



Damselfly

Chandra Prasad

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Damselfly

Chandra Prasad

Damselfly Chandra Prasad

In the wake of crash-landing on a deserted tropical island, a group of private-school teens must rely on their wits and one another to survive.

Having just survived a plane crash, Samantha Mishra finds herself isolated and injured in the thick of the jungle. She has no idea where she is or where anybody else is -- she doesn't even know if anybody else is alive. Once Sam connects with her best friend, Mel, and they locate the others, they set up camp and hope for rescue. But as the days pass, the survivors, all teammates on the Drake Rosemont fencing team, realize that they're on their own -- with the exception of a mysterious presence who taunts and threatens them. When their initial attempts to escape the island fail, the teens find they need to survive more than the jungle . . . they need to survive each other.

This taut novel, with a setting evocative of *Lord of the Flies*, is by turns cinematic and intimate, and always thought-provoking.

Damselfly Details

Date : Published March 27th 2018 by Scholastic Press

ISBN : 9780545907927

Author : Chandra Prasad

Format : Hardcover 240 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Adventure, Survival, Contemporary, Fiction, Action

 [Download Damselfly ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Damselfly ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Damselfly Chandra Prasad

From Reader Review Damselfly for online ebook

Tara says

I really struggled, at first, with my opinion of Damselfly. As a former English teacher, I spent several years teaching Lord of the Flies. There were many aspects of Damselfly that were almost too close to Lord of the Flies for my comfort. However, by the end of the novel, I found that I really enjoyed the parallels and Prasad's modern take on Lord of the Flies. I love that there is potential for a sequel, and I love the way Prasad tackles race and privilege. I have already shared my opinion of Damselfly with the teachers in my building who teach Lord of the Flies, and I would definitely be using it if I were still in the classroom. It screams comparative analysis essay!

ellie says

this book was enjoyable to read - sort of creepy, but in a slow and sneaky way. it was a really good reading experience, actually, because i didn't put this book down. i just wish it fleshed out its characters and themes more - there's nothing more annoying than things that are half-assed. and a majority of this book felt half-assed.

let me use one example so i don't spoil the book: the title, Damselfly. About 80% (!) into the book, we're told by Mel and Sam that damselflies are like dragonflies, but more dangerous, and predators that are always looking for their next prey. and you get that metaphor that the author was trying to push there - that Sam, too, was becoming dangerous, except she really isn't. she doesn't stand up for the people she loves just as much as she didn't in the entire first half of the book. she doesn't take things into her own hands, be fierce, or even do anything resembling a dangerous situation. she follows mel, even till the end. See what I mean? She changed, yes, but she didn't grow. And it's frustrating because we could see that natural growth in other characters, yet our mc is still as placid and felt more like a supportive character instead of a main one.

It was still good though! The cover is beautiful. Also random side note but I loved the font in the book, it was so easy to read and also fit the book really well. The writing was entertaining, like I said, but nothing really mind blowing. I'm down to read more books by this author, but I think she can do way better than Sam. If we didn't get those flashbacks, I really think her voice would've been flat and unremarkable.

ALSO IM ANNOYED SHE AND MEL DIDNT DATE ?? their bond is so close and Sam would literally do anything for her ?? (ahem: they're gay.)

TW for mentions of self harm, domestic abuse, drug abuse and suicidal attempts. And also teenagers being really stupid, but that's to be expected lmao

?LEAH? says

3.5 Out Of 5 for this re-imagining of The Lord of the Flies

I never read The Lord of the Flies...I wasn't even sure what it was about...until I looked it up when I was

about a third of the way through this. The author has a spot at the end of the book where she talks about her inspiration for the book and as an author. She calls this a Lord of the Flies with a diverse cast of strong female characters. It does have male characters also, but they are definitely secondary to the females.

Damselfly is a story of what happens to a group of kids when they are suddenly stranded with no rules...or adult supervision. Told from the pov of a shy Indian girl, it addresses some tough subjects really well. Unfortunately, though, this felt under-developed to me and left me wanting something more from it; from the characters to general storyline. Overall, this was just an okay read for me, despite, loving the cover. It did remind me of the first few episodes of Lost (the TV show), so that was cool.

