



In the Light of You

Nathan Singer

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Mikal Fanon didn't join up so he could hurt people. Sherry Nicolas didn't mean to fall in love. Niani Shange didn't want to inspire any violence. Jack Curry didn't want to love someone who didn't love him back. Richard Lovecraft didn't intend to be made a fool. Hatred, seething, raw, unblinking hatred can be as inspiring as love. And when Mikal gets caught up in a rally, part of a group of new friends with whom he finally feels he can belong, he doesn't really question the message. He doesn't stop to think about the meaning of the crowd's chanting. He's just happy to be a part of it a part of something and he's basking in the glow of the man on the podium. A man who confidently knows himself. A man who can control a crowd. A man who thinks being white makes him superior. And Mikal's not the only one attracted to Richard Lovecraft's light. But Richard's isn't the only light around and when attractions are pulled in two different directions, a violent tear threatens everyone's world.

In the Light of You Details

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Author : Nathan Singer

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Rory Costello says

I was intrigued when I read about the subject of this book, and Singer's portrait was incisive, with hard-hitting insights on the "scene." It's a portrait of a facet of America of which most people will be at best vaguely aware. I was somewhat surprised (and not entirely pleased) with the shift in tone toward the end, but this was still a very memorable story.

Lauren says

An amazing story. I bought this as an ebook because it was on sale and I thought it seemed interesting. It was much deeper than I expected and a fascinating read (I finished it in a few days, which is a feat for me as I tend to be a slow reader). Well written with a few surprising twists, which is one reason why I don't want to say too much about the plot or characters. A book like this just needs to be experienced. My only gripe is the amount of typos in the middle of the book, but those were easy enough to get through. It's not an exposé on Aryan gangs, but rather a look at one man's journey to adulthood via the gang. And it proves to be a dark and interesting journey.

Angélique (Angel) says

Intense. Surprising at times. I read through it faster than I even realized. The emotions were so...tangible that I couldn't help but be drawn in. Great for psycho-analyzers like myself. Plus the ending was good.

Bill says

Nathan continues to amaze with his talent and incredible insight. His compassion and empathy are so real and contagious, I always find myself gaining a new understanding of how people can embrace viewpoints and ideologies which have previously been incomprehensible to me. And this talent is presented through a remarkable imagination and gift for storytelling! I find myself wondering whether Nathan's characters are actually people he has known, composites of people he has known, or completely imagined, but it doesn't really matter in the end. The point is that they are fully realized and totally believable, and I care about them all. I would have never imagined being capable of feeling empathy for a group of Neo-Nazi skins, but it happened! This was not always an easy book for me to read because of very graphic scenes of violence, but watching these characters grow and become aware of the effects of their brutal actions made it quite worth the effort.

Eric Beebe says

Nathan Singer has a way with words and it can get under your skin. In the Light of You is one of the rare

books that made me squirm with discomfort and joy at the same time. Quite the accomplishment if you ask me.

Imagine if you grew up a tough urban neighborhood and find yourself a member of a gang of neo-Nazi skinheads. Hell, not just a member, but the BEST FRIEND of the leader. Morally ambiguity abounds as the kid from the hood has to decide if he's loyal to his home or his new friends.

This book is intense and not for all readers. If you racial issues make you uncomfortable, stay clear. If you like to be challenged and are not afraid to examine your own deeply held beliefs, this is for you.

Jen Angel says

The story of a kid that gets drawn in and wrapped up in white-power skinhead culture when he is 17 years old. Well written. It's about white-power skinhead culture, and I wish it delved more into politics and how people can get wrapped up in it, though it kind of does that by showing one person's story. I wonder how many people will be interested in this? Or how believable it will seem to people who have had no exposure to skinhead culture (like, in some places was enough information given?)? Overall an interesting read and I'd pick up something else from this author.

Pyari says

It was a good book about finding yourself, & how sometimes in the quest to find your own identity, you get sucked up by what you think you want to be. It's about outgrowing your friends & realizing that not all of you go in the same direction, & that the person you turn into can be very different than the person you started off being.

