating than a..well.

In a pace that's more soothing than anything, you'll get invited into a Native American reservation along with the endearing and admirable main character, the 16 year old Skylar. What follows is a heart-warming, slowly unfolding coming of age story, in which past and present clash and love conquers all.

I'll admit it! The unhurried pacing and sharp focus on little, gentle gestures made my cynical heart swell. It didn't take much; a discarded jacket, a soundless laugh or charcoal drawings. Until a scene involving a bedroom and a photo occurred and I simply couldn't feel any more feels than I felt in that one breath-catching moment. For me, the essence of love is captured beautifully in this book, in all its facets and depth. This is how I feel love too and I applaud Christo for making its power palpable.

My only niggles would be that the story slowly petered out in the final pages, whereas I had expected a final assault on my senses that, I'm sure, would've sent me straight to cloud nine. And I personally would've made these boys 2 years younger. Their behavior and acts (or more accurately, their lack thereof) felt a bit too innocently sweet and at odds with their given age. All in all, I will say (not even grumpily anymore!) that Gives Light is very beautiful indeed and highly recommended. I wish schools would include this one on their reading lists.

*You can check out our group review plus enter the giveaway to WIN all 4 books in the series (Posted 16/03/2014):*

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## Kelly says

**\*\*\*5 Beautiful Stars\*\*\***

This book...OMG, this book! It's one of the most beautiful, heartwarming, inspiring stories I've ever read. Since my reviewing skills are limited I'll just leave you with one of my favorite quotes and urge you to read this book. Hopefully you'll love it as much as I did.

**“He broke away from my mouth and trailed his lips down the front of my throat. I felt his lips close around my scars. He kissed away their ugliness. His lips parted in tingling butterfly kisses that drained the strength from my knees. I realized he was mouthing words against my skin.**

**Not words. Just one word.**

**Mine.”**

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**Bev says**

**I have *no* idea how to describe my feelings once I'd finished this story, it was absolutely beautiful, and I'm *so* glad Trish recommended it to me and Rosa made me boot it up the queue. It was perfect, completely captivating, any and all superlatives you care to use, this wonderful, wonderful book deserves them....it was a privilege for *me* to read it. 5 stars on here, but worth millions AND 5 GLITTERING GOLDEN STARS**

This is the amazing story of Skylar and Rafael, and yes, you did read my shelves right in the introduction, there is NO sex in this book whatsoever!! Skylar is the son of Paul Looks Over, a native American, and his father is missing...he's always told Sky that if he doesn't return within 3 days, he is to go to the police. Skylar himself is not your normal 16 year old, he is mute, and once he steps inside the police station, things change forever for him and for everyone else he comes into contact with. Eventually, he is taken to the reservation at Nettlebush Arizona where he meets his grandmother Catherine whom he hasn't seen since he was five.....I'm not going into any more detail other than to say that I've already downloaded the other 3 books in the series, and if you miss out on this story, you'll be sorry you did. Yet another Young Adult story that I myself would have missed out on had I not started to seriously look at the genre. **I can't recommend it highly enough.**

*Rosa made the point in her review that one of the reasons this book is not so popular could be that it's m/m. I'd like to put forward another reason and that's the fact that the MC's are Native Americans...I hope that **isn't** the reason but it does make you wonder...as the book says '**White colonists had pushed the Native Americans out of their homes, and then they had slaughtered them for expressing their beliefs**'...that is **FACT**, it may not be pleasant for people nowadays to accept, but the truth rarely is.*

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**Rosalinda \*KRASNORADA\* says**

**\*\*\*FIVE SOUNDLESS AND SMILING STARS\*\*\***

I finished this book yesterday and I still can't stop thinking about it. **This book just stole my heart and imprinted it with a permanent marker.**

'Gives Light' is a book about love. Not just about falling in love with someone, but about love in general. Sometimes I am tired about reading those conventional and repetitive love stories, sometimes I want something else. Sometimes I just want to read the story of a kid with a huge capacity to love his family and friends, a kid who doesn't know what resentment means.

**Skylar**, a boy who lost his mom and his voice 11 years ago...

He was left with his father and now, 11 years later his father has disappeared and he has to move to the reservation where his Granny lives.

How horrible uncertainty was. How cruel

And that's the thing about this book, most of the quotes I highlighted are thoughts that I always have on my mind. You'll feel like you're reading about your own life.

**Rafael**, a native american boy who thinks he's responsible for his dad's actions...

Rafael has demons to fight and he hasn't had an easy life but Sky will bring light to his existence and he'll understand that he's not his father.