????????????????????

~~~~MY RATING~~~~

**?3.5?STARS - GRADE=B-**

????????????????????

### **~BREAKDOWN OF RATINGS~**

*Plot~ 3.7/5*

*Main Characters~ 4/5*

*Secondary Characters~ 3.5/5*

*The Feels~ 3/5*

*Pacing~ 3.5/5*

*Addictiveness~ 4/5*

*Theme or Tone~ 3.8/5*

*Flow (Writing Style)~ 4/5*

*Backdrop (World Building)~ 4/5*

*Ending~ 2.5/5 Cliffhanger~ It kind of did...*

*Book Cover~ It's very compelling, it's definitely what drew me in.*

*Narration~ ?4? for Soneela Nankani...I like her, but she could use some work on her voices.*

*Setting~ Deserted Island, somewhere between the Mainland and Hawaii.*

*Source~ Audiobook (Scribd)*

---

## **Semina says**

If you ever wondered what would happen if you put teenage girls in place of young boys in the classic “Lord of the Flies”, then “Damselfly” will definitely answer all of your questions. The narrator, Samantha wakes up on an empty island, covered in bruises and mosquito bites. She soon recalls the plane crash and starts looking for her classmates. Some of them turn up dead while others are battered but alive. They soon organize themselves but under the pressure of danger from the unknown person and the cruelty that they show to each other, they slowly shed their humanity and crumble into a state of feral animals.

The author has a good grasp of the genre and the insight into the teenage mind. The language she uses is clear and manages to slowly escalate the tone of the novel to match the terrifying circumstances that the characters find themselves in.

The one dilemma I have about the structure of the story is about Rittika, who seemed unnecessarily cruel from the beginning and didn't seem to evolve. The trope of the mean popular girl is quite common in the Young Adult genre but should have some layers or one redeeming quality. But I guess the author wanted to use her as the main sociopath and to emphasize the humanity of the rest of the characters.

My favourite character was Mel, the naturalist genius who takes a lot of notice of the world around her and probably the only voice of reason in the whole book, apart from Pablo. But after a while, she too falls victim to escapism and carelessness.

---

## **Strawberry says**

Holy shit. A miracle is happening. I am actually giving a YA book 5 stars!!! Hold on to your seats for icecaps may melt and pigs may fly!

(Actually I'd give this a 4 1/2 but I like it enough to roll it up to a 5. I have a few minor nitpicks that I'll list below under a spoiler tag. Or actually, better just spoiler the whole review right now.)

What I loved about this book (besides the fact that it was *Lord of the Flies* inspired) was that it didn't shy away from race stuff at all. Unfortunately right now we live in a climate where a certain set of YA readers are lying in wait, frothing at the mouth, just waiting to pounce on the next "problematic" thing written by the next (usually white) author. And I'm not saying they are wrong. The YA book I read before this was the revised version of *The Continent* (which was full of so many racial problems that it was pulled before it even got published) and despite revising and wasting 2 years, the author still managed to fuck it up. The problem I'm getting at is that so many authors, white, but other races too, are TERRIFIED of writing race-stuff or depicting any character as racist because readers have no chill and will interpret a character who is obviously meant to be racist for the sake of the story as THE AUTHOR being racist IRL, and that is not cool and you need to stop!!

So Chandra Prasad had zero fucks to give and dove into the racism head-first and I love her for it. We have one Indian character declaring racial supremacy of non-whites over whites, calling them the Golds vs the Pales, we have our protagonist going "But das wacist!" and Rithika, our main antagonist going basically "Yeah, so?" I love it!

I love the depictions of institutionalized racism even more. I love how, for example, Sam, the main character is half-Indian, half-white, but basically lives a white-washed suburban American life, but dresses up in full Indian costume with bindi, henna, bracelets and everything for her interview at the school where the white admissions officer is basically shitting "diversity!" out of every orifice.

I too have felt the pressure to perform an over-exaggerated version of my ethnicity to satisfy white people who need "diversity" to make themselves feel more "woke." I had a boss who wanted me to use my unpronounceable ethnic name rather than an Americanized nickname, just so our office could seem more diverse. There comes a point where even "diversity" becomes a tool of oppression. A tool the dominant race uses to force us to behave a certain way in order to get ahead. African Americans feel the pressure to "Act white" in order to get ahead, while the rest of us non-whites feel the pressure to be more ethnic. Not always, of course, only when the person with the "diversity" fetish is the one who stands in the way of us and our careers and futures. "Okay brown girl, you want a bright future? Do me a dance and sing me the song of your

people!" No. Fuck you. Fuck off.