Jessica says

This book shows the journey of a teenage boy trying to find where he belongs. The story is chilling and raw. The dialog may be offensive to some, but helps one feel what his environment was like. His recollection of how he lived his life is frightening and makes one think about how scary the world can be. The end of the book gives one hope with the boy grown into a man and learning how to make sense of his life.

Jolie says

I really liked this book. It was a fascinating look into the life of a teenager who joined a Neo Nazi group and what transpired the year that he was in there. I was surprised at the last couple of chapters (not giving a spoiler here...read the book...lol).

Patricia says

Mikal Fanon is a 16 year old boy who feels he doesn't fit in anyplace until he meets Richard Lovecraft. Richard is the leader of a gang of Neo-Nazi skinheads and Mikal soon joins the group. Mikal finally feels as though he fits in someplace. He becomes very close to Richard's girl friend, Sherry Nicholas. The two young people are both fascinated by Niani Shange a beautiful intelligent black activist on the local campus.

The book points out many of the problems young people are dealing with in today's world. Since joining Richard's group Mikal has committed acts of violence that he would have never dreamed of doing prior to becoming a group member.

This is a peek into a world foreign to a lot of people and a real eye-opener. Although a difficult book to read it is also a difficult book to put down. Some of the group survive and go on to lead productive lives but the memory of the group and the violence will always lurk someplace in their mind.

Neal says

This book is well written and approaches the subject of racism and the neo-nazi movement in a much different way than most books. Once you start reading it, you can't stop. I read this book in it's entirety on a Sunday. I highly recommend this book.

Leah says

I bought this at a library book sale on a whim but I figured for \$2.00 I couldn't really lose. It took me a little while to get into it because it was so intense, fast-paced and raw. That ended up being what I loved most about the book. I thought it was a good look into how young people are recruited into hate groups, why they stay and how they get out (or don't).

Mindi says

Not sure why I even bothered to finish this book. The main character reminded me of Holden Caulfield. I hate Holden Caulfield.

J.D. says

A brutal, unflinching look at America's racist subculture, replete with sex, violence and jagged-edged punk rock. Nathan Singer does more than narrate the story of the rootless, disaffected kids drawn into the hate: he lets you hear the siren song that lures them to their doom.

Yeah, I blurbed it, and I meant every word.

Andrew says

In this, his third novel, Singer shows that he's not afraid to get his hands dirty to prove a point. The reader is forced into the head of an Aryan Warrior, a 17-year-old neo-nazi skinhead who falls in with an "army" of others like him. It is at times very difficult to read, as Singer pulls no punches on the language of hate, or on the details of violence. Above all, though, this book terrified me as I found myself identifying and sympathizing with some of the most abhorrently hateful characters in literature. The novel really delves into the thoughts and histories of these people, giving insight into how someone could fall into such a terrible situation.

Sonia says

Wow, what a powerful story. I got this book as a free kindle book, so I wasn't entirely sure what I was getting myself into when I started reading it.

I couldn't put it down.

It disturbed me, it enraged me, it made me uncomfortable, it challenged me, it nauseated me...in short, it did all the things reading a book from the perspective of a "skin-head racialist" should do. The fact that this particular skin-head was a 16 year old child only made it more challenging to read. You couldn't help but feel sorry for the kid at the same time as you couldn't help being disgusted by him and his friends.

I wanted to put it down, I wanted to stop reading it, I wanted to not be a part of this world anymore...but I had to see it through, I had to hope for redemption, for something that would make it all worth something...(coincidentally, all of the things the protagonist himself was searching for).

In the end, I'm glad I stuck with it, it is a well written, thought provoking, incendiary, and ultimately, captivating coming of age tale, set in a world most of us would rather pretend does not exist...

Melissa Kyeyune says

Well, well, well.

