



## Desert Rice

*Angela Scott*

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## **Desert Rice** Angela Scott

Samantha Jean Haggert is a beautiful twelve-year-old girl—but no one knows it. All they see is an awkward boy in a baseball cap and baggy pants. Sam’s not thrilled with the idea of hiding her identity, but it’s all part of her older brother’s plan to keep Sam safe from male attention and hidden from the law. Fifteen-year-old Jacob will stop at nothing to protect his sister, including concealing the death of the one person who should have protected them in the first place—their mother.

Sam and Jacob try to outrun their past by stealing the family car and traveling from West Virginia to Arizona, but the adult world proves mighty difficult to navigate, especially for two kids on their own. Trusting adults has never been an option; no adult has ever given them a good reason. But when Sam meets “Jesus”—who smells an awful lot like a horse—in the park, life takes a different turn. He saved her once, and may be willing to save Sam and her brother again, if only they admit what took place that fateful day in West Virginia. The problem? Sam doesn’t remember, and Jacob isn’t talking.

## **Desert Rice Details**

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Author : Angela Scott

Format : Paperback 225 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Contemporary, Drama

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## From Reader Review Desert Rice for online ebook

### Judy & Marianne from Long and Short Reviews says

Originally posted at: <http://www.longandshortreviews.com/bo...>

Stunning. Disturbing. Touching. Raw.

And even those words don't do this justice. Ms. Scott has got serious writing chops. She made me love this book, even though it's nothing like my usual choice for reading and even though it's terribly sad and tragic for the vast majority of its pages. She creates incredibly real characters in Jacob and Sam, then puts them in a place that broke my heart.

They aren't always the most endearing of people. They do things that are frustrating, dishonest, and heart-rending. But they always love each other, and they always determine to make a life for themselves. Jacob's first and only real goal in life is to take care of his sister. As we learn the truth of what happened, we understand what drives him so frantically to keep her safe.

Sam doesn't remember what happened to put them in the place where they are. And she's remarkably typical for a girl her age, except that she's dressing and acting as a teenaged boy. No punches are pulled in this book; there is language, graphic situations and more. Even something like Sam's first period are described so clearly I was cramping up right there with her.

Thankfully, all is not bleak here. Eventually they meet a good-hearted man and his girlfriend who take them under their wings, but even that doesn't go smoothly.

This isn't a book for light reading. It's one you will think about long after you finish and wonder if this is how it truly is for some kids out there. It'll make you grateful for your rather normal life and will cause you to count your blessings, no matter how small.

Reading Desert Rice is a life-changing experience and I'm glad I was able to read it.

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### Crystal says

I seriously still have chills on my arms!! Angela Scott has some of the best first chapters and mid book twists that I have ever read. This is my second book of hers to read and right from the start I was captivated by both. She packs a huge punch in just a few sentences and I can definitely say that I will be on the lookout for her next book.

This story is very different from her zombie novel WANTED. This one is about survival and the love between brothers and sisters. Samantha and Jacob do not have the ideal life. They live with their mother who is abusive and their days consist of just trying to survive. Well when their mother dies, Jacob takes Sam on the run so that they can stay together and not be split up in foster care. My goodness, what these two go through is beyond heartbreaking. Jacob at only fifteen takes his sister who is twelve across many states, finds a job by lying about his age, and basically takes care of her the best way he can. That right there is love. Is their journey perfect, no not by a long shot. Pressure builds and Jacob shows that he is only a child several

times and Sam goes through the same thing. My heart really broke for these two characters. The turning point in the story is when Sam meets Boone. Things take a very intense turn when Sam and Jacobs true story comes out and let me tell you, you will need tissues for that part. I was in shock and I am still in shock over what happened to these two kids.

Again this story is not perfect and I think if the author had made it a perfect ending with a bow then it would not have been real. Jacob did what he did for the love of his sister and he will forever hold a place in my heart. I did not know that this was going to be a series so I am very intrigued to see where Ms.Scott takes this story. There are a few loose ends that I know need to be tied up and I am very curious how those will play out. Another brilliant story from Angela Scott!

\*A copy of this book was provided by the author. Thank you SOOO much!!\*

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## **Lenna says**

I was completely engrossed in the novel the entire time I was reading it, and I felt myself get anxious during intense plot moments, and I really sympathized with the characters. The novel follows the narration of twelve year old Samantha Haggert and the story of how she and her brother tried to make it in the adult world by themselves. The story starts with the death of Sam and Jacob's mother at which point, they clean up the mess and take the car to leave town. Right away we see how protective Jacob is of Sam and both characters naturally drift into their roles of older brother and younger sister.