Anyway, got that out of my system. She just really went there and I am so pleased that this book exists, just to document how I and thousands of other 1st, 2nd, 3rd gen non-white Americans feel having to perform a minstrel show or else be deemed "white-washed" and "not ethnic/diverse enough."

I liked the character of Mel too. I did feel like she possibly had some form of autism (specifically the one that used to be called Asperger's before it got merged back in and called Autism Spectrum Disorder) but it was never addressed in the book.

I also want to say, I don't know why some of the reviewers are misrepresenting this book, making it seem like it was an all-girls version of LOTF because there were boys there too. They were just more passive and sat back while two of the girls who had the strongest personalities clashed over leadership.

Few nitpicks: Nobody had cellphones? Please! teenagers are glued to their phones. It would have made more sense if they had phones but no signal or service from a tiny island in the middle of nowhere, or the phones were dead, waterlogged or otherwise fucked.

Author didn't talk much about physical changes. Sure, weight was lost, periods were had and skin was sun-burned but, for example, IRL girls would be super-self-conscious about body hair. Armpit hair growing out, leg hair, pubes, mustaches, eyebrows. Wearing the same shit every day didn't seem to be an issue. I felt like they should have at least found a suitcase or two so they could have more clothes. I think she mentioned everyone was just running around in the skimpiest things possible, but even bras and panties get gross after a day or two, especially if you are sweating and running around in nature nonstop and you have no toilet paper, you're washing your ass in the ocean. Is a thin bit of cotton meant to handle all that?

Also, the leadership dynamic. I was surprised that none of the boys even tried to challenge the girls' leadership. Okay, Mel was a nature-survivalist genius and Ritika was Literally Indian Regina George but still all the guys were too passive. Did none of them have that toxic masculinity screaming in their ears to not let a girl boss them around? I'm glad they're good guys who trust empowered women to lead, but I'd like to have seen at least one guy try it and get crushed by the girls. I also didn't buy that anyone would take Rithika seriously on the island. This isn't high school and no matter how bossy and manipulative she is, wouldn't people's survival instincts tell them not to follow a leader who has no original ideas and no viable solutions to any problems?(Except her 'final solution to their biggest problem...') I've watched many seasons of Survivor and though the charismatic cool people may get attention early on, usually the people who know WTF they are doing end up earning the trust as the episodes progress, not the other way around. So yeah, tiny details needed to be ironed out, which led to the 4.5 score, but like I said, I rounded it up because despite my opinions on how it would be IRL, she still told a great story. I wish there had been more of a conclusion, but oh well.

---

## **Issy Jackson Stone says**

Sam is a half-American Half-Indian teenaged girl. She goes to a private school in America on a scholarship where she has one close friend Mel, a crush called Chester, and where she's part of the girl's fencing team that competes around the world.

On their way to compete in Japan, on the private jet that belongs to teammates Rish and Rittika's father, the

boys' and girls' fencing teams find themselves stranded on a deserted island. This novel directly mirrors William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* in the setting, characters, and theme of discovery and maturity throughout.

## WARNING SPOILERS

The book opens with a demonstration of Sam's dependence on her best friend, Mel. Instead of worrying about her, Sam immediately searches for Mel after the plane crashes because she'll know how to look after them. Later, more comes to light about Sam's difficult home life and Mel's comparatively ideal family, backing up Sam's dependence on her friend for safety.

The other characters, too, quickly establish bold and prominent personalities. Each are brilliantly distinct and well-written:

Mel is bold and independent, unapologetic in who she is. She is the 'Ralph' of this novel- the natural leader in a new world where the others are uncertain about what to do.

Comparatively, Sam starts the novel seemingly as a 'Piggy' character because she's not popular but is accepted because of her friendship with Mel. It's interesting to have the novel from this more 'outsider' perspective, though Sam is not quite so disliked as Piggy was in *Lord of the Flies*.

Rittika is proud, beautiful, sexual, the popular girl, but depends on her twin brother. She's used to being in charge because of her status at school, much like the character Jack in Golding's novel.

Rish, Rittika's twin, is loyal to her to a fault. He's also brave and has a strong friendship with Chester. Rish and Rittika are also analogous to Golding's twin characters Samneric.

