

The Living

Matt de la Pena

Reviewed by: Anika 16

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Shy's taken up on a sweet summer job aboard a cruise ship. He gets to check out the ladies, make good friends, and earn money to help his family recuperate after his grandma's gruesome death. But life aboard the ship takes a turn for the worse when an earthquake hits, causing a major disaster. Shy's soon stranded at sea with a rude rich girl he can barely stand. What he doesn't realize though, was that the earthquake was just the beginning. There is worse to come for all those who managed to survive.

The Living is certainly an intense story packed with action. The author does a good job crafting realistic characters like Shy. He and the other characters have their own flaws and pasts. Their past experiences actually make way for some very important events in the book. Matt de la Pena's story is well-written, full of twists and turns. He includes some food for thought when topics of race and class are mentioned during parts of the novel. The same goes for the topic of human nature, and how major disasters can bring people together or tear them apart.

Even though The Living does include some food for thought, I felt like it was drowned out by the action and apocalyptic focus of the novel. Matt de la Pena had the opportunity to create a meaningful message or change for the reader, but he chose not to go down that path. The plot and pacing of the novel progressed rather rapidly and drastically. I found Shy's frequent attention over women a bit unpleasant as well. Along with the sexual elements, there was much violence and bad language throughout the story. Because of that I would suggest this book to anyone 14 or older. The Living would make a great gift for those looking for a fast paced and heart pounding read.

Recommended Titles:

The Hunted (Sequel to The Living)

Darius and Twig by Walter Dean Myers

The Japanese Tsunami, 2011 by Lauren Tarshis

The San Francisco Earthquake, 1906 by Lauren Tarshis