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Sparrow Hawk Red (new Cover)



Synopsis

When thirteen-year-old Ricky Diaz discovers that his mother was actually murdered by drug dealers, he's desperate for revenge. But his father, a former drug enforcement agent, refuses the mission the DEA now offers: to steal an airplane with an American-made radar detector that the cartel uses to smuggle drugs from Mexico. Angry with his father for throwing away the chance to avenge his mother, Ricky decides to take matters into his own hands he will steal the plane. He runs away to Mexico, disguising himself as one of the many rateros, or homeless children. Life on the streets proves extremely hard and dangerous, and he's barely surviving when he meets Soledad, a crafty but kindhearted ratera. With her help, he must find a way to get into the drug cartel's compound and take the plane - or end up as yet another casualty in the raging drug war. In this thrilling novel, author Ben Mikaelson sheds light on America's war on drugs and the grittiness of street life while exploring an unexpected friendship and the healing power of family.

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 24 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #615,506 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #79 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Drugs](#) #520 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Hispanic & Latino](#) #859 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction](#)

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

Customer Reviews

Grade 6-8-- As in *Rescue Josh McGuire* (Hyperion, 1991), Mikaelson aptly describes a 13-year-old boy's emotional response to an appalling event. Ricky Diaz, the son of an ex-Drug Enforcement Agency pilot, vows to avenge the death of his mother, an innocent victim of the international drug war. When he overhears his father refuse a secret mission to confiscate the Skyhawk, a Mexican

drug cartel's plane (equipped with radar stolen from the DEA), Ricky decides to do it himself. Spanish-speaking and confident in his ability to fly small aircraft, he heads for the border. Once across, he lives among the rateros (homeless children) and meets Soledad, a streetwise waif who shares not only survival tips, but also strategies for penetrating the high-security cartel compound. Ultimately Ricky accomplishes his goal, but not without the last minute intervention of his father. Although the plot is far-fetched, many aspects of the novel ring true. The characterization is strong, the depiction of street life realistic, and the theme timely. This fast-paced tale should appeal to a varied audience, including reluctant readers. --Pat Katka, San Diego Public Library Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Ricardo ("Ricky") lives with his widower father Benito in an Arizona border town. Benito, formerly with the Drug Enforcement Agency, is teaching his son to fly--illegally, since Ricky's only 13. Meanwhile, eavesdropping on his father and some DEA agents, Ricky learns that his mother didn't die accidentally, as he's been told, but was murdered by drug-cartel members--the same men who've stolen a DEA radar-equipped plane that Ricky vows to get back. Posing as a homeless Mexican, he invades the druglords' compound, seizes the plane, and flies home. Concerns about being a "quitter" nearly sink this adventure, as do two abrupt breaks from Ricky's point of view to his father's. But Mikaelson pens savage scenes of Mexican street life, pokes fun at government officials, provides action-packed aerial sequences, and somehow pulls off his premise that a 13-year-old could put one over on seasoned drug traffickers. Innocent and appealing. (Fiction. 10-14) -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

My middle school boys love this book. Lots of adventure and an engaging story.

A great read.

I love all of Ben Mikaelson's books. They all have messages that the students can pick up on. His books are favorites of my students. Sparrow Hawk Red was especially good for showing both strong female and male roles.

Love this book! It is well written, engaging and so perfect for middle school age students. A big fan of Ben Mikaelson and look forward to more books!

This Is The First Time I Have Purchased A Book From And I Was A Little Worried But When The Booked Arrived I Was Very Pleased! The Book Was In Wonderful Shape No Tears No Markings..Thank You I Will Be Ordering More In The Future For You!

This is a must read for 4th through 6th graders.

I loved this book. It's a great story!

I am a 6th grade teacher who teaches a 22-day rotation class on flight. Since I have had the opportunity to fly aerobatic planes (my step-dad is a pilot), this book really caught my interest. This is a favorite read-aloud for my students. Many students say that it was the best part of their rotation class and when students come back to visit with me years later, they still remember Ricky and Soledad. When students "beg" you to read "just one more chapter" instead of doing some "cool" flight experiments, you know you have something pretty special. I work hard to teach students how to write using word choices and "voice" that create pictures in the reader's mind. I have chosen Ben Mikaelson as one of my favorite authors for exemplifying this. When I ask students what they "see" as I read, they can easily describe the feelings that Ricky has about losing a mother and stealing an airplane, along with the spirit and spunk of Soledad. I don't think that you will view "street kids" in the same way after reading SPARROW HAWK RED. As a matter of fact, my students would like to write to Ben Mikaelson and ask him if he would write a sequel!! I am currently preparing to read STRANDED to my Social Studies classes. I am excited to read COUNTDOWN when it becomes available.

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