

Stella by Starlight

Sharon M. Draper

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11 year-old Stella Mills is an African-American girl living in Bumblebee, North Carolina during the Great Depression. Segregation and discrimination permeate every aspect of her life. Still, Stella and her family manage to have a safe space within their own community and remain mostly unharmed. Things take a turn for the worse when she and her younger brother Jojo discover the local Ku Klux Klan burning a cross near their neighborhood. Stella's family is forced to come to terms with what this means for their community and figure out how they will stand up for themselves without getting hurt in the process. In the process, Stella learns the importance of fighting for what is right, as well as what the true meaning of bravery is.

This book truly touched my heart, not just because of its context, but also because of the message of hope that it portrayed. The story didn't try to gloss over the harsh details of what black families had to go through in a segregated society, in addition to showing how overt racism brought them so much fear and mental anguish. The author did a good job of showing Stella's growth as she and her family faced multiple hardships, such as being restricted from voting or getting attacked by racists. I also enjoyed following Stella's journey as she realized her talent for writing and used it as a tool to express her feelings towards the racism black people face. The entire book was well-composed, and the author's style of writing was very powerful.

Stella by Starlight is an important novel because it portrays a dark of history that still affects the world we live in today. It is vital for young readers to have access to these kinds of stories because they show the injustices that black people have had to face in the United States and demonstrate how intolerance can be so damaging. I highly recommend buying this book since it teaches many important lessons for the current generation. The best age group for this novel are readers between the ages of 10 to 15, although I would suggest giving it a try even if you are older. This is an incredible story that is sure to be remembered for years to come.

Recommended Books:

The War That Saved My Life, Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

Blended, Sharon M. Draper

Clayton Byrd Goes Underground, Rita Williams-Garcia

When Stars Are Scattered, Omar Mohamed and Victoria Jamieson