



2022

Switchback

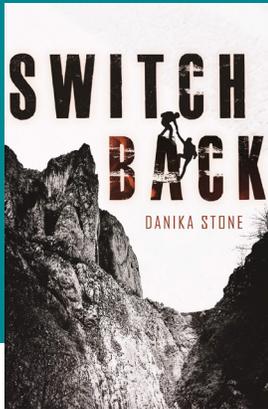
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Book Review

Switchback

Author

Danika Stone

Reviewer

Amanda Morgan

Rating

Excellent

Level

Young Adult

Pages

308

Year

2019

ISBN

9781250221650

Publisher

Swoon Reads

Ash and Vale have to go on an overnight hike with their PE classmates in order to pass the class. Ash hates the outdoors and he's never been hiking. Vale hates the bullying she receives from her classmates. Naturally, neither of them are excited about the hike to begin with, but it turns out to be worse than they expected. On the first day, Ash and Vale get separated from the rest of the group. Their absence isn't noticed until nightfall, and the town begins a frantic search for them. By that time the two friends are further from the path than they thought. Desperate to stay alive in the cold, bear-populated mountains and reach civilization, Ash and Vale use more strength and bravery than they knew they had. Through the twists and turns of their gripping adventure, the pair learns not only how to survive in the woods, but what it means to be a true friend.

With unexpected turns of events and tantalizing cliffhangers, this book can be hard to put down. The story-line is very well paced. It isn't so fast the characters are underdeveloped and scenes are vague, but it isn't so slow the reader loses interest. Ash and Vale both have distinct characters. Vale is smart about the woods, but is not very good with people. Ash is almost entirely clueless about the outdoors, but can make anyone his friend. He cracks jokes throughout their journey, even when their circumstances seem dire. This saves the book from feeling overly dark, as Vale and Ash experience many traumatic events. Vale is aro-ace (aromantic and asexual) so she and Ash do not become romantically involved at any part of their journey, which can be quite refreshing from other YA novels. Unfortunately, Vale's bullies are often faced with some anger, fighting fire with fire. This can get a bit annoying and leaves the ending a little unsatisfying. Otherwise, the book is amazingly written, realistic, and entertaining.

*Contains moderate violence, moderate language, and moderate sexual content.