He always knew what I wanted

What will happen when their worlds collide? How will Skylar react when he realizes Rafael is the son of the criminal who killed his mom?

Death wasn't a waste of time. My mom was gone. I'd never have the chance to know her. But it was through her absence, aching and acute, that I had come to know Rafael instead.

Where is Sky's dad? Is he dead? Is he hidden somewhere?

God had a plan for the Universe. And it was a really nice thing to believe

Why does Sky have those strange feelings whenever he's close to Rafael?

Because my stomach was tight, my chest was hot, and the strangest thoughts kept permeating my better senses – like how full his lips were, hiding sharp teeth; what his teeth might feel like beneath my tongue

If you want to find out the answers to all those questions, READ THIS BOOK.

*On a side note, and please don't take this wrong, I need to point out that I am very sad that this book is not a best seller. I have an opinion, don't kill me. If this book was about a straight couple, I think it would have been a best seller. This was like reading *The Fault in our Stars*, same amazing writing style. But guess what? They are two boys in love and that's why a lot of people won't give it a try. And I respect that, but you guys don't know what you're missing.*

*Rose Christo's writing is pure poetry, the kind of writing that you can't put down, the kind of prose that will stay in your mind at night when you're trying to fall asleep.*

Admitting what I wanted felt so much easier than denying it

*Thanks Baba for telling me about this book! Can't wait to continue our journey with Sky & Rafael.*

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**Julio Genao says**

*young boys: a Him and Her review special.*

**HIM:**

so, this book is making me crazy  
sporadically possessed of loveliness but  
fucking YA, dude  
what is seriously wrong with fucking YA

**HER:**

I dunno

**HIM:**

i just don't understand

**HER:**

The only YA I read is non romance

**HIM:**

people write them as if boys have no idea what their penis is for until they fall in love like they all go 'i have funny feelings in my tummy' and then go play monopoly

**HER:**

They are INNOCENT

**HIM:**

hahahaha

**HER:**

Hahahaha

**HIM:**

we are going to hell

**HER:**

Maybe so, but not for this

**HIM:**

nope.

i don't even need to produce fiction to rebut this kind of stuff

**HER:**

Harry Potter didn't have any of that shit

**HIM:**

when i was 13 a boy took me into a bathroom stall, tucked his dick behind his thighs, and asked me to fuck his pussy.

**HER:**

TMI, J

**HIM:**

i'm saying

these boys in this book make out for WEEKS

apparently without erections

just, like, plastic figures clacking together neuterly

**HER:**

\*cough\*bullshit\*cough\*

**HIM:**

long searching looks  
rolling around on top of one another  
not even petting  
FOR WEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEKS  
MCs 17 and 18 yo.

**HER:**

NO WAY

**HIM:**

WAY

when *i* was 17yo i was bending boys over the hoods of their cars

**HER:**

You were a walking gland, but still  
One takes your point

**HIM:**

i begin to suspect this whole thing is about UST. and/or that they don't like reading about sex, maybe, some of these writers, and writing about young boys presumably provides ample opportunity for them to deny us any  
but LITTLE DO THEY KNOW  
that most boys are fucking around with their cocks before they even work right  
are then taught to keep it secret  
are LYING TO EVERYONE EVERYWHERE AT ALL TIMES about what they do and wish to do and have not yet done  
and are not innocent of anything at all by maybe age 10.  
because human children are crafty fucks.  
...not puppies.

**HER:**

Nevertheless  
There should be a way to write about them  
With no on page sex  
Without turning them into sexless angels

**HIM:**

i agree.  
surely there have to be written examples of that sorcerous achievement  
but i can't think of any.  
maybe discreetly framed discussions in english boarding school lit.  
*a separate peace* or *sommat*

**HER:**

It's easier obv's, if the story has other stuff going on and is not just romance



**HIM:**

that's this story. and it's pretty good

i just

i mean, i get it, right

tastes

niche

i want lurv but no sex and they must be boys and they must be gay

but after a certain number of decisions that are so freighted with, you know, *actual experiences that can be correlated among a given population*

you are well into fantasy territory

it may as well be 'die hard'

for all the likelihood of it ever happening like that in real life.

**HER:**

Woot!

Everything should be Die Hard!

**HIM:**

it really, really should.

**HER:**

No sex in Die Hard either

That's why everyone is so aggressive

However

Plenty of messy bodily functions are politely left off page

**HIM:**

\*cackle\*

yes, very true. and absolute realism is hardly the point

just... could you please stop taking me out of the story so many times? with your boy-shaped, iniquity-free automatons with romantic hair and names like 'skylar'?

