



Nothing to Fear

Jackie French Koller

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Thirteen-year-old Danny and his family are struggling to make ends meet in New York during the Great Depression. His father leaves to search for work, and Danny and his mother do what they can to survive. With his mother pregnant and unable to help, Danny is forced to beg for food. Through it all, they retain their good humor and family pride, and in the end help arrives in a most unexpected guise. "Rich, rewarding historical fiction."--*Kirkus Reviews*

Nothing to Fear Details

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The other John says

This is a tale set in 1932, during the Great Depression. Danny Garvey is 13, the son of Irish immigrants, living in New York City. His father has been out of work for a while and, in desperation, decides to go on the road to look for work. Danny is left to face the day to day struggles of life, along with his mother and baby sister (And neighbors and friends and classmates....) as they long for his father's return by Christmas. My main complaint with the story is that the author pulls in too many elements of the poverty of the Great Depression. Through some of the supporting characters Danny gets a glimpse of a Hooverville, the Oklahoma Dust Bowl, begging, scamming, theft, welfare and the like. Maybe people really did experience that much in their individual lives, but I'm skeptical. Still it was an engaging and enjoyable read. The characters may be a bit flat, but the good guys are charismatic and the love they exude seems genuine. And if that doesn't make for good reading, what does?

Abby says

I have been reading so many good school books lately!! I love you homeschooling!

I really liked this book, and then ending like really tears down my face! Its a school book though so I don't normally think of reviewing. I will keep this short. It was a good book, with strong characters. The only complaint was a couple uncomfortable parts(a girl peeks in on a boy in a bathtub and teases him about it later. it was just weird to read, but it was mostly just a joke. Even though it causes the boy a lot of embarrassment)

The romance in here is little to none.

The message in here is amazing. Well maybe not amazing but pretty close!

I have this weird thing where I really really really like if the last phrase in a book is a good one. This one had a GREAT one!

Angela says

I thought this book was a really nice story, set in the time of the Great Depression in New York. It is the story about a boy named Danny, who shines shoes to make some money, his mother does laundry, and his father helps build the Empire State building. But when his father loses his job, he leaves his family in search for another job. Danny is sad, and he misses his father greatly, and has to work even harder to support his mother and baby sister, as well as going to school, working to help repay for a broken window, (that he didn't break) and also dealing with bullies.

But when Danny's father doesn't come home for Christmas, and he hasn't heard anything from his father in several months, he begins to worry, and begins to set out to search for him. And then, his mother becomes pregnant. Knowing that it was hard for her the last time, Danny has to forsake his plan and help take care of his mother even more. Then along comes a friendly man, who helps take care of Danny and his family. Eventually, everything turns out okay in the end, minus the fact that Danny's father died, (on his way home to spend Christmas with his family!) his mother remarries, and Danny and Maggie end up together.

The time setting was kind of hard for me to picture at first, because I kept picturing more modern New York.

I had to remind myself that this was Little Orphan Annie's time period. But I kept reading, the time setting picture getting better as the book went along. I also liked how kind some people were, compared to other people. When Danny has to learn how to be a beggar, people were kind, and handed out leftover food, unlike some people, who wouldn't share. It's just such a nice story, although the ending is sad, slash happy.

LeighAnne says

This is an absolutely wonderful book about a boy and his family living in New York City during the Depression. Told in the first person view of the son, it conveys the emotion and desperation of the time. The imagery is beautiful-and the story so certainly a real depiction of events at that time. I found it especially interesting given the current economic condition and hopes that so many have for the new president-just as Danny's mom and so many others had hope in FDR.

I loved this book and highly recommend it.

Kaylees says

Nothing to Fear by Jackie French Koller was an excellent book that took place during the Great Depression. It was about a young boy named Danny who matures throughout the book. His family goes through a lot of hardships due to his father's unemployment. However, when something even worse than these hardships hits Danny's family, he will be forced to grow up a lot faster than others. I liked this book a lot because it really gave me a sense of what the Great Depression was like for everyday kids. I also thought that the main character, Danny, was very relatable to. Danny was a lot like an everyday kid, he was just going through hard times. I think the book was very well written and described the time period perfectly.

Marion Marchetto says

We first meet Danny Garvey and his family in October of 1932 at the height of the Great Depression. The Garvey family lives in a tenement building in New York City and while they are still able to pay for food and shelter it is becoming more difficult with each passing day. Mr. Garvey has been without a job for a quite some time and it is Mrs. Garvey who takes in laundry and works round the clock to keep her children (Danny and his baby sister Maureen) fed and clean. Finally, Mr. Garvey decides to leave home in search of work and it is with great misgivings all around that he sets out promising both Danny and his Ma that he would return for Christmas. The story follows Danny as he bears witness to the hardships that the Garvey family and their friends and neighbors endure during one of America's darkest eras. But it's not all sadness as the reader follows the joy that Danny and his family find in the smallest of things: a clean bed, a bowl of oatmeal, a box of hoarded childhood treasures, earning a nickel for a giving a shoe shine, and a baby's smile.

The story is told by Danny and leads the reader through the hardship and despair that was prevalent during the time yet offers hope for the characters' future in the newly elected President Roosevelt's New Deal. You'll laugh and you'll cry as you become friends with the Garveys and their neighbors the Rileys. And you'll swear you can smell the food cooking in the hallways of the tenement building where they live.

A realistic, well researched story based on the author's own family stories. I highly recommend this story for young adults or for anyone interested in the economic history of the United States.

