



The Stone Gate

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A strange rock in the forest. A mysterious crystal. A full moon. An ancient secret. How do you find your way home when you've never left? Twins Jack and Kaya live in a small seaside town in Australia. When they see a dazzling white light shining from a giant rock in the woods near their home, it takes them on an adventure to a place both familiar and yet like nowhere they know. But where exactly are they? And can they find their way back in time? The Stone Gate is an exciting and fast-paced action adventure that brings climate change / global warming vividly to life for young adult readers.

The Stone Gate Details

Date : Published August 11th 2014 by Stebbing Lane Press (first published August 4th 2014)

ISBN :

Author : Mark Mann

Format : Paperback 254 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Science Fiction, Dystopia

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From Reader Review The Stone Gate for online ebook

RitaSkeeter says

I love cli-fi. It scares the pants off me because it buys into my deepest fears, but most cli-fi also has messages of hope. Given my deep seated anxieties around what climate change will mean for children's, and my children's children's futures, that message of hope is one I need to hear. Particularly given I'm blessed with a Prime Minister who believes climate change is "utter crap" (that's a real quote, by the way), and is steadily undoing all progress made by the previous government. Anyway, enough of my politics.

This book has a wonderful concept. Two kids come across a portal that takes them into three alternate realities. The first being a reality where indigenous Australians are living traditional lifestyles, and maintain their deep connection to the land. In the second, our main characters are transported to a dystopian, but likely realistic, vision of what our future will be should immediate action on climate change not be taken. The third and final alternate reality is a utopian vision of what society could be like if immediate action is taken to address climate change. The author is realistic in this vision; life as we know it will have to change. But for the things we lose, he envisages a society that - for me anyway - is very appealing. There is less waste, less plastic fantastic, more connection, more thoughtfulness. Woven through each of these are threads of Aboriginal Dreamtime.

This is a book aimed at a younger YA audience. My kiddiwinks are years away from being old enough to read it. I hope by the time they do read it, the messages it contains are no longer needed because we are on the road as a nation, as a planet, to living more sustainably.

Laura says

Had trouble putting it down

I enjoyed reading this book. The relationship between the siblings was better than other books, and made the story easier to read than ones with bickering brother and sister.

Phrynne says

Nice cover and interesting premise but I felt this was aimed squarely at very young adults, maybe 13 or 14 years old. For the adult reader there was a certain naivety in the writing style and a much too obvious emphasis on the issues of climate change. I don't mind reading about it but I prefer a more subtle approach. For the young teenage reader this book would be perfect. There is plenty of action and drama but nothing ever gets too scary and there is certainly a lot of information about what may happen to our world if we do not care for it properly. Three stars for me - it probably would have been four if I was still fourteen years old.

Ami says

I got this for free for an honest review, and boy am I glad I read it. This story is about two young Aussies, Kaya and Jack, who go through a stone portal in their town of Bayton. They end up traveling to different Dreamings, alternate realities parallel in time. In each reality, or Dreaming, another aspect of climate change and environmental responsibility and consequence is examined. We see a society in which the Aboriginal people live completely off and in equilibrium with the land. We see another in which the people are living in a real honest dystopian society that is probably our future. The third is really an ideal society where humans are living green and lean. It's so desirable as to actually be sexy. Yeah, sexy sustainability! Alluring solar wind and wave energy. Hey good looking!

The writing is easy on the eyes and light. Sometimes I wish the author would push more actually, but this is an excellent entry point. It's like Gary Paulsen and Cory Doctorow sat down with Al Gore and made a light book for educational purposes. To that same thought, I would suggest this text used in academia for young people.

I learned a lot about Aboriginals, and Australia that I didn't know. The characters were pleasant and intelligent youngsters. Those they encountered were also interesting. My favorite section of the book, the dystopia, also featured my favorite characters, Noah and Sara, who were struggling to survive. That whole section really hit me more than I expected. It maddening to see what's happening and yet we don't do anything about it.

This is a fast read, and it's good for an enlightening read.

Lynxie says

The Stone Gate is very firmly set in the Young Adult adventure arena. It is, however also more than an exciting book for young adults. It is a look at Global Warming and what we, as a collective planet, are going to do about it.

