



Chasing the Valley

Skye Melki-Wegner

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Escape is impossible. Escape is their only hope.

Danika is used to struggling for survival. But when the tyrannous king launches an attack to punish her city – echoing the alchemy bombs that killed Danika's family – she risks her life in a daring escape over the city's walls.

Danika joins a crew of desperate refugees who seek Magnetic Valley, a legendary safe haven. But when she accidentally destroys a palace biplane, suddenly Danika Glynn becomes the most wanted fugitive in Taladia.

Pursued by the king's vicious hunters and betrayed by false allies, Danika also grapples with her burgeoning magical abilities. And when she meets the mysterious Lukas, she must balance her feelings against her crew's safety.

Chasing the Valley is the first book in an epic trilogy of magic, treachery and survival.

Chasing the Valley Details

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Author : Skye Melki-Wegner

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From Reader Review Chasing the Valley for online ebook

Brenda says

Danika Glynn was sixteen; alone after her parents and sibling had been killed in the last round of alchemy bombs the king had launched, she struggled for survival. She knew she had to join the king's army when she turned eighteen – everyone did – but she was determined not to. After all, it was on the king's orders that her family had been killed; why would she help him to kill others? On the night the bombs struck again, Danika fled to the sewers. It was the only place to be safe from the bombs and the after effects of fire – but there were other refugees sheltering there as well. When she was rejected by the crew of refugees in hiding, she decided to attempt a daring escape. Escape over the city's walls would mean either death or freedom; a tentative freedom at best, but the lure of the Magnetic Valley was enough to spur her on.

In the frantic scramble over the wall, Danika fired a flare to distract the guards – the consequences of this action were long reaching and meant that she was suddenly a fugitive. But when she joined other refugees their determination to survive was greater than anything any of them had encountered before. With their magical proclivities to help in times of crisis - some were yet to mature – they managed to stay one step ahead of the king's cruel hunters. But could it remain that way? They were only a group of teenagers; they had no idea who they could trust...

Would the small group of young refugees manage to find their way to the Magnetic Valley? Would they even be safe in the Valley if they did achieve their goal, or was it just a myth that the king couldn't penetrate that area? One thing Danika knew for sure – they could no longer return to the only home they had ever known...

This is the first in the Chasing the Valley trilogy by Aussie author Skye Melki-Wegner; a fantasy/young adult novel which is full of action and adventure. I thoroughly enjoyed it – it was a fun read with an unlikely heroine. Danika is full of grit and determination and her new friends are the same. I actually purchased the second in the trilogy on finishing this one – I need to find out what happens next! Highly recommended.

Elric0791 says

I had the chance to read this recently and I must say I was mightily impressed. From the first sentence I was bound up in the world of Danika Glynn and her struggle to overcome the difficulties imposed on her by the tyrannical king. This story is a real page turner with unexpected twists and interesting characters that draw you into their world. Its target audience is Young Adult and it hits the sweet spot for that demographic while being a great read for anyone of any age.

Nansi Kunze says

Genuinely unputdownable! An impressive fantasy debut with a fascinating premise and engaging characters. Highly recommended!

Braiden says

I was given an uncorrected proof from my bookshop boss as she thought I might enjoy it since it has been described as being of a Tomorrow When the War Began cross His Dark Materials (young early reviewers have called it a mix of The Hunger Games and Percy Jackson - I do not see this, but realise they're limited in what they have previously read to compare it to).

For me, however, I found it to be a bit lacking in appeal and found myself losing interest quite quickly as I didn't feel as involved and connected with the world and the characters that Danika travels with and comes across. I've read over half of it; now that's not a lot but it's enough for me to say that I was bored with those 200 pages and didn't think I'd do any better further into the book.

IT WAS NOT BAD. It wasn't. After all, it has gotten so many good words from the young Random House buddy reviewers and has also been raved and talked about at the Random House Australia office. I really thought I would enjoy it since I've enjoyed all those previous works that this book has been described as being like.

I also didn't find the world particularly interesting. Magnetic Valley? Foxaries? Proclivities (tattoo-like things that represent what sort of power you have)? Don't know why to be honest.

I'm only one opinion. Maybe it's because I've been so focused on uni at the moment that when I do read I'm unfocused and mind wandering. But even then the book should be good enough to keep my interest through that.

Though I must say that the first chapter or two were pretty good.

Bibliomaniac Sasha says

Books that i love, i naturally finish within a day and this book is definitely not an exception.Funny how i found this book only now,it's such a great book! I can't believe there isn't much popularity for this one.