**HER:**

Yeah, I can't allow 'skylar'

Report for decontamination

**HIM:**

even if the diminutive is an almost-pleasing 'sky', he appears to have an enduring problem with erectile dysfunction

oh, *whatever*

i'm dnf'ing this badboy right hyuh

wanna watch die hard?

**HER:**

What a perfectly ridiculous question

Tell me when to hit play

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## **Baba says**

**5 beautiful stars.\*\*\*\*\*Review completed August 22, 2013**

Gives Light is a heart-warming, emotional and beautiful story that depicts a young and pure love between two Native American teenagers who physically differ yet at their hearts they are so much alike. Besides, it's also a journey of coming to terms with who and what you are--accepting there is nothing wrong with you. Our main protagonists are Skylar the mute, calm and very mellow sixteen-year-old boy who meets the same-aged Rafael on the Nettlebush Reserve. When Skylar's father vanishes so suddenly and the authorities can't tell him if he will ever come back, Skylar's grandmother offers to look after him. The temperamental, frantic and restless Rafael is the son of the man who murdered Skylar's mother. Alleged problems are bound to occur, however, the more time Sky and Rafael spend together the more they come to like each other. Even though it's not sympathy at first glance, over time the tentativeness and aversion turns into friendship.

*I couldn't possibly put into words what that meant to me. Nor had I realized until that moment how much of a group project it was to grow up. Each of us is just an imprint of the many people who have crossed paths with us over the years, some more times than others. Most of us never think to say thank you. I know I never had.*

*Death wasn't a waste of life. My mom was gone. I'd never have the chance to know her. But it was through her absence, aching and acute, that I had come to know Rafael instead.*

He broke away from my mouth and trailed his lips down the front of my throat. I felt his lips close around my scars. He kissed away their ugliness. His lips parted in tingling butterfly kisses that drained the strength from my knees. I realized he was mouthing words against my skin. Not words. Just one word.  
Mine.

*I sank my fingers into Rafael's coarse hair. I felt him jolt beneath my fingertips. I coaxed his lips with my own, gently, the lightest touch, an encouraging touch. It was dizzy and intoxicating and enthralling and tranquilizing, paradoxically, all at once.*

It is not insta-love. It is not rushed love. It is, however, the kind of love that grows slowly yet relentlessly. It's a tiny seed and it grows a little shyly; it wriggles its way through the soil until it thrives and will be in full bloom eventually. Although we haven't been privy to the full-bloom part yet. I suppose that will probably happen in the sequel.

Rose Christo writes wonderful kissing scenes that are achingly beautiful and languorous in their intensity. They are filled with want, need and longing. Perfect.

(...)I pressed up against him and kissed him like he was my lifeline, like he was air and I couldn't breathe. I kissed him hard enough that I really couldn't breathe, in the end, and my lips ached when we broke away, and we were both panting, him burying his face against the crook of my neck, his breath burning hot against my skin. I felt his heartbeat, jumping and hard, underneath my hand, my fingers splayed against his chest. He felt so alive. I felt so alive. He entwined our fingers and held my hand hard enough to hurt; but it was a wonderful pain, a soothing pain, the kind of pain that reminds you how human you are, how desperately your heart wants, how good it feels to finally have.

The author's voice is a vibrant veil of beautiful words. It's mute. It's loud. It's sad. It's happy. She conveys a rather huge spectrum of emotion through her writing.

It's a book that you must read with all your senses. Rose Christo lets the sun heat your body and when you need to cool off, the rain is going to refresh your skin like a velvet curtain. The way she describes flora and fauna, the sky and the stars, and the Native Americans and their legacy is a thing of beauty, as is the blossoming love between Rafael and Skylar. She urges you to lie down on the earth and bury your fingers in the soil, to gaze up at the sky and the stars, and soak up all the (sensuous) impressions. It's also a lesson how you converse without uttering a waterfall of words because actions and facial expressions speak louder than any verbal communication.

How beautiful he looked. Unsullied by the world's darker secrets; privy to its innocent ones. I could almost believe he was inhuman and had never known anything beyond the profound simplicity of nature, tameless and wild, and the animal hearts that beat within each and every one of us.

As a reader I experience a daily flood of books that provide (manufactured) drama over drama over drama. Granted, *Gives Light* provides some potential for conflict as well, but overall it's definitely on the calmer side of this range. It's pretty much unobtrusive and gentle; a nice change for once and very much appreciated.

