

Beneath a Scarlet Sky

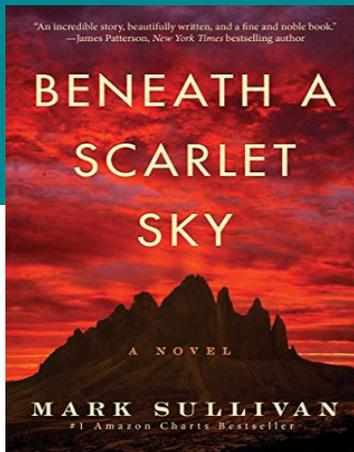
Karen Abbott

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Book Review

Beneath a Scarlet Sky

Author

Mark T. Sullivan

Illustrator

Reviewer

Karen Abbott

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Young Adult

Pages

460

Year

2018

Publisher

Lake Union Publishing

ISBN

9781503902374

The Allies begin bombing Milan on the day that Pino's story begins. At first Pino stays in Milan, but when their home takes a direct hit, Pino's father sends him to a monastery in the Alps. There, Pino begins to guide Jewish refugees over the Alps into Switzerland, and he learns to drive with the future race legend Alberto Ascari. His parents call him back to Milan before his eighteenth birthday and force him to register with the German/Italian army. As things happen, Pino finds himself driving for one of the most powerful German leaders in Italy. This places him in a perfect position to spy, to fall in love, and to reach manhood. As the war draws to a close, Pino faces brutal inhumanity, the loss of his fiancée, and the end of his peace of mind.

This is a very powerful story that runs the gamut of human emotion and experience. The fact that the story is based on the actual experiences of Pino Lello deepens the agony of the pain and loss in the book, but also makes the reader proud of him and of his courage. So many things happened to Pino that it is almost hard to believe. The documentation given at the end is necessary to reinforce the reality of the multiple facets of this tale and also provides follow-through on the many lives that have touched Pino's. The story is very well related and never becomes dull or loses itself in sentimentality. The style of writing has a sense of honesty that is appealing, if occasionally brutal. This is a great book to add to a study of World War II, PTSD, or biographies. The voice stays true to Pino's feelings of the events that he experienced, which makes all of the events extraordinarily available to the reader's personal responses as well.

*Contains mild sexual content.