Anne Marie is quiet and meek, living almost privately from the others because she has her own issues, made worse by the crash. She's the 'Simon' character because the crash means she can't take her medication, and so she loses a sense of herself and the world around her.

The island is very similar to Golding's novel, with pink rocks littering the mountain and pigs posing both a threat and a potential for food. They also find a conch shell, followed by a small lake they dub Conch Lake where they make their camp. Conch Lake is just as important in *Damselfly* as the conch was in Golding's novel. It's possible they're even on the same island as the boys in *Lord of the Flies*, which is an incredibly interesting idea. This is supported by the parachute they find hanging from a tree, from back in WW2, like the parachuter in Golding's novel that lands on the boys' island, as well as a covered hole in the ground that could be the one Simon hides in.

One of my favourite scenes is probably the bone-setting scene. Sam doesn't pretend to be an expert in doing it, and none of the others know how to set a bone, but because she's Mel's best friend Sam is in the best position to do it. The author has clearly done a lot of research into how to set a bone, but remains aware that the characters wouldn't have as much knowledge. It's very well done.

Of course, race is a big element in *Damselfly*, because the main character Sam is half Indian half American. She doesn't feel truly 'Indian enough' for her father or 'American enough' for her mother, which causes a lost kind of feeling where she doesn't belong with either race. Later in the novel, this is juxtaposed with the idea of the white interviewer for her private school recruiting her for being a 'mixie', something that intensely frustrates Sam. I felt *Damselfly* looked at this issue in good detail and made her frustration relatable to many audiences.

Another theme is that of mental illness: that of Sam's sister, Alexa, who is burdened by the pressure and abuse of their father; and that of Sam's friend Anne Marie who needs medication to make sense of the world. Sam feels very helpless regarding both of them, and soon comes to realise she needs to look after herself too.

Throughout the book, i slowly got the feeling that Damsel fly might be set on the same island as Lord of the Flies. Finally, close to the end, the suspicion is confirmed; the Chief shows up, an old man now, and it was the most exciting moment in the novel for me. His name is never mentioned, but it's likely that it's Jack because of the belt he wears and he was the only one who would have wanted to stay on the island after the others were rescued. I have to say - I loved the idea that they ended up on the same island and even met 'the chief' from before.

The other symbolism - finally finding and using the original conch, hunting the 'enemy', descriptions of damselflies killing the weaker members, and rittika offering Sam the conch but being rejected - is brilliantly and subtly done.

## CONCLUSION

Overall this is a brilliant book. It touches on difficult themes and handles them carefully but boldly, in a way that is easy to identify with and relate to. It teases through the narrative hints about Golding's Lord of the Flies, showing how on a deserted island anything can happen and it's easy to lose the person you thought you were, only to find yourself to be someone entirely different in the end. As its main characters are teenagers, it toys with the ideas of crushes and relationships, but ultimately friendship wins out.

I chose to read Lord of the Flies immediately before reading Damsel fly. While not necessary to enjoy Damsel fly, it enhanced the experience to know Golding's novel in such detail.

I loved Damsel fly. Read it now!

---

## Ateefah Sana Ur Rab says

If I were, to be very honest, I thought when I saw the genre of this novel that it would be like other romance novels that are enthusiastically read worldwide. I had not a clue about what was actually in the book and it would be unfair to say that it didn't catch me off guard. From the very first pages, I was hooked. I would look forward to when I'd finish other work and continue reading. I was anxious to know what might happen next in the book and what will happen in the end.

The book started with the main character, Samantha Mishra, being conscious of her surroundings. We got to know that she, along with other students of Drake Rosemont High School, had been the unfortunate victims of a plane crash. Stranded in a forest, away from the luxuries available at home and with not any means of contacting someone for help, this book walks the readers through the unpredictable table-turning of fate. This book reminded me of the novel, 'Lord of the Flies' by William Goulding. Although this book had a bit of similar setting, it had its own essence and was a guide in itself. I got to know about so many things that can come in handy in grave situations when one doesn't have the regular luxuries that in cities have become basic necessities of life.

This wasn't just a story about a group of people falling into bad luck. No, this book was so much more and left me agape. How wonderful it feels when one reads a book that is so well written that time after time, the heart continues to praise the author.