Gives Light has it all. Excellent writing and great narrative, very likable, interesting and well drawn characters, as well as a wonderful setting render this story unforgettable. However, the icing on the cake is the intriguing and mystic history of bygone times. Yet a small part of your people keep these bygone times alive and breathing by initiating and living rituals and retelling rites and events. But you also give Native Americans a voice and a face by telling stories like Gives Light. Our history are our roots, and we should never forget where we were coming from. It's a part of our identity and something we should be grateful for.

This story is a labor of love, I could feel it. It not only gives light, it is light—a ray of sunbeam that is going to warm your soul. Read it.

Recommended read.

P.S.

A thank you goes to Rosa for doing the buddy read with me. I'm looking forward to reading Looks Over with you! xxx

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## **Laura says**

Just because we don't talk about the hole in our heart doesn't mean it's not there.

Skylar St. Clair, a 16 year old mute boy, tells this heartfelt tale and introduced me to a beautiful world. After Skylar's Dad disappears without word one, Skylar is forced to return to a place that wields such power and pain over his childhood memories. Nettlebush, the Plains Shoshone Reservation, where his mother was taken from him. The place where his voice was taken from him. But the Reserve community and life surprises Skylar. Layers of nature, history and tradition begin to settle in, embrace, and spark life and light in Skylar's world. I loved watching Skylar find his way on the Reserve—with Granny, cooking, friends, and connecting with his past. And then... \*sigh\* there was Rafael.

**"It struck me as kind of crazy, kind of amazing, that one person could make me feel so serene just by being."**

Rafael Gives Light. What to say about Rafael? I adore the dumbass! :) A gruff, moody young man haunted by his father's crimes. Guilt and anger simmer and boil under his skin. But also a boy so alive with vulnerability, sweetness, smarts, and heart. He fit so perfectly alongside Skylar's sunshine, smiles, and curls. Hell, I loved these two at first sight. The way Rafael and Skylar communicate, touch, and talk with silence, music, and facial expressions is pure magic. I'm sorry. I wish I could capture their energy for you, but how do I explain the rush and blush that hit my face every time Rafael called Skylar "Sky" or how my smile glowed whenever Skylar played with Rafael's braids? I can't even come close to capturing their heat. Their time on the page, the moments they shared were simply stunning. From an early morning walk to see the sunrise to shoulder shoves and smiles! I loved it all! They understood each other without saying a word. The harmony and energy they found in each other was cathartic, passionate, hilarious, and sweet. A slow building friendship and love that made me laugh, awww, and cry. You MUST meet these two.

**"I could feel his taut belly against mine and our legs—his hard and muscular, mine skinny and long—a tangled mess. His arms were around me, searing and heavy across my back, but safe. Safer than anything."**

A big part of my love for this journey is the land and all it has to offer us. It dazzles me how much beauty and light Ms. Christo fit in this book. Flowers, trees, animals, insects, sun and the moon. Nature and all its wonder brought this story, the Shoshone people, culture, Skylar, and Rafael so alive for me. You will feel the wind, heat, and air on your skin. Feel the music and the dance. And cherish every hidden quiet corner. Ms. Christo possesses a beautiful way with words that will kick your sense of wonder into overdrive. I felt so emerged in the beauty. Blue skys to golden sunsets. Rushing waters, willow trees, and whispers in the grass. Breathtaking views of the land that awakened every tingle in my senses. I found myself listening to Greensleeves over and over and wondering what chokecherry pudding tastes like. Or even cricket cookies! Well—maybe not the cricket cookies. :) On my walks home at night, I tend to linger rather than rush now. Picking up acorns to roll around in my palm or leaves to twirl between my fingers. Nature not only sprang to life on the page, but all around me as well. I liked being in these pages. Inspiring and beautiful! And dare I whisper educational...haha... I had to look a lot of things up. Like what spittle bugs look like or pinyon pines or a promontory. The list goes on and on. I loved learning, seeing, and feeling it all.

Ooops...That turned into a gushfest. And there is so much more to say!

*Gives Light* is a coming of age tale filled with inspiration, power, and love. A tale of trying to live your life with the weight of family and guilt in your heart. Trying to learn to forgive and accept who you are and how to share your love with the ones around you. I hope we all find our Skylar or Rafael in life.

Highly recommended.

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## **? Jaela ? Killer ? QUEEN says**

How could the story of a boy named *Skylar* and another's whose last name is *Gives Light* not be amazing?

As an European, my knowledge of Native Americans is limited. I know the basics, but I'm sure they teach much more in American schools.

This book amazed me. I learned many things I don't know. The writing is so flawless and the author does a great job in describing the Native characters, their surrounding environment and their wonderful stories.

Skylar is a 16 yo boy, whose life has been cruel, leaving him motherless and voiceless, with internal and external visible scars. Skylar's father disappears abruptly and he is taken to live with his Native grandmother at a Reserve in the middle of Arizona. Skylar looks nothing like the people living there. He has blonde curls and his skin is so much lighter.

*"I said goodbye to the familiar cracks in the walls, to the fish tank that had never housed fish."*

The residents are wary of him initially, but soon he wins everybody over. He makes friends, people start to love him and teach him things that his father didn't, things that make him love his origins. Among everyone, there is a boy named Rafael, dark haired and blue eyed.

Rafael is a broken little boy blamed for his father's cruelties and loathed by the community. He likes to draw and this is his way of apologizing for things that weren't/aren't his fault. Skylar's arrival at the Reserve changes everything. They start a beautiful friendship. Rafael becomes Skylar's missing voice.

It was so wonderful watching this pure friendship transform into something more emotional. In this journey, they discover and explore their sensuality together for the first time. Those innocent but passionate kisses between them made my heart flutter. Rafael's protectiveness melts hearts.

*"I won't let them," Rafael said. "I won't let anyone take you away. I won't let anyone hurt you. I'll protect you. I'll always protect you. I don't care how. I just will."*

I liked how the community doesn't judge anyone for his choices of whom to love or befriend. The secondary characters were awesome. Sky's Granny was an amazing strong woman. I loved how supportive of Skylar she was.

Apart from Skylar's story, the book had a real secondary plot, which worked perfectly and in harmony with the main story.

I'm so glad I gave this book a chance. My ancestors's doings put me to shame. I'm absolutely sure that the Native people described in this book (and in real life) are beautiful people with beautiful spirits. I love how they see, love and respect Nature. I hope someday they find peace in their tormented souls.

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## Shelley says

4.5 Stars

I know that 'Gives Light' doesn't need another glowing review but how can I not when its effect on me is the same. I had NO IDEA the things I would learn and the effect it would all have on me. So this review is about all the things I didn't know ... but now I do :)

**I didn't know** that the Moon and the Sun used to be married before they quarrelled and parted ways.

**I didn't know** what it felt like to lay on my back by the creek and stare at the stars till my eyes went blurry.

**I didn't know** that doves are among the only birds that produce milk for their young.

**I didn't know** that the power of a soundless laugh is magnified a thousand times more than a vocal one.

**I didn't know** what it felt like to breathe in tandem with a character. It hurts sometimes, but in a wonderful

cathartic way.

**I didn't know** how much I would covet the life within Nettlebush. Community, heritage, the gift and share economy and belonging somewhere made me ache with longing. I want that too. So much.

**I didn't know** that a book could contain actual physical tranquilising side effects.

**I didn't know** that the greatest strength of this story would be its quiet gentleness.

**I didn't know** how much I too would grow.

**I didn't know** that a story could ever bring me so much peace. My soul feels utterly sated.

**I didn't know** that it would be among the most memorable books I've ever read.

**I didn't know** how grateful and humbled I would feel for having read it.

**I didn't know** that this book would turn me into such a damn sap!

Urgh, I'm done with these YA books (after I read the rest of this series), all these stupid happy-shiny emotions will be ruining my rep. So. Anyone up for a blood curdling, angst ridden, erotic orgy, with cheating and zombies?

*This review is the result of a reading challenge that Susan threw down for the team at BIOB. You can check out our group review plus enter the giveaway to win all 4 books in the series (Posted 16/03/2014).*

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## **Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says**

**\*\*Currently FREE on Amazon! Go snag your copy! 8/19/14**

**<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B008JYCVW4?i...>\*\***

This book was so beautiful.

"Gives Light" is about a 16 year old mute boy (Skyler) who is forced to live with his grandmother on an Indian reservation after his father abandons him. His mother was tragically murdered (years prior) and murderer slit Skyler's throat when he walked in on the crime. Skyler slowly makes friends on the reservation but finds himself most drawn to a boy, Rafeal, who seems strongly familiar. As it turns out, Rafeal is the son of Skyler's attacker.

"Gives Light" was touchingly sweet and poignant. It felt very pure and innocent, and it treated a difficult topic with grace. The writing was mature for a YA book, which I appreciated. I adored it. I think I just fell in love with all of the characters and the world of the Indian reservation. I am little disappointed, to be honest,

that this book is part of a series because I wanted a resolution but I am also a bit excited to see Sky and Rafeal's relationship mature.

