

Review by Gianna

Ground Zero Book Review

I found *GroundZero* to be a fascinating novel that tells two important stories from different places, both connected to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The way the stories come together makes the book very engaging.

The book shows two narratives: Brandon Chavez, a nine year old in New York City during the attack, and Reshmina, an eleven year old in Afghanistan in 2019. At the beginning of Brandon's story, he takes a trip to the World Trade Center with his dad. A fun day with his dad at work turns into a tragedy when the towers are hit and he is separated from his dad. Brandon has to figure out not only how to escape but survive.

During this, Reshmina is living through the harsh reality of war. She dreams of a better life and of peace, while her brother dreams of joining the Taliban. After an injured soldier ends up in her village and her family is pulled into conflict, Reshmina has to make tough choices.

My favorite parts of the book were the double narrations, educational value, and character development. The double narrations kept me on my toes and filled me with excitement wondering what would happen next. The flip from Brandon's danger to Reshmina's struggles were interesting to read. I also liked how the author, Alan Gatz, balanced out each story. The educational value is amazing. It is a great way to learn about how people were feeling during 9/11 and its impact on the world. By showing two different perspectives, one from America and the other Afghanistan, it helps you think about the event from different angles. Both

Brandon and Reshmina showed strength and courage which was inspiring. They were both children having to face harsh realities and be brave.

Some things I did not like was how predictable some of Brandon's narration was. As someone who reads often I was able to see most of the twists coming which made the book a little less suspenseful. Since it is a children's book some situations were simplified which left me wanting to know more information and details, which could also be a good thing. Lastly, Brandon's narration had a lot of action whereas Reshmina's was more slower paced, which left me somewhat bored at times and even wanting to skip past sections. Reshmina's sections were also a little more thoughtful whereas Brandon's were very packed with information. .

I would certainly recommend *GroundZero* by Alan Gratz. The book is not only educational and eye opening but a very interesting read. This is a book I can see myself reading again. It was an emotional and powerful book. I was relatively unfamiliar with what was happening in Afghanistan and in America in 2019 so this book definitely informed me of things I did not know of before. I liked how it gave me the point of view from someone experiencing these tragedies because it made the book more emotional like I was living it. I really loved this book and think everyone should read it!