



Skywater

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An aging husband and wife observe a band of coyotes who, faced with a diminishing water supply, set out across the Southwestern desert in search of the mythical source of all water. (Nancy Pearl)

Skywater Details

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From Reader Review Skywater for online ebook

Julia says

This has been one of my all-time favorites since I came upon it at a library in Ottawa (KS) and took the time to read it. The book follows along in the fashion of "Black Beauty" and Felix Salten's "Bambi" but unlike those two books it has a refreshing depth all of its own.

The story is a glorious masterpiece that weaves together two separate stories - the viewpoint of a spirit-thirsting coyote and his companions plus the story of a grieving couple who upon packing up for the Pacific ended up in the desert of the Kofa Mountains. Living together as neighbors it is only the sad consequences of human action plus love that drives them apart.

The characters were strongly created - their personalities a perfect blend that gave the story its strength. And it is a story that is full of emotional beauty, philosophical musings and the nature of survival that drives each species that lives side by side.

Definitely a timeless classic for generations to come.....

P.S. With this book I have to say the cover art is very important for passing it off. This is the one that I came upon first and this is definitely the best cover art that can be found for the book itself. I am fortunate that even though my sister gave me one copy without it that I was able to find a hardcover with this exact beautiful artwork without it costing me an arm and leg. Definitely gorgeous!

Bloomswest says

Giving this book 1 star because I can't give it less on this site. So poorly written it's laughable. The author writes using her Stanford degree and handy dictionary writing companion but the story is predictable and flat out boring. I power read it in one day and glad to be done with it. The premise of evil humans (except for a couple) vs. innocent coyotes and their interactions. I love nature and enjoy seeing animals in nature but this story is just so full of itself, it's painful. Seriously hard to believe that it made it to publication.

Jim B. says

I live in Tucson, Arizona. This story starts in my neighborhood and ends in a good place. If you love animals, especially dogs and similar critters, this book will tear your heart out. I cried several times while I read it and had to put it aside for a while when I was in the middle of it. If it gets to be too much for you, go to the last couple of chapters and see how it ends. Then you can read the second half.

Pecha Johnson says

It was a really amazing book. It showed the story from a coyote's view especially, and showed how it's

mostly humans who make the mistakes; not coyotes. The characters, all of them, are just so amazing. It's just a really great book. I love it so much. I think the main reason I love it so much is because I love animals. I've created an attachment with coyotes. It's a really really really good book. I would've never have doubted that anyone else would not like it if they love animals. But if they think coyotes are to blame, like the book says, for everything but the weather, I think if you read this book you'll create an attachment with coyotes like I did. It was my father who introduced this to me, and I really pay respect to him. Enjoy the book. --KBPJ, age 9

Hollie Ruthless says

I picked this book up from a free shelf, never intending to read it myself, but rather obtaining it for my husband who has taken a recent interest in the desert. After reading it, he insisted I read it as well. In all honesty, I didn't have high expectations of it, so I was surprised when I ended up enjoying it immensely! Writing a book from the perspective of animals is a tricky task, but I've never seen it done so well. The author has a great understanding of coyotes and it really shows through the writing. She describes the way the animals perceive the world and communicate so well, I'm convinced this is the closest we will ever be reading the thoughts of animals. The author also has a unique way of switching narrators without the story coming to a full-stop, yet also without leading to confusion. I don't know if I've ever come across that writing style before. Although the majority of the story follows the coyotes, there are little dips into humanity that filled me with rage, disgust, pity, love, horror, fear, sadness and heartbreak. Not that the coyotes' story was lacking any of those emotions. Despite the fact that the entire novel is in a desert setting, the descriptions of the landscape and surroundings never get dull or redundant. It is inadvertently educational about the land and the animals without feeling like a lesson at all. Even over 15 years later, it is still relevant and I wish it would get more attention, particularly in my corner of the United States. For what I would consider a short book, it has left quite the impact on me and has opened my eyes to a whole new world. This is definitely not in my usual genre and I am glad that I ventured out and read it anyway. I would love to read more by this author, but I appreciate the fact that she wrote a novel on something she fully understood and then stopped there. Her writing style is beautiful, though; I can only hope that she eventually decides to write another novel about something she cares about.

Shelley Alongi says

I don't think I've ever read a book told from an animals's point of view. Great visual images of the life of a coyote searching for water and the human interactions of the aging couple sympathetic to the coyote plight. I think "

Brand X could have a different name but that's purely subjective.