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## **Lisa \*-\* GiViNg It To YoU \* LoCk StOcK & TwO SmOkInG BaRrELs says**

[ He was almost killed when his throat was cut by his mothers murderer when he was 5 and the attack left him physically unable to speak. (hide spoiler)]

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### **Susan says**

#### **M/M Bingo**

#### **Round 8 - Week 4**

#### **"Best Gay Friends Become Lovers"**

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **4.5 stars**

Some people will read this book and think, “What the heck is all the fuss about?”. Others will read this book and think, “This is glorious.” I’m not quite sure what impacts one differently from the other. I can’t explain the why’s of one being bored and another being mesmerized by this book. I can only say, for me, I was *entranced*.

“Gives Light”...from page 1, I knew I was going to be swept up into the author’s words. I knew that Skylar St. Clair was somehow going to leave an impact on me. I knew that I was going to want to keep reading and reading more and more. 315 pages of pure butter. I also knew I’d struggle with explaining how it was that I became so mesmerized.

The best way I can describe this book is that it’s like being transported to the middle of the Nettlebush Reserve in Arizona, living among this Native American tribe and becoming best friends with a 16-yo named Sklyar...and then living through his every thought, smell, touch, emotion, experience. I WAS THERE. I felt it. I knew it. I lived it. All as I read it.

Skylar is, quite possibly, the most amazing YA character I have read. He is smart and kind and generous and curious and tragic and sympathetic and brave and strong and loving and funny. He is extraordinary.

Add in Rafael, Annie, Grandma, Dad and a host of other minor characters...all making this story so RICH and FULL...I enjoyed every page. The relationships in this book are so touching and powerful in ways you wouldn’t even imagine or guess: A simple hug. Holding hands. Swimming in a lake. Carrying a loom. Delivering letters. Cooking. Dancing. Drawing. Playing the flute. Little things that each made the story so very lovely.

Despite the difficult storyline (the blurb is exactly the tale that’s told), the writing is amazingly tender. It’s descriptive yet it’s concise and not overdone. It’s slow yet impactful. It’s beautiful even in the ugly parts.



The only thing that I could say that didn't work for me is that the book didn't have a natural ending. The storyline just...continues...I'm assuming...on in the 2nd book. I'm not a big fan of how this works in some series. I was hoping a bit for that "reward" at the end. But, I guess getting there was a reward in and of itself.

Highly recommended for a time and place when you don't need fireworks, when you can appreciate something graceful yet takes its time, when you want a book that feels like a gentle \*sigh\*.

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## Virginia Books says

**A stunning and evocative prose telling a special and beautiful story.** The narration is so good you are transported there from the very first page. You can feel Skylar, you can see what he sees, you are able to love him, feel sorry for him, empathize and almost touch him. It also has a very subtle humor coloring some of Sky's thoughts and that transmitted me even more tenderness, lighting up the the perception of sadness that Skylar's life inspires.

And oh, Skylar! **What a strong voice he owns.** He is only sixteen but leading the story like a pro, like the grown man he is not (yet), like the shiny star he already is. He is kind and that kindness is perceived in every action toward the others, and in his attitude about life in general. His vision is a delight because you want to hug him, talk to him, understand him and let him know he's understood.

Skylar has suffered a lot. He is mute since he was 5 and he faces the world in a way not many people would. He is brave and unselfish. He, as a character, is bright and unique. He is the light and you are the moth and the only thing you can do is follow him in this journey, discovering his origins and learning who he is.

He is the blonde guy in a Native American reservation. The white unwelcome boy with no ties with his Indian side. With a dead mother, a missing father and with no voice. Physically disable, yes, but otherwise his internal voice is so potent I could hear him from my home and through the pages. He talked directly to me and he was amazing enough to introduce me **two things I want to highlight:**

- **First of all, Raphael:** the native, the gruff guy with the heavy baggage, the uncomfortable heritage and the huge heart. The teenager who deserves to be treated as the unique man he is. Not as his father's son, not as the seed of something bad because he is not. Far from it, Raphael *I don't mope, I brood* is compassionate, and kind and **he can talk to Sky as if he was hearing each unpronounced word.**

- **Second: The journey** to another culture, another society, another way of living. This is fiction and I don't know the accuracy of all of it but it was very interesting to read about Native Americans and some of their rules, traditions and ways of living. To be honest, it could have been a dystopian story and I would have loved it the same because the prose is magnificent and what it's told beautiful, appealing and special. **It's an ordinary story about extraordinary guys** showing us their everyday routine, their falling in love.