For this reason, I have marked it down one star, because I felt that at times the constant discussion about what had been done to correct (or not) the path forward for humanity, came across a little like preaching. Now, this isn't to say that the information and the message in this book is not valid. It is! But I would have preferred a little less 'environmental preaching' and more adventure. This is a personal preference thing, and I feel that young adults will probably not feel this way.

That little issue aside, I did enjoy the adventure that Kaya and Jack experienced. I think my favourite was Beth's world, but I liked how the rich aboriginal history was brought into the story. For me, that really was a work of genius.

The pace of the book is spot on for younger readers, there is constant action and information being provided and it will keep those with shorter attention spans interested because of this. The tone is conversational and light with alternating POV chapters from Kaya and Jack. I liked this format because it allowed for a bit broader a scope when trying to cover all the related topics as the kids went through their adventure.

This also posed some interesting challenges, in terms of how it was written. I didn't really enjoy the first person present tense writing style, but I think I get where Mark was trying to go with it, alas I don't think the choice lived up to its reputation. Using the first person present tense POV, should have given more insight into the characters (especially when they had interchanging chapters to voice their own personalities).

Unfortunately, Kaya and Jack fell quite flat for me. Aside from having some pretty strong stereo-types, they didn't seem all that developed.

Kaya was a nature, environmental guru. She watches shows like Bear Grylls and is in tune with nature. Where as Jack is a typical computer nerd-type of character. There is a couple of flashes of personality throughout the book, but it's limited to specific events that the protagonists find themselves and don't come through at other times.

All of that aside, I still enjoyed the book. It was a fast read and entertaining if you can look past the preaching about climate change.

I predict this should be suitable for ages 13 and up, however there are a couple of assaults/sexual references at the start that may cause distress to those sensitive to that type of thing.

Brenda says

Twins Kaya and Jack lived in a small Australian coastal town called Baytown; surrounded by Bay Beach to the east and a forest of thick trees and sandstone cliffs to the west they loved their home town. The night of the full moon when friends Jayden and Debbie along with Kaya and Jack ventured up to the High Plateau was like any other – it was a favourite haunt of the local teens, with the Stone Gate just a strange rock with an opening in the middle. But that night something very weird was happening; the moon seemed to be filling the stone gate with brightness...

As Jack stepped forward to check it out, he grabbed Kaya's hand; then after a blinding white flash and a strange roaring which filled their ears it was quiet again – what had happened? As they looked around everything seemed the same – the Stone Gate was still there in the clearing – but where were Debbie and Jayden? As they began to explore they realized that the countryside of their home was much the same, but very different. Where was the usual rubbish? Where was the graffiti which was always around? And where was Baytown?

Kaya and Jack's adventures while they tried to work out where they were and to find food to survive became stranger and more vivid. Their eventual meeting with Aboriginal leader Billy of the Dunjini tribe and subsequent events which continued were fascinating but surreal. But more was to follow. Would Kaya and Jack ever find their way back home? And what was happening to Kaya?

What a brilliant book! I was caught up in the adventures of Kaya and Jack right from the very beginning – the imagination of Aussie author Mark Mann is fantastic. The incorporation of global warming in a fictional way and for a young adult audience is extremely well done and I also enjoyed the author's notes at the end of the book. With full on action and pace that is electric, I have absolutely no hesitation in recommending *The Stone Gate* highly, and will be watching for more from this author.

Amie's Book Reviews says

THE STONE GATE by Mark Mann

Set in the fictional seaside town of Baytown, Australia, 16 year old Kaya and her twin brother, Jack are exploring a rock formation called The Stone Gate on the night of the full moon when they are entranced by a blinding, white light.

Thinking he is being silly, Jack grabs Kaya's hand and pulls her into the light. What happens next stuns both of them.

When they open their eyes they realize something has changed. Baytown is gone. Looking around they realize there are no lights and the houses and hotel they are used to seeing simply do not exist anymore.

As they spend more time in their new surroundings they begin to realize that they may be trapped in this alternate reality forever.

I don't want to ruin the story by giving too much away, but I will say that Jack and Kaya get a chance to view their hometown as it might have been, as it is and how it might end up if it isn't properly cared for.