Samantha is a most precocious young child. She doesn't always act her age. I do think she is written to be more mature than a typical twelve year old girl, but there is definitely more to her than meets the eye. For example, she uses vocabulary that a typical twelve year old wouldn't use, and she approaches certain situations with a tact beyond her age. But at the same time, she does regress into childlike mannerisms that I found to be endearing such that I found myself chuckling at certain things that she said or did. So even though she flip flops between naivete and maturity, she's very consistent in the way she alternates.

Jacob is a harder character to get behind from the beginning because we don't learn anything about his motivations for his actions until the end of the novel. I love that he loves his younger sister Sam and it is clear that his job is to be her protector, but in doing so Jacob comes off as stubborn and due to circumstances, the decisions he makes for her may not always be the most favorable. But the bond between the two is so strong and Angela Scott has successfully portrayed a functional dysfunctional family.

Desert Rice was a very good read, and it fits well within its genre. It does play with themes that are typical within young adult such coming of age, and the strong but young protagonists for example but it also plays with other themes such as familial dysfunction in the way of alcohol or drugs, and religion, to name a couple. These are not uncommon in novels, but the way that Scott utilizes these ideas was very well written. The story was not predictable even though in the beginning I was under the impression it would be. I was pleasantly surprised and drawn in by Sam and Jacob's story the whole time.

Angela Scott is a wonderful story teller and I am giving this the full five stars because of how much I enjoyed the novel. It is a solid contemporary young adult tale that is very well written. It is easy to read, straight forward, the language is simple and not overly complicated, but all of the elements are appropriate so that they make sense within the frame of the story. It is a fun read and a touching story so I recommend this book to all of you.

## Lori says

Absolutely LOVED This Story! I Fell In Love Instantly with the characters!

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## Eric Townsend says

I'll be honest, I haven't read a whole lot of books with a 12-year-old girl's point of view, so I didn't really know what to expect in terms of how the character would narrate her story. My first impression of Sam was that she was woefully, and a tad annoyingly, ignorant of a lot of things. I don't remember much about being 12, but I don't recall being so unaware of the world as a whole. However, as I read Desert Rice I discovered more and more that what Scott was likely doing in showing that ignorance was highlighting the pathetic excuse for an upbringing that both Sam and her brother Jacob received. Sam is a character that Scott clearly poured a little extra of her writer's essence into, she's someone you instantly want to befriend and protect, and the lengths that her brother goes to do so seem justified by more than just their family link. She's as innocent as they come, molding herself only by what she sees in the few encounters that she is allowed to have with the world but she has the typical stubbornness of someone her age which makes her feel all the more real.

Which brings me to Jacob. He has both of their lives on his shoulders, plus the additional weight of keeping secret what happened to them both from everyone they encounter, and from Sam as well. He puts on a brave face most of the time but some frustration does leak through, mostly fueled by what Sam had went through (can't be any more specific, spoilers!), and a bit of a typical teenage male's difficulty with being around his kid sister all the time. However, Scott makes it readily apparent that Jacob cares deeply for Sam so his occasional outbursts don't demean him as a character, they even prove to separate him from other books where this character is often a cardboard cutout.

The plot might be the one complaint I have for Desert Rice, and keeps it from being among my favorites. It's a bit obvious based on the summary where the journey is going to end up, even if the details to get them there aren't clear. There is a slight twist at the end, don't worry I won't spoil it, but not enough of one to really shock you. I would also say that Sam's indecision at certain parts, even for someone her age, was a tad ridiculous, maybe she thought she was doing what was best for them, but it was irritating to say the least. The pacing was good, though, and there was enough action in Desert Rice to keep the reader engaged while developing the characters at the same time.

There isn't much to say about the world building as far as just the setting goes. I don't know much about Arizona outside of the obvious, but Scott seemed to have a pretty good feel for what it is like there, and I'll take her word(s) on it. The cowboy-type of people that were described at times were a little over the top, and though there may still be some smaller towns where these descriptions would be accurate, it just felt a little off. The setting at least felt realistic enough, so I guess I'd give this area a check mark for completion if not an outstanding (channeling my inner teacher there, weird I know).

Overall I enjoyed Desert Rice. The characters were the highlight of the book without a doubt, and I loved Sam, she was just excellently done. It was a quick and pleasant read.

