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Chasing the Skip

Lisa Packard

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Book Review

Title: Chasing the Skip
Author: Janci Patterson
Reviewer: Lisa Packard
Publisher: Henry Holt and Company
Publication Year: 2012
ISBN: 9780805093919
Number of Pages: 226
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Excellent

Review

Ricki’s mom still hasn’t returned from California even though it’s been three weeks. Her grandmother doesn’t want her to live with her anymore, so Ricki is now on the road with her dad. Her dad is a bounty hunter and travels all over the country looking for “skips” or people that missed a court date. This seems like the perfect opportunity for Ricki to practice being a journalist and to give her things to write about in her blog. As Ricki and her dad travel around, Ricki gets nervous about her mom being gone for so long and not hearing from her. Every time they stop off in a city, Ricki goes to a library to update her blog about bounty hunting and find out what happened to her mom. Her dad picks up a dangerous skip named Ian who is about the same age as Ricki. As they are traveling back to turn Ian in, Ricki gets to know him better and starts to develop a crush, even though she knows he’s dangerous. Ian gets away several times, at one point leaving Ricki and her dad stranded without a car, but they eventually catch up with him. Ian finally gets turned in and Ricki finds out that her mom doesn’t want her anymore. It’s hard at first, but Ricki and her dad start to get along and get to know each other better. Ricki may not have her mom anymore, but she now has the dad she’s always wanted.

Patterson gives an interesting insight to law enforcement and teenage drama. Ricki only sees the excitement, fun, and opportunity of becoming a journalist rather than the dangerousness of her position. Like most teenagers, she doesn’t follow what her dad says and gets in some pretty risky situations. Ricki’s dad is constantly trying to warn her to keep her safe, but Ricki never realizes how dangerous the skips are until she almost gets taken and shot by Ian—perhaps teenage audiences will be more aware that each decision has a consequence. Patterson also approaches a sensitive issue with the relationship between Ricki and her parents. When Ricki discovers her mom doesn’t want her, she’s distraught and feels abandoned. But when she finally sits down with her dad and talks to him about her feelings, she realizes how much her dad loves her and only wants the best for her. Readers with similar situations of separated or estranged parents will really relate to Ricki and even find their own way to communicate their emotions. As Ricki discovers more about her dad, she realizes that she knows very little about him and she wants to give him a chance. Ricki is reunited with her dad and finds that he’s better than what she imagined, it just takes time to see that. This story shows that adventure isn’t always what it seems and that you might discover something that you once thought was lost.

*Contains moderate language, sexual content, and violence.