

Connect the Stars

Marisa de los Santos and David Teague

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Audrey Alcott has a “superpower” where she can instantly detect when someone is lying. But because of this, she often completely distrusts those that lie, which is literally everyone, including her closest friend. When Audrey’s friend, Jamie, betrays her, and the whole school practically turns against her, Audrey vows to stay home and never make friends with anyone ever again. Aaron Archer has an incredible photographic memory. He can instantly recite most of the encyclopedia and dictionary. But he often fails to understand non-textbook questions like the feelings or emotions of people. After he messes up in a national Quiz Masters trivia tournament over a question about feelings, everyone seems to lose faith in him.

After these difficulties, both Audrey and Aaron’s parents decide to send them to the rigorous “*El Viaje a la Confianza*” wilderness camp in the Texas desert in order to help them regain their confidence. Audrey, Aaron and several other misfits and outcasts bond as they all endure and trek across the unforgiving desert. But while combatting tough inclines, dangerous wildlife and extreme weather conditions, the kids also find themselves facing two of the biggest bullies on the team: Daphne and Randolph. However, trouble suddenly comes when Daphne mysteriously goes missing. As the kids delve deeper into understanding each other’s backstories and shortcomings including Daphne’s, Audrey and Aaron begin to see beyond their “superpowers” and abilities to truly understand the people around them better.

I liked how the story switched between the perspectives of Audrey and Aaron. It’s always interesting to read a book with dual narrations because you can better understand the story from different views, as well as the main characters themselves. The plot line was well developed and exciting. As the story went on, you could also see a lot of character development and shifts in some of the campers’ personality or perspectives on things. There wasn’t really anything that I disliked about the book.

I think this book is suitable for those ages 10+. Audrey and Aaron are thirteen-year-olds themselves, so this would be a great book for pre-teens or young teens. The content of the book is pretty kid-friendly and there are no significant offensive themes present. However, I think a character swears once in the book. Also, there are mentions of murder and bloody physical injuries that may be triggering to some younger audiences, but these details are kept very minimal and serve to support the story development.

Overall, I enjoyed this book. The plot kept me hooked until the last page and I read it all in one sitting. This is a great book to read for all the special misfits and outcasts alike.

Recommended Titles

- Lost in the Barrens by Farley Mowat
- Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech
- Holes by Louis Sachar
- A Clatter of Jars by Lisa Graff
- Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson