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Survival Strategies of the Almost Brave

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Book Review

Survival Strategies of the Almost Brave

Author

Jen White

Illustrator

Reviewer

Jamie Greenwood

Rating

Dependable

Level

Young Adult

Pages

308

Year

2015

Publisher

R. R. Donnelley & Sons

ISBN

9780374300845

Shortly after their mother's sudden death in San Diego, sisters Liberty and Billie spend the summer with their estranged father, a traveling photographer. Liberty and Billie are initially excited to get to know their father, but their father isn't used to children and begins to neglect them. One day he abandons the girls at a gas station. Liberty immediately assumes the role of protector for her younger sister. The girls decide they need to get a hold of their mom's friend, Julie, back in San Diego. Until then, they fight to survive by secretly hitching rides in the back of cars and trucks, taking baths in hotel swimming pools, and making unlikely friends. Eventually a kind man finds the girls and takes them to a doctor and the police. The police find the father, who apologizes to Liberty. The girls finally get a hold of Julie who comes to pick them up, and the three begin a new life together.

The strongest point of this book is easily the characters. Both Liberty and Billie are very well developed and invoke empathy from the reader. Because the story is told from Liberty's point of view, it is especially easy to sympathize with her. Although Liberty is mature for her age and finds herself in a very serious situation, her thoughts and feelings accurately reflect her age, making her a very lifelike and relatable character for readers her age. Additionally, the message of the book is very valuable. When Liberty's father asks if she and Billie can forgive him, she replies, "Maybe." Her answer is honest and understandable. The message thus conveys the importance of second chances along with the importance of protecting oneself. Liberty implies that she is willing to forgive her father, but that he will have to earn that forgiveness by treating his daughters well.

*Contains moderate violence.