

Review of *Captives*, from VOYA's June 2013 issue:

3Q 4P S

Williamson, Jill. **Captives: The Safe Lands, Book 1**. Zondervan, 2013. 304p. \$9.99 trade. 978-0310724223.

When eighteen-year-old Levi responds to a call to buy ammunition, he does not realize it is a ploy to distract him while his community of Glenrock is attacked, or that his brother, Omar, is the one behind the betrayal. Levi returns to find most of the residents slaughtered and all the young women and children missing. As one of the Outsiders, Levi lives beyond the boundaries of the Safe Lands, where the lifestyle is primitive but wholesome. The Nationals live within the Safe Lands's walls in opulent splendor but riddled with "thin plague," which makes them unable to conceive and deliver babies. In order to survive, the Nationals begin procuring uninfected young women from among the Outsiders to be surrogate mothers. Unable to elicit help from neighboring communities, Levi sets out to rescue the women of Glenrock. He befriends members of the resistance who help him organize an escape plan but many captives remain prisoners at the end of the book, as Levi and his friend, Mason, continue to work toward the villagers' release.

Details of life in the Safe Lands are reminiscent of the *Hunger Games*, where beauty is artificially enhanced and broadcasts televise the pregnancy and delivery of the "Queens" to the populace. Unfortunately, the beginning of the story drags and the dialogue seems stilted and awkward; bonding with the characters is difficult. After the massacre at Glenrock, the action accelerates, the characters develop, and the book is hard to put down. While Christian values drive this fantasy, they do not permeate or overpower the narrative, allowing it to appeal to broad group of fantasy enthusiasts.—Nancy Wallace.

In a post-apocalyptic world filled with a walled city called the Safe Lands and outskirting villages, three brothers must choose their own destinies as they each journey on separate paths. Levi sets out to save his village and his true love. Omar is ready to give up his family for the power of the "Safe Lands." Mason is the boy with brains who might be able to save them all from the virus that plagues the Safe Lands. This book is no ordinary dystopian society book; it is full of intrigue and suspense. Readers will have a hard time putting it down. Readers will be hungry for more. 4Q, 4P.—Hannah Forrester, *Teen Reviewer*.