Rating 3.5/5

## Stevie Mikayne says

I began reading Desert Rice at bedtime. I thought "Ah... I'll just relax and crack open a chapter to see why everybody's talking about Desert Rice." Wow. 11:30 PM went by and I was still sitting bolt upright in bed, eyes wide.

Novelists love a "hook" - something to grab their readers right from the word go. Or in this case, "Grab'er feet!" Scott didn't just find a hook - she found a claw. I was lifted from my bed and transported to a trailer park where Samantha Jean Haggert and her brother Jacob stood over their mother's dead body, put to the task of trying to move her. Jacob's love for his twelve-year-old sister is matched only by his fear for her safety. He shields her, provides for her, and simultaneously pushes her away with the force of his protection. This incredible bond drives their story to unbelievable places, and causes Jacob to make drastic decisions that have permanent and wide-reaching consequences.

Starting in West Virginia, winding all the way to Arizona, these two survive on stolen food and stark fear. Along the way, they meet kind souls like Boone and Laura, who help them stitch their lives back up. When Jacob is finally forced to reveal the secrets he's been keeping, his heartbreaking revelations ignite a series of unstoppable events. The only way out of hell for this brother/sister duo is straight through the flames.

A gripping tale of two young people on a frightening road trip, trying to survive in an adult world, this is a must-read for anyone who loves strong pacing, dramatic storytelling, and a shocking end.

Two thumbs up to Angela Scott!

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## Aliaa El-Nashar says

This book made me cry like a baby.

Repeatedly.

As I've mentioned before a couple of times, I hate human interest stories, or tragic ones, or ones that have a very traumatizing event occur in them that the whole book is dealing with that issue. I hate being so emotionally invested in a book, and right now I am holding a tissue drying my eyes as I write this.

This book was good, and bad, and awful, and brilliant.

The book starts with Jacob and Samantha carrying their mother's dead body inside so the corpse wouldn't be eaten up by dogs. They then proceed to go on the run in order to not be taken into foster care and be separated. Samantha's twelve, a child on her way to her teens, whilst Jacob is fifteen, pretty much not old enough to drive that family car he'd taken from his mother. Jacob forces Sam to dress up as a boy and cuts her hair so she wouldn't draw extra attention to herself. They find it hard to stand one another in this long and frustrating journey to Arizona, because it's apparently warm down there. They land in a city and struggle to make-do with what they have and stay in the motel. Jacob takes on two jobs and works himself to death whilst Sam finds more creative ways to spend her time alone and make money. But an incident with her brother drives her to meet Boone, a nice man she refers to as 'Jesus'. So when her brother gets deathly ill,

Sam finds no one else to go to for help. Their brother and sister are forced to confront their past and what caused them to be here, and none of it is pleasant - or in Sam's case is even remembered!

I honestly didn't know what to expect when I read the synopsis and signed up for this tour. I mean, the cover was awesome - as I am known for my impulsiveness with regards to covers - and the synopsis didn't give away much so I signed up and had at it. The first few lines were very hooking. I wanted to know straight off what the heck was going on. Then the author proceeded to keep me on said hook all the way throughout the book.

I mean come on when a book starts with this:

"Grab 'er feet!"

To grab her feet, I'd have to touch her, and nothing could be worse than putting my hands on a dead body, even my own mama's.

How can one not be caught into the web that is this book? The author's style was flowing, simple, and entrancing. It was like I cast under a spell until the book ended where I was allowed to be free. The events happened in a moderate pace that gave the book more plausibility and frankly I was impressed. I just hated the idea of crying all over, but I couldn't help myself. The added mystery and twists I didn't expect had my eyes bulging at times. I honestly didn't see most of them coming and it was a hard blow. I love such blows to your bubble of what you think is going on, when it's not really that at all.

An amazing read! I cannot wait to get my hands on book two to know what happens next!

Rating: 5/5

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## **Moslimah says**

DESERT RICE by Angela Scott

\*\*\*SPOILER FREE REVIEW\*\*\*

Immediately after their mother's death, fifteen year-old Jacob takes his twelve year-old sister, Samantha (Sam) away from their past in their battered family car, fearing being separated by social services- or at least that's all he tells her. Samantha is stuck to obeying her brother's plan to keep her safe and that means dressing up and being Sam, the boy and doing everything he asks of her. As they hit the road, things get tough and what follows is a series of events that end with the revelation of what really happened to the children's mother! Because Jacob knows, Samantha doesn't remember and Jacob isn't sharing!