There are 6 books in this series and I haven't read any of the blurbs so I don't know what they are about but I

guess I'll read book two just to check where the story goes. Because **Gives Light is the beginning, the story of first kisses and holding hands**. The story of two cute teenagers supporting each other and bonding. A friendship forged in trust and understanding and I want to know what comes next.

**Very recommended read** if you are in the mood for something sweet with a good and remarkable prose.

Reviews for Book Lovers

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## Thomas says

I have so many **feelings** about this book.

To summarize my emotional experience with *Gives Light*, I want to post a picture of me clutching my chest while lying on the bathroom floor in fetal position. Instead, I will try to dissect why I love this fabulous novel by Rose Christo.

**Feeling #1: Appreciation.** *Gives Light* screams of diversity. The protagonist, Skylar, is a half-white, half-Shoshone sixteen-year-old who cannot speak and has feelings for a boy. Diversity has come up a lot in recent conversations about young-adult literature, and this book hits it right in every way. Christo keeps the main plot compelling - Skylar, whose mother was murdered when he was little, moves to the Nettlebush reserve and befriends the son of his mother's murderer - while weaving in details about Shoshone culture, tradition, and history. *Gives Light* is a book that makes me think: I am ignorant. I am still ignorant. But thanks to this book and its characters, I am a little less ignorant than I was yesterday, and I will gain even more knowledge if I keep exploring tomorrow.

*I don't like to break promises, and that was the only thing keeping me from turning and running away. Because I was having those thoughts again, that I didn't belong here, that I was rubbing salt in an open wound. The same dance had been performed centuries ago and had ended in spilled blood and tears. The Natives had danced and the whites had slain them for it. And really - can you think of anything more ridiculous to fight over? A dance? The eyes on me were patient and expectant. I could feel myself split in two, the two halves of my own history. I was the fallen Plains children and I was the usurpers who had taken their lives and their land. That didn't make sense to me. I didn't make sense to me.*

**Feeling #2: Admiration.** Christo's writing flows like water, the kind of water that leaves you feeling refreshed, satisfied, and thirsting for more. She balances so many different elements in *Gives Light*: Skylar and Rafael's relationship, Skylar's familial strife, the unique setting of the reservation, and the culture of the Shoshone people. Her prose kept it all on track, and while I felt enamored with Skylar and Rafael's characters, I still searched online for images of promontories and grottoes to even better visualize Christo's imagery-laden writing. These feelings of appreciation and admiration grant this book a five-star rating, but the following emotion gives it a spot in my heart as one of my favorites.

*I can't possibly describe the effect that a simple smile had on his face. I can try, but even now I know I won't do it any justice. Because when he smiled, he showed all his teeth - like a wolf - but it was inexplicably innocent, free from ferocity. When he smiled, there was a light in his eyes that didn't usually occupy his visage. When he smiled, his dimples were deep, like laugh lines, and I saw the missing tooth at the back of his mouth and the hidden laughter he had bottled up for years.*

**Feeling #3: Adoration.** Skylar and Rafael. Skylar and Rafael. *Skyfael*. Oh, how I love these characters. Skylar, a boy with orphan Annie hair and a jacket he never takes off, comes to Nettlebush reserve and meets Rafael, a brooding loner and the son of the man who murdered Skylar's mother and left Skylar mute. An unexpected duo, they spend time together and start to heal the hurt within both of their hearts.

For the first 20% of the book I felt a little unsure of their relationship, but after that initial fifth, I fell in love with them. Rafael's moody tendencies and how he punishes himself for his father's crimes, Skylar's growth from the boy who hid his scars to the young adult who lets people see them, even the simple moments when Rafael sang so Skylar could learn a song on his flute - these two have won my adoration and my affection without a doubt. Together they bond over the burdens their families have placed upon them, and they turn those burdens into gifts that they share with one another.

*He broke away from my mouth and trailed his lips down the front of my throat. I felt his lips close around my scars. He kissed away their ugliness. His lips parted in tingling butterfly kisses that drained the strength from my knees. I realized he was mouthing words against my skin.*

*Not words. Just one word.*

*Mine.*

**Feeling #4: Anticipation.** Thank goodness there are three more books in this series. I cannot wait to read them, and I also cannot wait for others to read *Gives Light* and fall in love with the Skylar and Rafael like I have.

