



The Rock and the River (Coretta Scott King - John Steptoe Award for New Talent)

By Kekla Magoon



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In 1968 Chicago, it's not easy for thirteen-year-old Sam to be the son of known civil rights activist Roland Childs. Especially when his older brother, Stick, starts keeping to himself. Then, one day, Sam finds something under Stick's bed that changes everything: literature about the Black Panthers. Suddenly, nothing feels certain anymore. And when Dr. King is shot and killed, Sam's father's words are no longer enough to make him believe in change....This moving, coming-of-age story gracefully encompasses the scope of the struggle between the civil rights and black power movements through an intimate and relatable lens.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up—Sam Childs, 13, is growing up in Chicago in 1968. His father is a civil rights activist, and the boy has been involved in peaceful demonstrations with his family. When he and his girlfriend, Maxie, witness the brutal beating of a friend at the hands of the police, his world begins to change dramatically. His 17-year-old brother brings a gun home and hides it in their shared room. Next thing Sam knows, Stick has run away from home and is involved with the Black Panther Party, whose philosophy his dad does not share. The brutality of the beating has wrought a change in Sam as well, and the good works he sees the Panthers doing in his neighborhood make him question his dad's opinion. The characters are well drawn and the complexities of the relationships between Roland Childs and his two sons are moving. The episodes of violence are graphic, but necessary to move the plot forward, and Magoon portrays well the tension between the Panthers and the Civil Rights Movement. An author's note provides further historical context. While the image of the Black Panther Party is somewhat idealized, this is an important book about a historical reality that has not been dealt with in juvenile fiction.—*Kristin Anderson, Columbus Metropolitan Library System, OH*

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review In Chicago in 1968, Sam, 14, obeys his father, an eloquent civil-rights leader who is close with Dr. King and is passionately committed to nonviolent protest. But after King is assassinated and Sam witnesses police brutality toward a friend, Sam follows his rebellious older brother, Stephen ("Stick"), and joins the Black Panthers, whose revolutionary platform is the opposite of the nonviolent philosophy that Sam has been taught at home. Then Sam's father is stabbed. Will the brothers retaliate with violence? True to the young teen's viewpoint, this taut, eloquent first novel will make readers feel what it was like to be young, black, and militant 40 years ago, including the seething fury and desperation over the daily discrimination that drove the oppressed to fight back. Sam's middle-class family is loving and loyal, even when their quarrels are intense; and Magoon draws the characters without sentimentality. Along with the family drama, the politics will grab readers, especially the Panthers' political education classes and their call for "land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace." A long author's note fills in background in this important title for YA American history classes. Grades 6-10. --Hazel Rochman

Review

"An intensely significant story..." -- Sundee T. Frazier, winner of the ALA 2008 Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award

"This is an essential story that has been waiting for its time and its teller. A brave and brilliant accomplishment." -- Helen Frost, Printz Honor Award-winning author of "Spinning Through the Universe"

"Vividly, poignantly, and without compromise, Kekla Magoon takes us to the heart of a world in the messy business of monumental change. "The Rock and the River" is an extraordinary book that brings unflinchingly to life an extraordinary moment in time." -- Tim Wynne-Jones, author of "Rex Zero and the End of the World"

"This explosive coming-of-age story, taut with tension and protest, propelled me along like the river of its title. Magoon is most certainly a new and serious talent to watch. An intensely significant story of emotional

and historical depth that resonates with relevancy for our age." -- Sundee T. Frazier, winner of the ALA 2008 Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award for "Brendan Buckley's Universe and Everything in It"

"What a rich and passionate debut novel! With both intensity and humor, the story that unfolds is at once riveting, disquieting, and ultimately most satisfying." -- Ellen Levine, Caldecott Honor Award-winning author of "Henry's Freedom Box"

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marcella Aragon:

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation or go to the outside with them family or their friend. Do you know? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, as well as playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read a new book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent 24 hours a day to reading a publication. The book The Rock and the River (Coretta Scott King - John Steptoe Award for New Talent) it is rather good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. In case you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book offers high quality.

Gordon Frederick:

The Rock and the River (Coretta Scott King - John Steptoe Award for New Talent) can be one of your basic books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining however delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing The Rock and the River (Coretta Scott King - John Steptoe Award for New Talent) yet doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource details that maybe you can be considered one of it. This great information may drawn you into fresh stage of crucial pondering.

Dorothy Payne:

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Amy Quist:

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