



Prison Boy

Sharon E. McKay

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Little Kai is brought to the orphanage run by Bell, a fearsome Englishwoman whose dedication to her charges is unflinching. There, an older child, Pax, immediately takes Kai under his wing. It soon becomes apparent that Kai is a brilliant child, and given the right circumstances, could go on to achieve great things.

Penniless and living amidst political strife and constant uncertainty, the children are nonetheless taken care of and protected -- until Bell dies and they are left on their own. Pax is determined to keep Kai safe, and to make sure he gets the education he deserves. But life on the streets is tough -- and dangerous.

In a desperate attempt to make enough money to keep Kai in school, Pax agrees to work for a shady character known only as Mister. Mister sends Pax on a "special" mission -- carry a very heavy box to a pre-arranged location, and wait there. At the very last minute, Pax realizes that the box contains a bomb; it explodes, killing and maiming hundreds of people.

Pax and Kai escape the deadly explosion, only to be arrested soon after and charged with terrorism. What follows is a descent into the hellish prison where brutal guards stop at nothing to make Pax talk. As a means of survival, he retreats into a magnificent fantasy world and finds himself on a journey of hope and discovery.

This haunting novel brings home the tragic situation in which children in over 40 countries are tortured with impunity. But it also speaks to the strength of love under the most dire of circumstances.

Prison Boy Details

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From Reader Review Prison Boy for online ebook

Gabriella Lalone says

I love this book he took in a baby that people thought he was going to die but he did not die.

Susan says

What would you do if you were an orphan and the orphanage you lived in is no longer there? Pax and Kai are orphans. Pax takes care of Kai when he was left at the orphanage as a baby. Pax named him Kai. In this book you will follow their lives living on the streets. Pax unknowing carries a bomb that explodes and causes Pax and Kai to go to prison. Pax is rationed 50 lashes a day on his feet until he tells the truth. Does Pax tell? What happens to Pax?

This is a book that helped me "walk in their shoes" even though at times I didn't want to. The subject of this novel of abandoned children living in a country with civil unrest/war is one that many of us do not think about or even acknowledge--much less about torture done to innocent people regardless of age. I am glad that I had the opportunity to read this story. It is heartbreaking at times yet one hopes that torture is stopped today by us. This is a necessary book about a subject not written about -torture of orphaned children.

Disclaimer: I received an arc of this book free from the author/publisher from Netgalley. I was not obliged to write a favorable review, or even any review at all. The opinions expressed are strictly my own.

Michaela says

Wow. Just wow. Very provocative and lovely. The only thing keeping this from a five star is the fact that there isn't really a defined setting or year. I know it's to give it a timeless quality but still. Anyway, the ending caused a lot of introspection and reflection.

Rajkamal says

Prison Boy is a heartwarming fictional novel written by Sharon E. McKay. It revolved around the hardships of a 12-13 year old boy named Pax (Paxton), along with his non-biological brother, a 6-7 year old boy named Kai, living on the streets trying to find a home, make money and keep each other safe.

A key factor that caught my attention was the cover, it's so simple but speaks volumes. The title makes a lot of sense. I wouldn't say that you would know what the title means during the beginning of the book but, as you go along you come up with many predictions which creates curiosity, forcing you to continue the ongoing journey of 2.

Prison Boy gave me another point of view of the world. As I read the book I was more intrigued throughout each chapter, past each page, after each line. I didn't know people could be this cruel, for instance, when

people kicked Pax and Kai out when they didn't have anywhere to go, or when one of the characters named Ol' May took their hard earned money and ran away leaving them to deal with everything on their own, when shortly after they were kicked out by two men with guns. I feel as if the book changes my perception of the world and gave me a lot to consider and think about.

There was a lot of truth to this book for example, when a man named Mister took advantage of Pax and Kai because they didn't know any better, and they were in need to get food, and get Kai into a good school because he was very intelligent, especially for a child his age. People in reality do take advantage of the innocent, people that would do anything to survive and keep their family safe from harm.

I think this story would restore people's faith in humanity because of how some people helped Pax and Kai throughout their horrific journey, especially when Pax was in prison and got help from Dr.Ezat a college professor. I would recommend this book for people who are interested in learning about the outside world. It's an unbelievable novel. The world is a cruel place and this book might want you to change that. I'm pretty sure 'Prison Boy' is going to change your perception of things.

Not everyone knows the feeling of being separated from whom they love, and finding out that you didn't have anyone from the beginning and being left to die before you were saved, that just brings out alot of emotions and the pain really gets to you because it's very descriptive, so overall I would rate this book 4/5 because it had a great story line, interesting characters and lots of faith.Including the exceptional writing and realistic hardships shared throughout the story.

Maryam Asif says

This book was so beautiful and it literally broke my heart. I couldn't help but cry again and again at the end. Pax's journey throughout this book made me so sad and made me think about the lives of other kids who might be suffering in the same boat. Same with little Kai. Oh please read!! It is honestly amazing.