Highly, highly recommended for fans of young-adult fiction who desire a diverse and heartfelt story. *Gives Light* reminds me of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, and those who know about my ardor for that book know that that is not a comparison to be taken lightly.

\*review cross-posted on my blog, the quiet voice

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## Trisha Harrington says

Gives light is my all-time favourite YA series. I don't believe I will ever find a YA series that will touch me as much as this series did. The first book is beautiful, mysterious, and captivating. I never believed I could fall for a book as hard as I did this. But the truth is, I don't know many people who wouldn't love this book, whether you are a fan of m/m or not, this is just one of those books that people must read, in my opinion. It's always going to be on my favourites list.

From the first page, I was hooked and I remained hooked for a long time. I didn't want to stop reading. It was one that I was close to tears when it ended, not because of the ending, but simply because it had ended. I felt like a baby, not wanting someone to take something away from me. I was dedicated to this story and the characters.

*"If I'm gone for three days, call the police."*

Skylar's dad was missing and he needed to find him. The first few pages we see him revealing some parts of his childhood, mainly going through the place he grew up. I think this was then I found myself falling in love with his voice. It suited him perfectly and I was able to picture him in my head. It went from him describing the town he grew up in to his arrival at the police station. That first chapter did a great job of drawing me in. Normally, it would take a while longer for me to really become invested in the plot. But I was intrigued from the moment I picked up the book.

Skylar spent a brief period with a foster mother until he was placed with his paternal grandmother. Upon meeting his grandmother, all I could think was "who is this witch?" Catherine Looks Over was a character that didn't really appeal to me. I was really unsure about her because she just seemed so cold. When I say cold, I mean she didn't really show much emotion. But she grew on me. A lot! Maybe that was because, in some ways, she was a lot like Skylar. They really did have several similarities when it came to expressing their emotions. Either way, she became one of my favourite ever secondary characters in a book.

Skylar soon began to settle in, and on his first day he befriended Annie Little Hawk. When Annie was introduced, I didn't immediately warm to her either. But unlike most books in the genre, we had no trouble from her when it came to the couple in this book. It's something that did pop into my head, but once I realised she had her own love interest, I was fine with her. They spent some time getting to know each other and she introduced him to her family. It's not her family who caught his attention, though.

*"That was when I saw him. What little I could see of him was obscured by shadow—but then the flames jumped and cast him in sudden light. He was my age, maybe a little older."*

Skylar noticed Rafael almost straight away. Their relationship was a slow burner that began when Skylar figured out who Rafael was, the son of his mother's killer. But that didn't discourage Skylar. Neither did Rafael's standoffish nature. In fact he was drawn to the lonely, misunderstood boy – the boy who soon stole my heart as well. And it was such an instant thing; I almost couldn't believe how much I loved him. Honestly, I don't think I could have loved Rafael more if I tried to. He was really just one of those lost souls who was judged because of his family.

Rafael was such a wonderful character. He was a massive part of this story. He brought out the best in Skylar. Not in the conventional way, but he gave me a reason to believe things wouldn't be doom and gloom. He knew Skylar, could understand what Skylar was saying, even when no words were spoken. Their connection was immediate. It was strong and it was emotional, too. It was gradual in some sense, but instant in another. It was like they had been friends their whole lives. I just have to say really quickly, I adored how they bonded. I'm not always a believer in the meant-to-be-together thing, but I so believed it here.

*He always knew what I wanted.*

*He was across the room in two strides. He took me by the waist in warm hands. And he kissed me.*

Though the romance element was not forgotten, it was not shoved in your face either. Neither boy had real experience with romantic relationships. Skylar – having been kissed before – was a lot more forward with

what he wanted; Rafael had never been kissed, but learned what he wanted. The way the first kiss was described had me swooning so bad. Yeah, it wasn't hot and steamy like in erotic books, but it had its own special passion. Maybe it was because I was so eager for them to get together it just felt like that. But I am serious when I say it was one of the best kisses I have ever read.

All the mystery had me second guessing myself. Skylar's dad, Paul, was where the book finished off, more or less. His return brought more questions than answers. And I'm not going to reveal anything more about his return. I don't want to spoil this book or the series for people who haven't read it/them. I will say this book is an amazing beginning to an amazing series. It is one of the best books I have ever read. And I don't think you need to be a teenager or very young either. To enjoy this book all you really need is to be able to fall in love with amazing characters and a wonderful, mysterious plot.

I highly recommend this book. It was amazing and something special that I will keep with me forever.

My review can also be found on Greedy Bug Book Reviews.

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