



TITLE INFORMATION

CHILDREN OF THE STARS

Neil V. Young

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BOOK REVIEW

A spacefaring teen who falls to Earth falls even harder for a girl in Young's debut YA novel.

Dayton Murdoch has spent all of his 16 years aboard the *Venture*, an explorer ship that launched from Earth years ago. As a survey flight pilot, he's a mere 14 flight hours away from earning a Recon patch and the promise of a more exciting job. But when an apparent cosmic storm forces the *Venture* crew to crash-land in Los Angeles, Dayton and his fellow teens, including flight technician Zara McCulloch, are there to stay. It's definitely an adjustment for the youngsters; this future Earth may have air cars, but it still isn't as technologically advanced as what these "outworlders" are accustomed to. But then there's Allyson Curtis, the first person on this planet whom Dayton meets and who, it turns out, attends the same high school he's sent to. Dayton is smitten, and, based on a friend's tip ("Earth girls like cars"), he tries to impress Allyson by salvaging his Planetary Survey Vehicle to get around the city. Young skillfully hits on a few crucial issues; Dayton and other *Venture* survivors endure bullying as well as earthlings treating them like outsiders and somehow inferior. The young hero is a smart and capable but also believable adolescent, as he can't always rein in his impulsive reactions, sometimes using his fists in lieu of his razor-sharp mind. Zara, a similarly complex character, resists assimilating to Earth's society, and her unrequited crush on Dayton sparks a barely disguised animosity for Allyson. On the other hand, Allyson is a bit underdeveloped, being little more than a romantic interest. While this SF tale of galactic exploration, nutricubes, and radioactive things gradually turns into a teen drama, the author consistently incorporates fantastical elements; in between discussions of who's taking who to the school dance, Dayton struggles to find a parking space for his trusty PSV.

Adolescent triumphs and woes fuel this engaging SF romp.

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