Kata (beforewonderland) says

2.5 Meh. I truly didn't hate it, but there was no direct plot. Not to mention the NEVER ENDING end. It just kept on dragging on unnecessary points and glossing over ones that were needed. Plus the writing wasn't even good so.

Jenny Huang says

4 stars (I really liked it) — 80%

"It is wrong to kill for love, but it is not wrong to fight for love."

Awestruck. I was very pleasantly surprised. Prison Boy immediately took first place a few chapters in. I've heard quite good things about it from others, and I can't help but agree. This novel was a solemn piece of art.

Set in an unnamed town on the planet with a ruling King, the story follows two boys: Pax and Kai. Paxton had been only seven when a tiny infant had arrived at the orphanage he was housed under with five other children. The government had already been restricting the tiny house's money, and the coming of the child wasn't going to make anything better. The orphans' caretaker, Bell, however, took him in nonetheless, and Pax had developed an instant protection for him when he held the small body in his arms. Naming him Kai, he saw to his every well-being even when the building around them began to crumble.

A few years later, just as Kai's gifted abilities were finally acknowledged, the orphanage is shut down when Bell passes away. For the fear of their separation by the child protection agency, Pax rids of their identification papers and runs with Kai with a moderate amount of money previously stored. Now they were out on the streets, where dangers lurk every corner and expenses were high. When their money reduced to nothing and Pax's jobs were failing, he finally accepts a high-paying job from a rich man asking for couriers to deliver packages all over the city. And from this opportunity, life becomes somewhat stable once more. That is, until the man asked them to bring a mysterious heavy package to a waiting area in the middle of a busy area. And this, this event, changed the course of Pax's and Kai's lives forever.

My gosh. Though I hadn't cried, sadness crept over me since the beginning of the book. It was very well written; everything was beautifully descriptive. McKay had a very raw and interesting way of bringing her message across, which wasn't revealed until after the middle of the novel. The scenes after the climax (or it could've counted as a part of it) were raw, uncensored, and brutally realistic. I couldn't believe the actions committed by those people: do they really do that to children? It's ridiculously immoral.

One small happiness in here was the brotherhood between Pax and Kai. It was simply beautiful, period. The amount of things Pax had sacrificed for Kai was insurmountable, and so wonderfully touching. Everything he'd done in the novel had been for him. Prison Boy has got to be the most moving story I've read in the collection, and the one of which's message impacted me the most.

A straight four stars for everything it deserves. I'd love to find more books by McKay and experience her writing more thoroughly, for Prison Boy was very good.

Loyalty leads to bravery. It is the foundation of all that is good, kind, and true. It is fueled by integrity and love. Now I will tell you, fight to live. Fulfill your purpose. But do not fear death.

Stanley Wu says

The story starts off with Pax and Kai, two children of an orphanage that is on the verge of being shut down. The orphanage is in pretty bad shape, and barely provides enough for the children to live another day. This is how most of the society is, where the rich stay rich and the poor stay poor. The king and the upperclassmen control most of the economy, and do not care much about the poor (especially the children). One day, Pax

and Kai's caretaker dies and they decide to run off onto the streets, with no money at all. In an attempt to get a job, they meet a man named Mister who will pay them for delivering an unknown package to a location. The package was a bomb. Unknowingly, they accepted his offer and the package later on exploded. The two children survive, but are convicted of terrorism and are put in prison. Inside the prison, they were deprived of food, and constantly being tortured by the guards. Despite this, Kai and Pax try their best to persevere and find hope through fantasizing about a Goddess, who will take them around the world. As the story goes on, it only gets worse, until...

I have mixed feelings about Prison Boy, but I do enjoy it for the most part because of the message it conveys. I think that it raises awareness of the situations that have occurred not only in the past, but in present day countries. The people in poverty are not being treated fairly, and children are being taken advantage of. When the children were convicted of terrorism because of the package, they did not receive a fair trial and were simply dumped into prison. Mister, the man who gave them the package, is free to do whatever he wants and will perhaps do more things of this sort in the future. Furthermore, I think it was really easy for me to put myself into the main character's shoes, because of how he felt when he lost a loved one and what he did to try and move on. Overall, I think this story had a good plot, with very relatable and memorable characters. I would definitely recommend it to anyone who wants to read something that challenges their emotions.

Salwa Abdalla says

Prison Boy by Sharon McKay

I hated this book. I loathed what it did to me. Have any of you read it yet? Do you understand what I'm talking about? Well, here is the reason I absolutely despised reading this.

This book ripped and shredded my heart. That however is not the reason I hate it. I actually like when books make me sad as in the "I want to cry my life out" sad. I don't enjoy pain (yeah, I'm not that crazy), but I enjoy knowing the book had triggered a feeling in me. I understood the characters pain. The characters pleasure and sense of adventure. The will to learn and to explore. I was able to actually feel that. So before I go down really harsh, Kudos to Sharon McKay for writing a novel like that.