Skittles says

This is a great book about The Great Depression. The main character has to help his mom and his little sister to have a great life. When his father goes away to find work, Danny struggles to care for his family. Each chapter is very suspensful. This was also a very easy read and kind of sad, happy , and wierd in the ending. A great story to read in your freen time. Perfect for Young adults or Adults.

I learned from this book to be happy for what you have, because somewhere else it could be worse.

Kristine Hansen says

I was reading this one out loud to my son for school and at the end it became difficult to read. My voice shook and I found myself tearing up. Only with great effort was I able to keep going, though I am very glad I did.

This is an excellent look at the depression. So many details, so many facts slipped in when the reader isn't looking. I was delighted with the fact that this book had it all - an excellent and engaging storyline, and a history lesson so well hidden that the reader doesn't even notice they're being taught. This is one my favorites so far for this school year. Can't recommend it enough!

Janna Thalman says

I loved this book. One of the best I've read for awhile. It is about an Irish immigrant family trying to survive the Great Depression in New York. It specifically follows one boy, Danny, who is a teenager at the time. This book really was great, well written, with a great story line while learning history at the same time. Some lines I liked,

"That was before the children. Children make a woman more . . . cautious." So true. I used to be a lot more daring.

"I sighed. Why do things have to change? It makes life so complicated." Again, so true. I am not very good with change.

Talking about when his father leaves to find work, "Things were never quite right when he was gone. Scary things were scarier; lonely times were lonelier. We were like a wagon with one wheel missing, and no matter what the rest of us did, we couldna' get that wagon to ride smooth."

"There's more to folks than bone and blood, I know that much. And there's more to this world than meets the eye."

All in all, I read definitely read this again and think it would be a great read with the kids!

Sam Harrison says

As a slow reader I was surprised on how quickly I was able to read this book. It definitely not the best book I've ever red but it was a good one. What I really like about this book is that it was a good story about time in the early 1900's. It had a realistic story about the depression and I actually wanted to read! One thing I was

impressed with was how strong the story was with an unstructured plot. The plot is that Daniel Thomas Garvey's dad went away for work. Not much but a lot came from it. I'd recommend this book as it's something alright to read.

Joslyn says

I loved this book when I read (I think when I was like 12). It was one of my all time favorite books and I wish I still had a copy of it. A fictional story about a young boy growing up in during the great depression, it taught me a lot about where our country has been since the revolution and the civil war (the only parts of American history we spent enough time on for me to remember). When we visited Washington DC when I was 13, the FDR memorial meant a lot to me because of this book. Maybe I did learn about the depression in school, and I probably would have learned something significant about it eventually, but I think fiction has the power to make history real to us, especially kids. This book made this important part of history real to me.

Silvia80 says

Danny Garvey ha 13 anni vive a New York con i genitori, originari dell'Irlanda e con la sorellina minore. E' il 1932, periodo della Grande depressione. Le aziende sono costrette a licenziare i dipendenti o peggio ancora a chiudere le attività, le banche e le industrie duramente colpite, fanno sì che la maggior parte della popolazione deve affrontare il problema della disoccupazione, la mancanza di soldi, casa e cibo. Anche per la famiglia di Danny si prospettano tempi duri e difficili. Il padre come molti altri capofamiglia, dopo aver passato le giornate in strada sperando di ricevere qualche offerta di lavoro saltuario, decide di mettersi in viaggio alla ricerca di una occupazione.

Attendendo il suo ritorno, il ragazzo dovrà prendersi cura della mamma e della sorella. Da giovane adolescente, sarà costretto a maturare a preoccuparsi di come pagare l'affitto, portare a casa qualche soldo per poter mangiare e pagare le spese mediche tutto continuando a frequentare la scuola. Un bel romanzo focalizzato sulla povertà vissuta soprattutto dai bambini.

Miss Amanda says

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1932-1933 NYC. 13 year old Danny didn't mean for the window to break. When the Sullivan twins ask Danny to create a diversion, they swore they were only going to steal candy instead they break Weissman's shop window. Danny is convinced Mr. Weissman has plenty of money and is horrified when his dad makes Danny promise to work off the debt. Danny discovers that Weissman is just as poor as everyone else and not as mean as he seems. As the Depression worsens, Danny must be the man of the house, while his father looks for work.

Great story with a lot of details about daily life during the Depression. I'd recommend this book to a reader interested in learning more about what it was like to live during the Depression

Mrs. Francis says

A great historical fiction book, that was an engaging read. The main character Daniel takes you right into the book, and it is hard to put down. I felt connected to this character not only because of what he went through, but how he thought. The author Koller, knows how to keep you on the edge of your seat, and the falling action took another direction from what I had expected. It doesn't matter if you're not into historical fiction, and don't let the boring cover let you judge this book (I almost didn't read it because of that!). Read the summary on the back, then dive in. You'll be glad you did!

Harrison Kessel says

WARNING REVIEW HAS SPOILERS

This book is about a boy named Daniel who lives in New York. When the stock market crashes in 1929, Daniel and his family feel the pressure of the lack of work. His Dad goes to look for work and leaves Daniel and his Mother alone, who Daniel later finds out is pregnant. She is sickly, however, and falls into a coma after the birth. Staying with a man who rents out part of their apartment, Daniel discovers a letter that says his father died. His mother comes out of the comma and marries the man in the apartment named Hank.

This book was a great book for me because I can relate to some of the experiences. Now I was never even close to the situation Daniel was in, but my family felt a dramatic impact after the crash in 2009. At the time, my parrents where in a divorce, so seeing the decline of Daniel in this book reminded me of myself, although I will never feel the pain Daniel has felt.