Becky Loader says

I will never feel the same about coyotes after meeting Brand X and his compatriots.

An old couple who live in the desert purposely foul their well when they find out that a defunct copper mine is poisoning their groundwater. This forces the local wildlife to find a new water supply and saves them from a nasty death. The story, told from the coyote perspective, documents their search for "Skywater." The

Native Americans call the coyote, "God's Dog," and I think it fits.

Rosemary says

Beautifully written fable. Loved the main characters, both human and coyote.

Elle Thornton says

Finding Love in the Desert Places

Skywater unfolds a spellbinding journey with a small band of coyotes, whose distinct natures and ultimate fates are as deeply moving as characters in a Shakespearean play. After their well is poisoned in the Sonoran desert, the coyotes follow their leader to find what is believed to be the promised ancestral place of endless life-giving water. The coyotes face many dangers in the merciless worlds they navigate on their quest to reach Skywater: sharpshooter riflemen at a military proving ground; rivers; deadly highways; baited traps. The power of this story goes far beyond the perils the hunted and weary coyotes face: it comes from Melinda Worth Popham's ability to see something wonderful in the unloved suffering outcast, in the rejected, and to convey its worthiness and wonder to the reader. The writing is extraordinary. On every level, Skywater is a transformative story.

Joyce says

I rarely read novels. This was a beautiful novel, given to me by my Grandmother Evelyn, after she read it. She was close to 90 at the time!

Jessica says

I had reservations about a novel told from the perspective of coyotes, but I trusted my co-worker's recommendation on the strength of our mutual appreciation for Wallace Stegner. For a fable, this was done well. But I guess I don't like fables. The author anthropomorphizes the animals to an absurd degree. The coyote's actions seemed realistic (most of the time) and could have stood alone without the narrative of their human-like thoughts. I know I shouldn't have been expecting realism, but I couldn't help it and so spent most of the book annoyed.

Derrick Ruthless says

While I find it hard to accept that anything in life is truly "destined to be", finding a copy of Skywater on the free book shelf of a local library was quite the perfect happenstance. Having lapsed in recent years on

reading (and other subsequent creative endeavors) in favor of buckling down to work and take care of my children, I had recently relocated to Southern California and, inspired by the inviting weather, started to venture outside. I became a regular at local parks and enthralled by my new surroundings, started to hike the surrounding hills and canyons. It's amazing how one's mindset can change with the absence of mosquitos and added benefit of dry shoes. I had begun to learn and appreciate both the delicate balance and resilience of nature. It was my newfound summation that more incredible things were happening outside the computer screen than within it.

Enter Skywater by Melinda Worth Popham. Skywater was as informative to me as it was a poignant and beautiful tale of a reluctant pack of coyotes and their incredible will to survive. It seamlessly bridges the commonality between our species and puts you in the shoes of the coyotes as they venture toward the mythological "skywater". Equally as compelling, it tells the story of an adorable older couple whose admiration for the coyotes gives hope for our ability to co-exist. "Every year approximately 400,000 coyotes are exterminated in the United States", and while the book never treads into lecture territory, it very clearly paints the picture of a species deemed "dispensable" by the human race. The narrative is mighty in its mere 206 pages. I truly enjoyed this book for its ability to help me see the beauty of the desert landscape and the unwavering courage of the coyote. It was the perfect re-entry point for getting back to reading for enjoyment and I wholeheartedly recommend it.

Lauren says

How much is it possible to anthropomorphize creatures before becomes too much like a Disney story? In the case of this book, pretty far. Or perhaps I am able to give the author the benefit of the doubt more because I can relate so much to the emotional intelligence of my own pets. Surely they must think like we do. Or not. I would say that this is probably the biggest drawback to this book, though it did not get in the way of its enjoyment for me. Let's just say that towards the end it was a stretch to imagine a coyote using a kind of logic to decide whether or not to chance risky behavior. For the most part this story is spellbinding, captivating, and tragic. I did not know the extent of the devastation visited upon the coyote population in the first half of the 20th century, and it is useful to have a book like this to remind us how much our human decisions impact the life around us.

Amy says

Sad and heartwarming little story about those tricky little coyotes. In the end people should be shot for some of the terrible things they do to animals.

Linda says

One of the all-time great books. Wonderful perspective all humans should try to see. One book I will never be without.