The author has a great eye for adventure and mixes in a lesson about global warming and being a proper steward to our planet without it coming across as preachy.

The fact that this book is geared towards young adults should not dissuade older readers. There is enough detail, action and adventure to interest readers of any age group. I do, however, recommend this book for ages 13 and up based on some violent and scary scenes that might not be appropriate for younger children. There is also one section that has some sexual innuendo that would not be appropriate for young children.

I rate this book as 4 out of 5 stars in the young adult fiction category.

* I received a free ebook copy of this book in exchange for a fair and honest review. The above review is my unbiased opinion of 'The Stone Gate'.

Christian West says

Interesting book about a pair of twins who go into alternate realities through a stone gate. The book utilises some Indigenous Australian stories as the basis for the alternate reality gateway which didn't sit too well with me, and it was a tad preachy about climate change, but it had wonderful pacing and was a great story. I'd recommend this for early teens, the writing is a bit too juvenile for older ones.

Susan says

I received this book in exchange for an honest review.

Australian siblings Jack and Kaya accidentally travel back in time by stepping into a stone portal that is

active only during the full moon. The book is an account of their effort to get back home, which, as it turns out, isn't so easy to do! Along the way they, they experience what their hometown was like in the past and how it will be in the future. Mann states in a epilogue that he wrote this book to educate people about global warming through a story rather than through a list of facts.

Although the author has an easy-going writing style, the first part of the story was a bit sketchy. And one of the chapters has some brutal attacks and sexual suggestiveness that might not be appropriate for younger kids. But the adventure at the end of the book will keep you on the edge of your seat!

Deborah says

A really good book. I love the relationship between the brother and sister. I enjoyed the traveling through different realities and how the issue of global warming was addressed without being preachy. There were some solid ideas on that problem that could be implemented in our world not just in the pages of a book. Kudos on those ideas and for how the issue was woven into the story so easily. I really like the idea of alternate realities and how they differ from our own. It's an intriguing concept. Really solid read and wonderfully written.

Veronica ?? says

When the coolest guy in Baytown calls Kaya and asks if she wants to go to the Castle to watch the full moon, no-one could have possibly imagined that a sequence of events would cause Kaya and her brother, Jack, to be transported to another realm. How will they return home when they don't really know how they got there?

This YA fantasy, with a climate change theme, pulled me in. It was not preachy or full of scientific facts. What it was full of was fantastic visual language, real people and suspense.

At the start of the novel I did think that Jack's character was portrayed as being too weak, even Kaya once calling him "little Jack". I was really hoping that Jack would develop and do something amazing, I wasn't disappointed.

The different realms were very interesting and after the first realm I was intrigued to see where the portal would take them next, what scrapes Kaya and Jack would get into and who would help them on their quest to return home.

Written for the young adult/teen market, a couple of violent scenes may exclude it from younger readers although it holds a message for readers of all ages.

Full of adventure, action and real suspense that had me holding my breath at times!

I'm now left wondering, did Jack and Kaya continue on with their lives as if nothing happened or did they become climate change advocates determined to campaign for change around the world.

Tracie Lark says

Author Mark Mann plays with time and place in his book *The Stone Gate*, one constant small town,

Baytown, is thrown through the ropes of time forcing an underlying topic of climate change as a main theme.

The Stone Gate represents an opening to other parallel worlds, told in a folk tale style with three stages, not unlike the tale of the Christmas past, future and presents but in this story, the lesson is an environmental one.

The book begins with twin siblings Kaya and Jack meeting two friends to go exploring by the full moon, up a steep gully known to them as the Stony Stairway reaching the High Plateau. Unbeknownst to their parents, the four of them meet at the Stone Gate, a rocky arch formation to watch the full moon. "The light is dazzling. Blinding" after they step in to the full moon light under the arch of the stone gate, "And that's how it begins".