I'm a VERY difficult reader to please and this isn't a book I would typically read but I read it and boy was I blown away. This novel captivated me, not from the first page but from the very first sentence, where we are brought smack in the middle of the action. The voice of the innocent and mostly naïve narrator, Samantha is honest and real, as she navigates through two journeys, an inner journey of the issues surrounding becoming a teenager (nicely addresses some tween topics), and a journey of dealing with the world around her. There were a few times where I thought, a twelve-year old couldn't possibly think like this, but this, in no way ruined awesomeness of the book for me. By the end, we see such wonderful character growth, it's worth a tear or two.

What I REALLY loved was the relationship between brother and sister. It was REAL! Like, so, so real! I loved that we saw Jacob as a strong character who would do anything to protect his little sister from both the world they have been forced to face as well as from their past. Little things, like making sure she brushed her teeth and stacking up on tampons makes their relationship even more wholesome. He's her teacher somewhat. But Jacob isn't without flaws. He can't always be the knight in shining armour that he's been trying so hard to maintain. Even he fears what the immediate and long-term future could hold for both of them, especially when he must finally open up about what really happened to their mother.

We meet a few other characters in the novel who play some important roles. Although they are not as fully developed as the two siblings they are still a nice addition. DESERT RICE is a novel full of surprises, and just when you think there couldn't possibly be any more surprises- BAM! You're hit with them again. This is the first book I've read by Angela Scott and I must say, I was very impressed. The teaser of DESERT FLOWER, the second novel in the series just about had my jaw drop open. Can't wait for this one!

P.s. the title for this novel- so clever! I only just understood it right now, as I write the end of this review.

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### **Frances says**

I love this book!!

This book was a recommendation for me and I'm glad I read it. Sam (Samantha) and Jacob are brother and sister that has a horrible life of unfortunate things happen to them but in the end a bright light is a upon that makes their a whole lot better.

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### **Lane Diamond says**

This story packs a real emotional punch. Samantha, the teenage protagonist, will grab onto your heart, and she won't let go.

I recommend this book to anyone who loves Upper YA or Literary Fiction.

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### **Stephanie Manning says**

From the very first sentence, to the very last chapter, Desert Rice was heart-wrenching to say the least. Watching the struggle of two children on the run to save each other and stay together was more than I would have imagined from the simple book cover summary.

I had received a copy of the book from a Goodreads giveaway so it wasn't something I had personally picked out to read. The cover was tempting and the summary was interesting. I cracked the book, read the very first sentence and was hooked!

Read my complete review at <http://stephaniesbookshelf.blogspot.c...>

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## Carolina Stroschein says

- "La vida seguía insistiendo en ser tan condenadamente difícil". •

"Arroz del desierto" es una novela asombrosa, perturbadora, conmovedora y cruda. Trágica y esperanzadora. Terriblemente cruel e increíblemente dulce.

Sam y Jacob son dos hermanos que huyen de su hogar en Virginia Occidental hacia Arizona en un coche robado para dejar atrás un pasado terrible que Jacob persiste en mantener oculto y Samantha no puede recordar. En su afán por proteger a su hermana menor –aunque casi al borde de la adolescencia–, y desconfiado de todos los adultos, Jacob la hará pasar por niño. Ya desde el principio, se me partió el corazón que con tan sólo 15 años, Jacob llevara el peso del mundo sobre sus hombros, actuara como un adulto y se viera obligado a tomar decisiones y a hacerse pasar por mayor de edad para buscar empleo y mantener a su hermana. Sin embargo, a pesar de todos sus intentos de proteger a Sam, el destino insiste en complicarles las cosas a los hermanos Haggert y el pasado y la verdad no tardará en salir a la superficie.

La novela está contada en primera persona del singular, por Sam, una niña de doce años que no puede recordar lo sucedido antes de que ella y su hermano huyeran de su hogar. Así, a medida que avanza la historia, el lector va sufriendo con los personajes, siente que viaja en el asiento trasero con ellos y poco a poco va recordando al mismo tiempo que la niña los duros hechos que los llevaron a abandonar su ciudad natal.

