

Review of *Okay for Now* by Gary D. Schmidt

By Amanda Huang

Rating: 4.75 stars

Okay for Now by Gary D. Schmidt is a brilliant novel set in the New York of 1968 that puts a spin on the classic “coming of age” story. In the novel, the main character, Doug, has just moved with his family to another area of New York that he reasonably calls “the dump”. He lives with his cruel older brother, abusive father, and sweet, sensitive mother, who is the closest to him out of the rest of his family members. In attempts to find an escape from his world, Doug finds himself at the local library, where he discovers a rare Audubon book behind its glass case. With the help from a librarian, Doug also discovers his artistic talent when he begins drawing birds from the book, and from the birds’ pictures, he also sees shards of his own broken life. Art is a source of relaxation, positivity, and courage for Doug, giving him what he needs to stay strong. With his newly found self-confidence and bravery, he begins changing his life on his own, realizing that bad things are only as bad as you make them. Doug starts creating a new path, a new life, and a new world not only for him, but for the ones around him, too.

I decided to read *Okay for Now* after reading the book flap, and the thing that intrigued me most while reading the book was the rich plot and the prolific symbolism. The symbolism was so fascinating because of how the pictures in the Audubon book related so well to Doug’s family and social struggles, and how the pictures helped Doug understand how to solve them. I would definitely rate this as one of the best books I’ve read all year, and this one was quite outstanding among others. I gave this a rating of 4.75 stars, because it was so close to perfection, yet little to no books really deserve the ultimate rating of 5 stars. I felt that I couldn’t really connect with any of the characters, and the book jumped around a little too much. Other than that, it was an impressive read, and one that I would highly recommend to others. *Okay for Now*

by Gary D. Schmidt is a fabulous story that illustrates how we can't wait for others to change our lives when we can change them ourselves. The novel was woven with threads of intriguing characters, figurative language, and symbolism- making it an exceptional story to follow.