

Alone Together

Robert Hill

New Diamond Publisher (2018)

ISBN 9781720699668

Review by Noelle (Teen/YA Reviewer) for Reader Views Kids (9/18)

13-year-old Kyle Stryker's life is just like any other pre-teen's; filled with school, family, and video games. Aside from the constant reminder of the incident that occurred years ago, every day is as average as can be. That is until a bizarre event happens – the northern lights are appearing all over the North American continent. At first, the world takes this as just an abnormal once in a lifetime event until days later things take a turn for the worse. Suddenly everyone loses power without warning. It's not just basic electricity but anything that's technology based. Phones won't turn on, cars stopped working, and planes are falling from the sky. Still unsure about what's going on, the Stryker family waits for help to come but as the days pass by without any word from the outside world and things starting to become increasingly dangerous, they finally realize that they just might be on their own.

"Alone Together" by Robert Hill is an exciting twist on a “what-if” situation after a C.M.E event - a coronal mass ejection. A C.M.E can be caused by nuclear weapons or from the sun's solar activity, which is what creates the northern lights. From the information about this abnormality provided by the author at the end of the book, we can come to understand this event can occur from the sun when a cloud of solar plasma and magnetic field lines is released during its solar activity. This has actually happened before in March 2010 but the cloud containing these energized particles missed the earth by a large distance. Even so, it opens up the possibility that something like this could one day reach our planet and cause mass-disorder.

I have read about this topic before and enjoyed exploring the idea of what would happen if such an event did occur. Though it was a bit scary to imagine the outcome of a C.M.E., I thought this book did a great job of capturing the reality of one without being unrealistic. Everything that happened in this story fell in line with how everyday citizens would react after such an event and it made me really think about what I would do if I was in the same situation. It was hard not to root for the Stryker family because it was so easy to relate to them and the uncertainty they felt after experiencing such an event. They struggled, fought, and prevailed through the ups and downs they faced. Kyle, the narrator of this story, was barely a teenager when all of this occurred but he did what most of us would have to do in such tough situations and accepted the responsibilities that were given to him. It's not an easy thing to do, especially at such a young age, but by doing so we gradually get to see him mature and improve as a person throughout the story.

Mrs. Maxwell was one of my favorite characters but by the end of the story, it was hard not to love all of them. The times where people were able to come together to help one another were the best moments in the book and as Kyle realized, it really makes you think about how out of touch we are

as a community with each other and how we should work on fixing that so that way we could be there for each other when we need to be.

The thing I loved most about "Alone Together" by Robert Hill is that it wasn't over the top with certain things like violence and graphic descriptions, making it a good choice for young teens to read who are interested in these types of stories or anyone looking for a good sci-fi book. I definitely recommend this one!