La narración por momentos se pone realmente dura—el lector precavido se puede ir imaginando las situaciones que atravesó la niña— y hasta llega a producir rechazo y desaliento por el género humano. Afortunadamente, para equilibrar la situación, aparece en la historia un encantador vaquero con un corazón de oro dispuesto a ayudar a los hermanos sin esperar nada a cambio. Un vaquero que viene a restaurar la esperanza en el género humano. Y, al mismo tiempo, un vaquero con el que, me atrevo a decir, cualquier lector se desea encontrar al menos una vez en la vida:

"Arroz del desierto" definitivamente es un libro para los amantes de un buen drama contemporáneo, lleno de tensiones, revelaciones desgarradoras y momentos de extrema ternura y bondad.

Aclaración: Las imágenes y los gif citados en esta reseña no corresponden a imágenes de libro, sino que son los actores que inspiraron a la autora y me encantó incluirlos en la reseña porque se condicen muchísimo con los personajes del libro.

### Una frase:

*"Me encantaba cómo olían los libros, la tranquilidad de los alrededores y las miles de posibilidades alineadas en estanterías sin fin. Siempre se podía encontrar un final feliz en un libro, ¿y a quién no le gustaban los finales felices?"*

Disponible en Amazon

Disponible en Barnes & Noble

## Mags~CVAddikt~ says

Innocence somehow survives the dark in a story that show us love between brother and sister, and hope, there are still good people in the world.

The book is narrated by Sam, and it's the perfect perspective of a 12-13 year old, her innocence is very well portrayed ... there were situations that made me feel rage, sadness, impotence and ... I wanted to scream and warn Sam about the danger, a danger she couldn't see because of her innocence.

Her brother, Jacob ... what can I say about him? My heart broke for him 1000 times, he felt the weight of the world on his back, he just wanted to protect Sam, and he almost died \*insert little teardrop here\* Jacob managed to protect Sam but he was so stressed that he also pushed her away ... until the end, when he had to reveal the truth of what happened.

Good thing there is good people in the World, Sam and Jacob met Boone, the angel they needed and who eventually saved them.

If you like dramatic books, filled with tension and shocking revelations, this is the book for you.

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## Tana says

Desert Rice by Angela Scott

Ok I am not really even sure what to say about this book, I picked it up today to read and never put it down once. Angela Scott has written a fantastic novel. I cannot express how much I enjoyed this story and Angela Scott's writing.

Where to begin but I suppose at the beginning, we are introduced quickly to Sam and her brother Jacob moving their dead mother into their trailer. Once they get the body where they want Jacob informs Sam that its time to leave. Packing as much as they could they take off in the family car. During the trip Jacob informs Sam that she has to dress more like a boy and he cuts off her hair and makes her wear baggy clothes. He doesn't want anything to happen to her, he needs to protect her and keep her safe.

Chills went up my back knowing there is more to this story and I have to admit it was well worth the read. Angela Scott has written a story that is heartbreaking and yet I couldn't stop reading. God I can't tell you how many tears I had to wipe away from my eyes so I could continue Desert Rice.

It is a must read and I have rated it a 5 star rating and I would rate it 10 if I could. It was terrific, fantastic, heart wrenching..OMG just go buy it and see for yourself no words will express how much this story is worth reading. You end up loving Sam and want to just hug her and Jacob for trying to do everything a 15 year old boy could do to keep his sister safe.

DISCLOSURE – \*Disclosure of Material Connection: I am a member of Reading Addiction Blog Tours and

a copy of this book was provided to me by the author. Although payment may have been received by Reading Addiction Blog Tours, no payment was received by me in exchange for this review. There was no obligation to write a positive review. All opinions expressed are entirely my own and may not necessarily agree with those of the author, publisher, publicist, or readers of this review. This disclosure is in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255, Guides Concerning Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising\*

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## **Disincentive/Feta says**

**Excerpt and the giveaway here <http://disincentive-reviews.blogspot...>**

It's one of the hardest reviews to write since I have started writing this blog. What do I say about the book that was so perfect?

Desert rice sucked me in from the very first sentence. The whole book is so tense that I didn't want to stop. I stayed up at night just to read.

Characters are really well created, but the main heroine, Sam is so perfect that I have no words to describe her. She's going through a lot and trying to find herself in a world that is really cruel.

I didn't like Jacob so much but I respected him for doing so much for his sister and acting so mature. The relationship between those siblings feels really natural and I loved it.

The genre is contemporary but it's one of the best mysteries I have read in a long time. When everything came out, my heart was literally beating faster. Some descriptions are really cruel though, so if you are very sensitive, it's not for you.

To sum up everything, it's a must read for everyone who's looking for a tense, epic read.

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