As I read further and came across the first 'note', it thrilled me beyond limits. I became much more eager to know what that thick forest held, what was going to happen and what was the mystery behind the lunatic on



loose who always knew when and where to hide. The suspense in this book was just 'wow'. This book also reminded me of 'And Then There Were None' by Agatha Christie because the threats and suspense in this book looked as if the author had been friends with Agatha Christie and discussed with her, how to thrill the readers of Damsselfly. Such a wonderful book, it is!

My favourite character in this book was, Amelia Sharpe (Mel). She fascinated me at whatever she did or said. If there was someone who was not insane and did not succumb to the viciousness of the forest; it was Mel. She was brave and did not give up, for, she knew that 'Winners never give up'. Mel was a born genius and a perfect leader. Although some of her plans did not work the way they should have, she was the only person who knew and set up priorities. The way she led others and focused on what was important was absolutely marvellous. Mel's character was inspiring and gives the message that in the gravest situations; one must keep calm and use his/her brain to figure out what needs to be done.

Samantha Mishra was my second favourite character and I liked how she chose to stay with Mel through everything. She wasn't flawless but she did stand with her best friend in the end and I think, that is what matters the most. Reading about her life at home, though, was something really sad. I don't want to go deeper and spoil it for new readers so, I'll just say, 'Life is life and that's how it is'.

Now, it's time for the character that I hated the most since the beginning of the book. Rittika Singh, she was just not someone I could like, at any point in the book from start to the very end. Her manipulation skills were praiseworthy, though. Reading about her, I had this feeling that wouldn't go away. An eerie feeling that she wasn't what she appeared to be and that all her glory was nothing but a facade; built especially to hide something. What it was, can be found out by reading the book.

Anne Marie was someone I could sympathize with. She was a good person but then again, life is messed up and it mostly messes with the good ones with pure souls. I liked Anne Marie because of that and because she was the first one to realize the true identity of the 'beast'.

I want all readers to take a minute or two and appreciate the writing style and vocabulary in this book. Seldom do I come across books that are written so well with a good vocabulary. I loved this book!

---

## **Mogsy (MMOGC) says**

3.5 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <https://bibliosanctum.com/2018/07/01/...>

Aptly described as a modern Lord of the Flies, Chandra Prasad's Damsselfly follows a group of prep school teens as they try to survive after the private jet carrying their fencing team crashes onto a deserted tropical island. The story is told through the eyes of Samantha Mishra, an unassuming and unassertive girl who often finds herself overshadowed by her more confident and socially extroverted classmates. Sam doesn't always feel accepted by the others, and in fact, she only has one real friend, the eccentric but extraordinarily gifted Mel Sharpe, who is in many ways as much of an outcast as our protagonist.

After surviving the crash, Sam manages to locate Mel in the jungle, and the two of them quickly set out to gather up as many of the others who made it out alive. The group then decides to establish a base camp near a fresh source of water, and Mel, applying her vast knowledge and experience, begins directing everyone on how to gather food, construct a shelter, and provide protection while waiting for help. But then days go by with no sign of rescue. Worse, strange and unexplainable things start happening around the island, leading our survivors to think they might not be as alone as they first thought. As fears and pressures continue to

mount, bitter rivalries and disagreements begin tearing the group apart. Before long, Sam finds herself caught in the middle of a dangerous power struggle, torn between loyalty to her best friend and a desire to fit in.

Not unlike William Golding's classic that no doubt provided a bulk of the inspiration, *Damselfly* takes a look at survival and the effects of it on the basic state of human nature. Namely, when Sam and her classmates find themselves marooned on deserted island with no adults and no rules, a new form of tribalism eventually emerges to fill that void. Over time, the cutthroat dynamics at their elite high school also becomes adopted as the status quo on the island, with rich, beautiful, and popular Rithika heading up her own little circle of supporters, while Mel winds up being the de facto leader to a second group of outcasts consisting of Sam and all the others. In a way, this makes the novel's perspective all the more cynical and disturbing, because it speaks to the inevitability of how people acting from fear will always end up creating the very reality they fear the most. Ultimately, this group of modern teens—privileged, well-educated, diverse, and made up of both boys and girls—still failed to prevent themselves from devolving into society of cruelty and savagery.