Neo-nazis. White Power. 'Taking back the land'. Things that will make your eyes widen. I am writing this review from the Black side of things. (Please laugh). Basically, Mikal Fanon (inspired by the Black post-colonial, and oft-quoted Frantz Fanon? No? Okay.) is a young, marginalized and angry white guy who longs to fit in... somewhere. Fitting in is difficult because his poor family lives in the ghetto and he is surrounded by Black folks who are either violent and abusive towards him , or just don't understand.

All of this changes when he meets two members of a local Neo-Nazi gang. They take him under his wing, teach him to retort verbal attacks from Blacks (with equally disgusting racial remarks) and offer him solace from all that is wrong in his world. Lucky enough, this gang even has some hot 'white power' chicks so you could say Mikal's social and sexual awakening occurs once he joins this White Power brotherhood.

This 'racialist' (author's words) brotherhood is different because it despises any affiliation or comparison to the KKK, and they believe Hitler's ideologies stem from the simple fact that he wanted people to live in peace, away from people different from them. Segregation is a necessary evil that becomes less evil once you think about its benefits. Less 'bastard' mixed children, less conflict, less political correctness, and less accommodation of intrusive cultures.

Mikal is in moral Heaven. He is in a White Power gang not because he is evil and hates Blacks, but because he wants to help Blacks and Whites understand the benefits of segregation. A better life for all.

This perfect racialist utopia that Mikal has convinced himself of, is perfectly foiled when he lays his eyes on Niani Shingai, a local Black activist that everyone loves. He develops a very contradicting obsession with her and longs for her to acknowledge. When she finally does... let's just say, he blows it, as guys often do with their untouchable crushes.

I am not sure whether I would classify this as a novel condemning racism, a novel just placing us in the mind of a racist without condemning him as wrong(therefore eerie)... or whether it's a sad coming-of-age novel that shows us the conflicting attitudes of a young, racist teenage boy in love with a Black girl. I feel as if the novel tries to justify racial feelings as normal and as being a reaction to oppression or perceived oppression.

I feel the Black love interest was used to show the ludicrousness of harboring racial ideologies. They limit our 'acting upon' natural attractions to people of other races.

Overall, while I cringed at the racist references to Blacks (and Black women) in this book, I also understood that I would probably hear worse things directed at me, if I were, say, a detective locked in a room, interrogating a neo-nazi.

Read this book not for the glee or the romance (which is unrequited by the Black girl), but for the reality of how young neo-nazis justify their beliefs. You will come away either uncomfortable and angry that these thoughts even exist, or like me, you will appreciate the excellent writing, told from a disturbing first person perspective.

Colleen says

This book was amazing. It took me to a different place, but it was a place I didn't want to be. The way kids

were polarized into their groups seemed very honest. The brutality that takes place within the group is beyond comprehension for me, but I don't doubt it. It's a subject everyone should understand but it's not a book for everyone, which is the only reason I gave it 4 instead of five stars. I found the ending to be honest and hopeful and it cleansed my mental palette of the bitterness from what came before.

Jordaline Vulva says

This book surprised me. I expected it to be up front and in my face with the gritty, dirty parts of people but instead it was subtle. Almost beautiful how Mr singer crafted these characters. They have depth, and weren't cookie cutter. Yes, most of the characters were horrible, racist, sexist and fascist but it was honest. They felt the terrible hatred because that's what they were taught, or it was the only way to belong. This book had disgusting displays of what humans can and will do and I in no way condone or encourage nazis, racists, gangs, sexism, or any kind of discrimination. In the light of you isn't so much about those things though, I thought it was more a book about self discovery and forgiveness and the power of love, even if it be destructive. If you aren't one for vulgarity or taboo subjects, this isn't for you.

Stephanie says

A dark and desperate coming of age tale, the subject matter and language is not for the easily offended but also is incredibly necessary to create the provocative characters that bounce effortlessly between despicable and sympathetic. The reader is likely to squirm uncomfortably as you realize how common and familiar evil can be; how easily understandable actions can be even as we deem them unjustifiable...we all want to belong...

3 stars for writing and minor editing mistakes, 4 stars for character development and philosophical exploration.