When the light stops, Kaya and Jack's friends Jayden and Debbie aren't there and the first thing they notice is the lack of rubbish around. Kaya and Jack begin to realise that they are in a very different version of Baytown. The twins meet an Aboriginal family and learn to pick berries, spear kangaroos and feed and water them selves in a pre-colonial Australia. An elder, Billy, who has traveled through the portal many times and speaks English, tells Jack and Kaya the story on the Binjin rock, or stone gate, and explains how they must be protected, as does the crystal hanging around Kaya's neck, which is used as the key to the portal between different dreamings. He welcomes them to Dunjini country and explains that the longer they stay in a different dreaming, they will lose energy and become sick. Conflict with other families forces Jack and Kaya in to a suspenseful stay in Dunjini country.

At the next full moon Jack and Kaya reach the stone gate and are transported to yet another reality where it is quickly apparent that the world has fallen apart. They are chased by a security guard and a team of rebels only to find refuge with two new friends, Noah and Sara, in an old and run down house in downtown Baytown. The impact of global warming is clear in this world; the coast and the inland are at war over the lack of water supplies, houses are flooded, food is rare and the international news presents stories of natural disasters and absolute chaos. Kaya starts to feel faint at times and they realise that they don't can't stay away from their dreaming for too much longer or they may die. Before they leave, Kaya and Jack transfer to Noah and Sara, their bushman skills which they had learned in Dunjini country, enabling them a safe getaway from a local Baytown tyrant who has taken advantage of the vulnerability of the Baytown people.

A lucky escape takes Jack and Kaya to a very different version of Baytown. They meet Beth and stay with her and her mum in their village. Jack and Kaya note the different lifestyle of communal work, the lack of vehicles and an organic diet grown in a village farm. International news reports the massive changes countries are making to protect the earth from the impact of global warming. The challenge here is that they have lost the Maala crystal and Kaya is getting weaker each day, often blacking out. Jack, Kaya and Beth travel to meet a university professor in Canberra who takes them to the outback in search of the rare crystal.

When they arrive back to their dreaming, Jayden and Debbie are staring at them as if nothing had happened except for a freaky light transformation under the stone gate.

I enjoyed how the story was told from both the two main characters perspectives, Mann divides the chapters up between siblings Kaya and Jack, allowing for a suspenseful read. The pace is fast and present tense keeps you in the story, every step of the way.

This is a simple tale that keeps you on the edge of your seat whilst inviting you to think about the direction that Australia is heading in in regards to the environment. I recommend it as a great read for students because of the cultural and environmental themes as well as having characters that one can easily relate to.

Kris Runyon says

Thank you Goodreads for the opportunity to win and read *The Stone Gate*! I am very excited and will post my review as soon as I have received and read Mark Mann's book.

Update..... Thank you Mark Mann for this wonderful read! I have to say that this story kept me both intrigued and entertained throughout.

No Spoilers Review - I loved this story! I loved the journey with the characters! Set in the fictional town of Baytown, Australia, 16 year old Kaya and her twin brother, Jack, see a dazzling white light shining from a giant rock in the woods near their home. After stepping into the light they find that the Baytown they knew is gone. How do you find your way home? I was caught up in the adventures of this brother/sister duo from beginning to end.

There is enough adventure and suspense to interest readers of any age group (except youngsters - really for older teens & above). Even though I am a "tad" past the YA group, this should NOT dissuade anyone (except youngsters) from reading *The Stone Gate*. Absolutely looking forward to more from this author.

Tracey Lampley says

The Stone Gate is clever. It plunges you into a different Australia and places a nice spin on climate change. Intriguing, it keeps you turning the pages. The author places a premium on characterization and setting, which was uncanny. One is compelled to delve into the characters of the victims and the villain. The plot was brilliant. This book is well worth its price. I recommend this book as it is a four-star read.

Diane Goodman says

I love this book and I don't agree that it is strictly a young adult book. The relationship between siblings Jack and Maya is so special. I was sitting on the edge of my seat through this whole book, I was not only reading I was right beside them the whole time. I am extremely claustrophobic so I very uncomfortable through parts of the story. I had to stop and get control of my heart rate and get my breathing under control, I know it sounds really stupid but it's true. I was gifted a copy of this wonderful book from the Author Mark Mann and I want to thank him for choosing me. I feel very privileged and it was an honor to read this book.

Please don't let some of the other review's stop you from going on this adventure, You will be cheating yourself out of the trip of a lifetime. If you are an armchair quarterback give this book a ride. Thank You so much.

Diane E. Goodman