It tried to piece me back together. Me being the reader, I did not enjoy that one bit. The way the author tried to resolve the book was exactly like her ripping my arms and legs off and switching them. Incorrect and not complete. Yes, I do know there is no such thing as wrong in writing (but we still get graded XP). When I reached the end I found out how the rest of the orphans miraculously survived and got there dream jobs.

Not happening buddy.

To be completely honest (let's reassure you once again I'm not trying to harsh) this never happens in real life. The part in where people get there dream jobs. Now, before you go off on me answer this: What is a "dream" job? Is there such thing? Well, I've got the answer for you. Since we're human and have ever changing and evolving feelings, there is no such thing as a "dream" job. But, what teared me up is that there are orphans out there, being stuck in prison because some people don't want to have them. Simply because of being orphans.

So let that sit for a minute.

Minute up? Overall, I'm not really the person to go to if you want a sad book, but out of all the books so far,

this one has my vote. Now, once again no matter what I said, read the book, and comment back to my review! Let's discuss how wrong I was (or right: probably right XP).

Peace out!

Travis Owusu says

This book was a really great book about how two kids who used to be in a homeless shelter ended up on the streets and the many mistakes they had made that ended them up in jail. This book is all about how to overcome your struggles with your imagination and how even if you think your life is over things will always get better.

Barbara says

In an unnamed country, a British expatriate runs a small orphanage out of love for children and compassion. Even when officials seem determined to shut down her orphanage, Bell remains stalwart. But when she dies after making arrangements for the children under her care, the oldest child, Pax takes matters in his own hands and runs away with Kai, the youngest child. Kai had taken a battery of tests that showed how brilliant he was, and Pax knows he must go to school to reach his potential. The two end up living homeless on the streets of the city after one of Bell's neighbors steals the money she had left them. Although Pax tries hard to find work that will allow the two youngsters to survive, he makes a fatal mistake when he becomes a delivery boy for a man named Mister. After the package he was delivering explodes, Pax and Kai are scooped up by the authorities and imprisoned. Pax is consumed with worry about Kai even while enduring unbearable torture and being deprived of food and water in an attempt to get him to confess to something he didn't do and name names that he cannot name. Clearly, there is no way out of his horrible situation. While other prisoners work to help him as much as they possibly can, Pax seeks refuge in fantasizing about flying with Goddess Girl to all the seven natural wonders of the world, including the Grand Canyon and the Great Barrier Reef, featured in a book given to the children by one of Bell's friends. Although I kept hoping for a happy ending to Pax's story, I knew there would not be one. Still, the way the author concludes the story is moving. Readers will find it hard not to ponder the nature of fate or destiny and the startling love of one boy for another as well as the courage Pax must have possessed. This book, originally published in Canada, will surely make readers think hard about the odds that are stacked some individuals, and the potential that never goes realized because of poverty and lack of opportunity. It touched my heart and made me think.

Veeda says

This book lost me. The writing was choppy and it was difficult to follow the plot.

Edward Sullivan says

A powerful, challenging realistic story focusing on abandoned children victimized by war and poverty.

Peter says

I finally finished a long but interesting book by Sharon E. McKay called Prison Boy. This book made me realize how difficult life is like for poor children in developing countries where they are often treated very badly. The protagonist, Pax (who is very brave and selfless), and his companion, Kai (who is very smart), are both orphans that faced countless challenges and difficulties when their orphanage got shut down and demolished.

One thing I really liked about this book, is that the fact that it had a lot of completely unexpected plot twists, where the biggest one of all is when Pax and Kai gets arrested and tortured for terrorism which they did not intentionally commit. Each major plot twist completely changed Pax's and Kai's life in surprising ways. This is the reason why I ever finished reading this long book, as I tend to enjoy books with lots of plot twists, because in real life, unexpected things happen a lot, just like the plot twists in this book. Without them, I probably would have stopped reading it after a few pages. Another reason why I liked this book is because it made me realize how difficult life is like for poor children in developing countries, and how easy life is in developed countries like Canada compared to them.

My opinion is that, this book's plot and storyline was good, but I didn't like the length of it. I would rate this book a **3/5** because I really enjoyed the storyline, but, as said before, I didn't like the length of it.

Josie says

I do not regret reading this book but it is definitely not my favourite. If you have not completed this book then don't finish reading this review because of spoilers.

My least favourite part of the whole book is when Pax dies! He was my favourite character besides Meg and I really did not expect it. I also hated the ending. In my opinion I think one of the kids from the orphanage should have come instead of Ezat. Overall, I think that if you have already started this book to finish it, but if you haven't don't pick it up, or maybe get the copy from your library.