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A Small Free Kiss in the Dark

Author:
Glenda Millard

Reading Level: Grades 7+

When you?re a homeless eleven year-old named Skip, there isn?t anywhere for you to go, because all the shelters are either for women with children, or for men, which you aren?t. When you?re homeless, a runaway, you never sleep in the same place twice, otherwise someone might be able to figure out where you are and take you back to where you ran away from.

Skip is asleep in a Dumpster when the bombs begin to fall. He wakes up violently, ears ringing, dust and garbage in his mouth, chunks of concrete raining down on top of his exhausted body, Dumpster rolling from the concussion of the blast. Skip doesn?t know which way is up, but he crawls out of the Dumpster and runs. Skip runs and runs, looking for someone or something familiar, and then he sees the grizzled face of his friend Billy.

In the days after the war begins, Billy and Skip rattle around the broken city, searching for food, for shelter. One day, they find a six year-old boy named Max who has lost his mother. Another day, they follow the train tracks out of the city to Dreamland, an abandoned amusement park that becomes their home. As soldiers begin to move in, Skip, Billy and Max find it harder to hide themselves, especially with the addition of the dancing teenage mother Tia and her infant daughter Sixpence to their ragtag gang.

It is Billy?s knowledge, Max?s unfettered optimism and hope, Skip?s determination, Tia?s beauty, and Sixpence?s innocence that brings them together. In A Small Free Kiss in the Dark, Glenda Millard has created a fragile world with delicate characters; a world that, as you read into it more, unconsciously pulls your blanket tighter around you and curls your legs up close to your body. This book is not one to read lightly, nor is it one to miss.

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