

Code of Honor Book Review by Gianna

“Code of Honor” by Alan Gratz shows themes of loyalty, identity, and family relationships. Alan Gratz, who has become one of my favorite authors, has outstanding storytelling skills that make you feel you are there in the book. He has written many books that intertwine with personal and political struggles that are eye opening for readers. Kamran Smith, the protagonist of the story, is a highschool senior. He has it all: he’s popular, an amazing football player, has a supportive girlfriend, and will soon be attending college. Kamran’s life is flipped upside down when his older brother, Darius, is accused of being a terrorist. Darius was formerly a soldier, who served in Afghanistan. A video later surfaced of him leading an attack on the U.S. Embassy. Kamran is now faced with the fact that his brother may be a terrorist. Even after plenty of evidence, he refuses to believe his brother is capable of something so terrible. Kamran sets out on a long journey to clear his brother’s name. He relies on their childhood memory and their code of honor, that they made as children to stick by each other's sides. I liked many things including: engaging plot, complex characters, real-world relevance, and emotional depth. The plot is fast moving which kept me focused and entertained. There was the perfect amount of suspense and plot twists. It kept me guessing whether or not Darius was truly telling the truth which was not revealed until the end. It was thrilling and kept me wanting to read more. The characters are very complex and well-developed. Kamran had visible internal conflict. He struggled to decide if his brother was innocent considering the amount of evidence against him. I felt like I was almost going with Kamran on his journey. There were many important and educational topics discussed in the book. It goes over terrorism, national security, and prejudice. Gratz, the author, talks about these topics carefully providing a neutral perspective that allows the readers to think about these issues. The emotional depth was a strong aspect to the story. If Darius and Kamran did not have a close relationship this would have been a very short story lol. The two’s relationship is powerful. Kamran’s feelings of trust, love, and betrayal are shown convincingly, which made me really empathize with him. There were a few things I did not like: the predictability, pacing issues, and secondary characters. Like most of the books I have read so far by Alan Gratz, it was decently predictable. Most of the book I felt to be very engaging even when I knew what was coming. The downside was that it sometimes felt like it diminished some parts of the story. Most of the book like i said earlier is fast paced, but some parts of the book felt uneven and rushed. Some sections would rush through important events while others were hung up on not very critical moments. Lastly, some characters just were not well developed. Kamran and Darius have very in depth characters, where other important characters like their parents and even Kamran’s girlfriend were not. I think adding more development to these characters would have improved the story. Overall I loved this book. I personally like faster paced books so I would recommend it to other readers who feel that way too. I feel many teen readers can relate to Kamran’s journey of questioning his identity, family relationships, and loyalty. The book also focuses on important topics which provide valuable insight. I had very small dislikes about the book and I would definitely read this book again.