I seem to be attracted to "son of the king" type of boys.Let me clarify,firstly there's Fitzroy Vacker from Keeper of the Lost Cities,he's the strongest telepath (second if you count Sophie) and his name means "Son of the King".Then there's Tedros of Camelot who's the son of King Arthur in the series School for Good and Evil.And now,it seems another prince has appeared on my fictional-boyfriends list: Lukas Morrigan,a "martyred hero",the disappointment and shame of the Morrigan Monarchy.

Anyway,this book caught my attention with its witty and compelling writing.Author Skye has done a fantastic job with her narration and i definitely found Danika Glynn an interesting character to engage in.Her companions--Teddy Nort,infamous pickpocket,Maisy and Clementine Pembroke the richies and Radnor (sobs) are individuals who are pleasantly refreshing.The storyline may have been a little rushed but that's tolerable,same goes for the fact that Danika not thinking straight when the betrayal happened,that seemed a little fake.But all in all,loved the plot twists and the ending.Thankful it is not a cliffhanger,ha!

A solid 8 over 10 !!

Madeline says

When I read that Chasing the Valley was written by a young Australian woman in her early twenties, I was intrigued. Perhaps it was my patriotism or simply the fact that I selected parallels, such as age and aspirations, between myself and Melki-Wegner and made an instant connection.

That being said, her debut novel was quite impressive. Her story telling is of a maturity beyond her years and the emotional turmoils suffered by her characters had added power through her words. Quite a fantastic book that is, no doubt, the beginning of a great series and the career of a great writer!

Rebekah Nicholas says

It's an easy to read novel, I see how it would engage teens with its setting and themes.

It felt a little formulaic and clunky in parts. For example the word 'proclivity', it irked me every time I read it. For a teen fiction novel I think these elements are important to get right.

I will probably read the coming novels too, if only to see if the writer's style develops further.

Kaeranyu says

There may be spoilers (major spoilers are hidden though) lurking about, so read at your own risk! Also, I sorta blabbed a bit too much on this one. Sorry.

The story begins with a young 16 year old girl named Danika, who lives in Rourton, Taladia.

For as long as she can remember there's been a war on Taladia, including bombings to her city, by King Morrigan with the use of alchemy bombs, which react in various ways, such as after the explosion they cause the ground to become quicksand or beautiful flowers. These bombs took the lives of her family, when she was only 9. After this, she became a **scruffer**, a person who lived off the streets, and hoped someday she'll be able to get her revenge against the King and his family.

Since the war started, there's been talk of **The Magnetic Valley**, which is a beautiful place, far away from the city and the influence of the King, and where he cannot access, for his alchemic weapons do not work near magnets. We find out crews of refugees have been trying to head towards it, but that unfortunately most get caught somewhere along the way. However, the errors these previous crews have committed, and the fact the only crew that's been considered successful has been that formed by 5 people with different **proclivities**, has given enough information for others who try, know what they must do.

Proclivities are sort of magical powers that develop at puberty and that form specific tattoos at the back of your neck, in relation to what it is. Example, if you have a *Flame* proclivity, you'd have a tattoo of a flame or fire. It is to be noted that children and teenagers wear scarves around their necks to cover them until they fully develop, as showing anyone before that is considered *taboo*.

Due to the current bombing at the beginning of the story, Danika ends up meeting a crew of 4 (5) teenagers who have been planning to escape the city and have now found the best opportunity, and although initially she's denied being part of the crew, events unfold and she ends up first being just one more, and then a very

important person in it. The initial five people of this crew are: **Radnor**, the leader, **Clementine & Maisy**, two richies, **Hackel**, a smuggler and guide and **Teddy Nort**, a famous pickpocket.

I'll be honest, I found the story to be okay. That's it, okay. Now I'm not sure if it was because I wasn't too focused on it or if it was because it failed to captivate me, but I just didn't really find it more than okay. Not bad or great. However I have decided to continue on reading, perhaps it'll captivate me this time and I'll love it, or maybe not, but it's definitely worth a try.

As for the story in itself, it had a nice pace, set the story nicely and wasn't confusing at all. It was actually pretty well done, I won't deny that.

Moving onto Characters, let's talk about Danika a bit, shall we? I have mixed feelings about her. She wasn't too bad at all, quite badass, there were just things she did that were so stereotypically dumb, like:

'I want to go and check it out' I say.

Radnor shakes his head. 'Forget it, Danika. No one leaves this circle at night, got it?'

'What if it's another refugee? They might need our help.'

'It's *not* another refugee,' says Radnor. [...] 'And even if it is another refugee, they're suicidally stupid to be flying that thing around. I'm not going to burden my crew with another liability.'

Want to guess what she did? Yeah, not listen. Regardless of how right she was, I felt this was the typical 'I'm not going to listen and that will definitely cause trouble'. Still, I'm glad I was mistaken and it was **Lukas**, another refugee ~~not really~~.

And how about when she discovers something about Lukas (which I genuinely did not expect, but am not surprised), and immediately she hates him and assumes he's been trying to manipulate her and most definitely betrayed her?

'Are you...?' Maisy begins [...] 'Are you worried about Lukas?'

'Why would I worry about him?' [...] 'I mean, he's a traitor. (view spoiler)

But what's funny is, it isn't until he tells her what really happened, that she doesn't even realize how ridiculous her behaviour was. This guy saved your life, gave you a very special present and did many other things for you, but you were quick to believe he was a traitor.

I don't know what to say. Hell, I don't know what to *think*. For days, I thought Lukas had betrayed us. For days, (view spoiler). Even now, I don't know whether to believe him.

And after ALL THAT, after hating him and wanting to kill him and hardly ANY romantic development...they kiss.

Lukas opens his mouth, ready to protest. And without even thinking, I swap my fingers for my lips.

I think this was my BIGGEST issue with this book, the lack of romantic development throughout the whole story, and the sudden, completely out-of-the-blue kiss/love these two end up going through. I didn't even get enough time to love Lukas as a character. I mean sure, he was cool and all, saved their lives a couple times and wasn't a nuisance, but there really wasn't much to him and even less regarding their relationship. My sentiment was basically *wait wat what's going on here why are they. but you were mad at him. but what.*

oh ffs fine whatever

Also, not surprised at Danika's proclivity. She's the MC, of course it had to be something like that!

**sigh*

And finally, secondary characters! Overall, I'm satisfied. They really didn't stand out too much, I mean, except **Maisy** that is. Out of all, she was the one I liked the most, she was reasonable and respectful, and quite cool too. **Teddy** wasn't half bad either, I liked his little flirty thing and how fun he was. Disliked **Clementine**, but it's not like she made it hard to dislike her, sob story or not, she was an utter bitch and not much to say about **Radnor**, or even **Hackel**, although this guy was a twat.

As a bad guy **Sharr** was your stereotypical hateful bitch, but unfortunately due to the poor character development, I didn't really get a chance to hate her. In fact, although it's clear she's into some nasty stuff and has an ego bigger than the moon, I couldn't find myself *really* hating her, as in Dead Witch Walking main baddie sort of hate.

~~because screw that guy man. being hot doesn't give you a free pass to being a twat~~

The ending...the ending was okay ~~not surprisingly~~. I mean it was a happy ending as they go, really have nothing much to say except it's rather satisfying and quick paced as heck.

Overall, it's okay. I'm going to read the second book, in hopes that it is better. But I'm sure it is...right?

Tina says

I really enjoyed Chasing the Valley. I especially love the last few chapters, and the daring endurance the characters had to go through. I love the idea and the way the magic was portrayed in the book and I thought it was very original. However, I had some difficulty visualising some scenes in my head. For example, the parts where the trainline went over the mountains like a cable car, and the plateau filled dead lands area at the end of the book had me stumped. I just couldn't get the right image of it in my head, and conflicting information kept crossing over. I also felt that the tyranny of the King and his family was a little transparent. I felt like he was just evil for evils sake, and that there was not much justification for his actions. That being said, does someone who is naturally evil need any justification for their actions? Perhaps that is what the author was trying to portray.

What I especially loved about Chasing the Valley was that it was unpredictable as to where the characters were heading and what issues they would face. As we are given little information about Taladia's geography (which is good!) it lets us experience the new surroundings as the characters experience it, which I loved. It allowed us to be as in awe of the environment around them as the characters were, and really gave you a sense of being in the moment. I found myself jumping and gasping at new twists and cliff hangers (which the author did very well).

There was one issue however (and it only small) that kept niggleing at me which I was reading. While I had some difficulties with it (as seen above) these were mainly superficial, and can be easily rectified by rereading the book. But my main issue was the repetition of Danika's likening of, what felt like everything, to death. She states a few chapters in how lack of food means death, or how lack of survival skills means death, which is all true of course, but I felt like it was a connection that was made too often in the book. I found myself thinking "there she goes again about the death thing" and I know it was used to create a sense of urgency in the situation but I felt like Danika was pushing it too much.

In contrast to this the part where (spoiler alert) she reminices about the girl whose toes froze in her boot and

when she took the shoe off she left her toes behind, was so engaging and creepy, that I had to set the book down for a few moments to deal with the imagery. That was very well done. It's giving me shivers remembering it as I type! And in conclusion, if getting shivers and re-experiencing the emotions of the story while writing a review for it is not the sign of a good book, then I don't know what is. I recommend it to all my students.