In fact, the modern setting somehow makes this situation even worse. Teens today face a myriad of issues including body image, peer and family pressure, relationships, and social acceptance. *Damselfly* explores many of these themes, further speculating on how they might play out in this deserted island scenario. Another factor that adds a layer to this situation is racism. I really appreciated how the author tackled this subject candidly and doesn't gloss over the fact that it is a universal problem. Racial division is one of the first methods Rithika uses in an attempt to sway Sam to her side, using their shared Indian heritage to try and convince her that non-whites (the "Golds") are superior to whites (the "Pales"). Our protagonist is obviously appalled by this, though later on, she also reflects upon how society has a way of fetishizing race and minorities, thinking back to her school admissions interview and how the administrators reacted with glee to her mixed-race heritage, seeing her only as a way to increase their diversity quotas. Rarely do you see topics like these addressed in such an open and unflinching manner, and I loved that about this book.

There's also something deliciously creepy about the story. While it contains no overt fantasy element, plenty of bizarre occurrences take place to make you think there might be some weird shenanigans afoot, such as the large prints left in the sand by some unidentifiable bipedal creature, or the presence of birds on the island that are thought to be extinct. In fact, what bothered me the most about this book was the lack of answers, and I was also extremely unhappy with the ending, which left things hanging on a pretty big and annoying cliffhanger.

That said though, I wouldn't hesitate to read the sequel if given the opportunity. I like all the groundwork that has been established here, and I'm enjoying the characters a lot. There's so much more room for Sam to grow, and I'm curious to see how she and Mel will fare on the next stage of their journey and what that would mean for their war with Rithika. Despite the frustrating ending, I also can't deny that I really, really, desperately want to find out what happens next. I'm crossing my fingers that the next book will bring some clarity and resolutions to all the mystery.

---

## **Bolden James says**

Got my hands on an advance copy. So glad I did. Loved this book for multiple reasons.

First, it's a fast and furious adventure story. I could not put it down. I kept wanting to read more and more: what will they do next, how will this compare to the boy's actions in a similar situation....Oh, what a book!

Second, there are some very memorable characters, notably the two best friends: the narrator, Samantha, and awkward, tough, wildly inventive, McGyver-like Mel (short for Amelia).

Third, I can count on one hand the books I've read that have ALL different background characters—and *Damselfly* is one. This novel truly and naturally captures America's true population and class diversity, but doesn't wallop you over the head with this fact. Rather, the differences are seamlessly woven in.

This is a great book for teens, and for informed adult readers, too. I could also see it used in middle school/high school English classes that teach *Lord of the Flies* because it could easily be compared to/contrasted with that classic, though it has its own original narrative. Kudos to the author.

---

## **RaiseThemRighteous says**

A few kids. A crash landing. An island that may or may not be inhabited (or possessed). It's the stuff of a story we don't seem able to stop telling.

William Golding's 1954 version, *Lord of the Flies*, lives on in our collective imagination, resurfacing in songs by Iron Maiden and on random television shows like *The Simpsons*. Golding's take was inspired by *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean*, an 1858 book by R. M. Ballantyne. In Ballantyne's version the kids who crash on the island are moralistic cherubs with a penchant for converting cannibalistic barbarians (yes, it is racist). Golding wasn't buying the moral simplicity proffered by Ballantyne and created a dystopian parody emphasizing human nature as well as the relationship between humans and nature.

In 2018, Chandra Prasad took a stab at it. Prasad's version, *Damselfly*, introduces gender, race, ability, and class into the basic plot Golding develops in *Lord of the Flies*, and, like Ballantyne and Golding, Prasad's book is both a product and critique of its times, albeit in the case of Ballantyne, an unintended critique.

The story is told from the point-of-view of Samantha (Sam) Mishra, a biracial Indian and white teenage girl who lacks self-confidence and doesn't quite fit in with her wealthy boarding school companions because of her class background. Samantha is best friends with the super smart Mel, a white girl who doesn't fit in with the boarding school crowd either, but unlike Sam, Mel doesn't care.

