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Goats, The



Synopsis

Harmless camp pranks can quickly spiral out of control, but they also provide a perfect opportunity for two social outcasts to overcome and triumph. A boy and a girl are stripped and marooned on a small island for the night. They are the "goats." The kids at camp think it's a great joke, just a harmless old tradition. But the goats don't see it that way. Instead of trying to get back to camp, they decide to call home. But no one can come and get them. So they're on their own, wandering through a small town trying to find clothing, food, and shelter, all while avoiding suspicious adults—especially the police. The boy and the girl find they rather like life on their own. If their parents ever do show up to rescue them, the boy and the girl might be long gone. . . . The Goats is a 1987 New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Book of the Year.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (66 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 12 - 15 years

Grade Level: 5 - 10

Customer Reviews

As a voracious reader, I am always looking for a book that will take over my mind, my heart and my soul in one fell swoop. Imagine my surprise to find a book like this in a course on Children's Literature. Brock Cole has written nothing less than a masterpiece. His book, The Goats, begins with two outcast, nerdy campers, a boy and a girl, who are stripped bare and left on Goat Island by their mean and nasty fellow campers. When they first find each other, naked and alone, they seem

almost infantile in their needs. These two couldn't take care of themselves with clothes on, let alone off. Amazingly though, with the strength of their pride and humiliation behind them, they vow to get off the island and teach their fellow campers a lesson. What ensues is not quite plausible, yet totally believable. Abandoned not only by their camp mates, but on a much deeper level by their parents as well, these two goats manage to survive in the most extraordinary ways. The most exceptional part of Cole's story is not how they survive physically, but how they survive mentally and emotionally. These two thirteen year olds, on the cusp of sexuality, develop an intensely intimate relationship. Cole has written something so beautiful, so adult-like, but it is doubtful that many adults ever really attain this level of intimacy. Literally stripped naked physically, the two characters find shelter and clothes within themselves, in their relationship with each other. Anyone who wants to be touched in the deepest way, to come away from a book changed, will find the great satisfaction with Brock Cole's *The Goats*.

Wow, this book really holds your interest, hooking the reader's sympathy for the Boy and the Girl right from the start. You just have to continue reading to see how they cope with sudden abandonment (supposed to be temporary) and decide to get even with the cruel kids at summer camp. Loss of clothing, money, self respect--just a malicious joke, you understand, to "punish" two social misfits. Through no fault of their own, two pre teens were chosen to be their camp's annual sacrificial victims (i.e. goats), by being forced to spend a few embarrassing hours on a nearby island. Ha-ha--very funny to the terrified kids, who recognize their degrading situation and who ultimately reject the decision. Thus Howie and Laura (who did not even know each other) are forced to rely on each other's wits and daring (strengths they did not realize that they possessed) to reverse the kids' malicious decree. Not only to escape their dismal fate, but to survive on the outskirts of society for 3 days. They determine to get even, to pay them back for all the humiliation. Anything rather than endure the ridicule of returning to camp. They decide to be proactive to preserve their own dignity, to wait until the girl's mother comes up for Parents' Weekend. The plot rivets your attention for the kids must overcome incredible obstacles--posed by adults and other kids--to live without the pale. It is unlikely that such social outcasts could be transformed so quickly into a cool "bandit" and a "fox wearing glasses", but the plot presents an interesting concept of social and physical survival. The book reads swiftly due to extensive dialogue, without the usual teenage platitudes. Their journey of self-discovery makes a fascinating read, with dark social undertones. For kids of all ages and adults harboring hurt kids inside. You will not be disappointed!

This is one of the most wonderful books I have ever read. There are two levels to this book; the physical adventures Laura and Howie go on together, from an island to a town to the forests, and then the deeper level of this book, which is the relationship that develops between these two people. I don't think I have ever read a book in which two people experience such a wonderful, deep, beautiful, intimate bond; not in any adult novel, and not in any children's book. This book is beautifully written, and while the adventures of the two protagonists are not truly realistic, the entire book is completely believable. I give the highest recommendation I possibly can on this book; it subtly shines.

I read this book when I was 11 years old and I am now 21. I enjoyed every bit so much that I know it word for word. I think the book is excellent for the mature young reader because it captures some issues that most adults would be able to relate to only through metaphors. This promising book includes puberty issues, isolation issues, and issues of social and moral growth. This book is still one of my favorites and I recommend it to any young adult that has ever had to face dilemmas at a very young age. I challenge the young reader to find their similarities and differences between the Bryce (main character) and his companion with themselves.

I read this book after seeing the movie "Standing Up" which is based upon the book. I hate bullying, but I love a story where the kids defeat the bullies with an even greater intensity. Laura and Howie run away from camp after they are the recipients of a cruel joke. Even though they are very young, they do a great job of keeping care of one another. The adults in the story do not take the bullying seriously. This story is a good lesson for both parents and kids. There is a little bit of bad language, but not so much that I put the book down. I did not like the ending at all, as it left too much in the air. The movie is fantastic. Read this book first and then watch the movie.

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