Jeanette says

Once I got into this YA fantasy book, I enjoyed it.

Sixteen year old Danika Glynn, a scruffer (street kids) hates the royal family who regularly bombs her city with magical filled bombs - especially after the raid 9 years ago killed her family. In a desperate escape attempt to find the mythical Valley in the far south-east she becomes part of a refugee crew and must learn to trust her companions despite their disparate origins (pickpocket, two "richie" twins, the son of revolutionaries and another more mysterious young man) as well as find her own strengths and weaknesses.

Written in first person present (much like Hunger Games), it is fast paced, has an interesting world and builds characters as the novel progresses. As with many modern books, I found the description rather lean, at times the plot was guessable yet there were enough surprises and character development to keep me interested. As the first book in the trilogy, I plan to read the next one.

Mpapaz says

An impressive story written by a young local author. Danika demonstrates a lot of strength on her journey to find the Magnetic Valley. I love curious details such as the foxaries and the alchemy charms. If you liked Divergent this may be one to consider reading.

Kelly (Diva Booknerd) says

<http://www.divabooknerd.com/2013/10/c...>

Chasing The Valley is *the* young adult fantasy fusion novel of the year. It's an engaging mix of magic fused within an oppressive dystopian world, and blends so effortlessly together. In their world, the wealthy and homeless are both ruled by the confines of their walled city, those with money to burn living a fuller life, but all under the watchful eye of the palace and royal guards. The King is a tyrant, and will stop at nothing until he is the sole ruler and citizens at his mercy. The idea isn't unique, but the mixture of characters and surroundings not only make for a magnificent fantasy, but it's enchanting. I loved Danika, her story of her parents being killed was heartbreaking, but she was determined not to live life on the streets, alone and wondering where her next meal would come from. She isn't strong or sassy, she's real and no matter how hard she's kicked, she'll rise again.

There is no forced romance between the characters, and no horrid love triangle either. Teddy, the pickpocket is adorable. He's the entertainment within the group dynamic, taking a lighthearted approach to the situation. The wealthy twins come across as cruel and unforgiving, but also have a worthy reason for seeking to escape. Lukas is the mystery factor within the storyline, not featuring prominently, but just enough to keep

readers intrigued.

It was so entertaining, that I found myself trying to preserve reading Chasing The Sky, but it was too difficult to put down. I absolutely loved it and now eagerly awaiting the second in this epic trilogy.

Aussie bookworm says

I could not put this book down, The story line is amazing and full of adventure, I love the Cover of the book, with the bright colours it really makes the book stand out.

Chasing the Valley is a story of determination and Survival in the harshest conditions. Danika is a homeless street kid, after her family were killed in an Airstrike by their king, Danika has been surviving on the streets, and getting odd jobs around the bars. It is after curfew and Danika is still at work when bombs start to fall, These aren't your everyday bombs these are Alchemy bombs, that not only destroy but can have some pretty aftereffects such as sprouting trees and flowers from the rubble. Danika decides that she can't take it anymore and wants to leave, after being spurned by a group of teenagers attempting to leave, Danika sets out on her own to find the legendary Magnetic Valley.

Chasing the Valley is a mix of Dystopian, Magic, Fantasy and Adventure. It is set in a world where the countries are ruled by a King who is always trying to expand his lands. When someone turns 18 their magical abilities become known, Danika is just learning what her abilities are when she runs, all she knows is that for a few seconds she can cast a illusion spell that can hide her. Other peoples abilities can include, beasts, birds, rocks, darkness, shadow, water ect. I loved all the characters, they all felt real to me with Danikas gritty determination to escape the city and start an Epic Journey to find the Magnetic Valley where she will be safe from the Royal Family and Their Alchemy Bombs, This book even made me cry, which automatically tops my lists.

I highly recommend this book for anyone who loves dystopian, fantasies. Chasing The Valley is truly a gripping read that will leave you on the edge of your seat. I can't wait for the next Installment.

Tora says

Definitely in the top 5 books i have read... In tie with the hunger games

Ruman says

DNF at 50%

Chasing the Valley was not exactly boring, but did little to keep my interest. I did not care for any of the characters, and thought that Danika was dumb. Honestly, how did she survive the streets? Danika has no edge. One would think that living on the streets, with a survival-of-the-fittest mentality, would make her more suspicious of the unusual, like kites flying in the air. But nope. Danika is an anomaly. She risks her neck for others when she has had to fend for herself the past years. It just seems out of character for someone

who lives on the streets. Kindness like that is usually snuffed out. It would have been better character development if Danika grew as an individual with her companions. The bonds that form from survival run deep. If one is lost from the group, the group would literally lose a limb.