The very wealthy, very beautiful, very assertive Rittika, who is Indian, creates a skin-tone based dichotomy to explain the suitability of her peers for life on the island: "Golds" vs. "Pales". According to Rittika, Golds are survivors, whereas Pales are not physically capable of adjusting to life under the sweltering sun.

Sam never feels Indian enough because of her mixed heritage, and she clamors for Rittika's acceptance even when it means betraying her best friend.

Along with race, ability is addressed. First, in Sam's memories of her sister who has an eating disorder, and second, through the inclusion of a character, Anne Marie, who needs medicine and whose mental health suffers as a result of not being able to access it on the island. Anne Marie is very similar to Golding's Piggy, who is hyper-vulnerable in Golding's version of the tale as a result of a visual impairment that requires him to wear glasses.

Other minor characters include: 1) Rittika's twin brother, who is comfortable living in her shadow, 2) Betty, who is not a big idea person, but executes other people's plans brilliantly, 3) Pablo, an environmentalist who

believes they have been gifted with a pristine island and should be its custodians, and 4) the likable part-Native American Chester, who could be good, but he is depicted as smitten with the book's beauty and dumb because of it.

I don't want to give away too much of the plot, because *Damselfly* is a page turner!

Prasad's fast-paced plot and engaging depictions of antagonistic human relationships make for an enjoyable read. There is a lot to talk about in the book, and a lot to speculate. It would pair wonderfully with Golding's text in a high school or college literature classroom. It's a fascinating parallel or linked text with enough similarities and differences to encourage thoughtful analysis. In fact, there are lots of materials, including discussion questions, available for teachers.

All this isn't to say the text isn't without weaknesses. The minor characters are not well developed, this is likely because of the first-person narrative style Prasad uses. A fair amount of action seems unmotivated because the reader doesn't have access to the motivation. The ending was also a tad disappointing, although it didn't detract much from the overall book, which is very good. (I won't get into more detail to avoid spoilers). I recommend the book, minor shortcomings and all!

I received a review copy from the author.

---

### **Jamal Lewis says**

This first-person tale is told through the lens of Samantha, who wakes up on an empty island. She is bruised and has been bitten by insects, but that's the least of her worries. She all alone, or so she thinks, as she stumbles across the dead bodies of her classmates, also victims of a plane crash. She soon finds other plane riders that are alive, albeit in bad shape. They want off the island, but that's no easy feat, as there is a protagonist looking to thwart that. In the blink of an eye, they transform and band together to get things done.

This is a YA novel that has the tone and aura of one to a T, thanks to the author's command of teenager-talk.

Definitely, recommend this for YA fans.

---

### **Kelly says**

Modern "Lord of the Flies" this is not. Definitely one of the dumber teen books I've read. Looking for an exciting story of survival? Keep looking, because this bore of a book won't cut it.

---

### **Laura says**

I was annoyed that it was basically a remake of a classic, "Lord of the Flies," down to the encounter with a wild pig and the brutal death of one of their own. No rescue here though. Which was fine - I didn't mind the ambiguous ending. I have seen it presented as a bunch of teenage girls but that isn't totally true, although they do drive the story and backstory. It also seemed like Prasad needed to do a bit more research. About half

way through the main character notes the long toe nails of Anne Marie. Really? They haven't been there all that long - toe nails grow very slowly and since their diet is mostly conch meat and bananas I doubt that is a recipe for accelerated growth. Other questionable aspects... 3rd degree burns? Compound fracture? poison on the conch? (she carried the syringe in her sock? on a tropical island? after diving to get the conch? )

I was also annoyed at how the back story of Sam was injected into the beginning. I kept thinking is there anything this book doesn't touch on? In terms of the racism card, I did not get a good sense that all the people that were on the Gold team were Gold (Chester? Betty?) Maybe just pick a few issues to tackle. It is too short and too undeveloped to drop in mental illness, racism, classism, sex, bullying...

I suggest skipping it.

---

### **Jennifer says**

I enjoyed "Lord of the Flies" so much, I thought I'd like this one, and I was right. Kept me in suspense from the very beginning until the end, I was just left hanging though with that ending.

---

### **Kelley Wood says**

Modern day Lord of the Flies meets Seneca Crane behind the creation of the island. So glad I got this ARC. Quick read, fast-paced, good characters. I need more please Ms. Prasad.

---