



Star Sand

Roger Pulvers

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In 1958, a diary is found in a cave on the small Japanese island of Hatoma. Alongside it are the remains of three people.

The journal reveals the story of Hiromi, a sixteen-year-old girl who'd grown up in the United States before living in Japan in the midst of World War II. One day, while collecting star sand—tiny star-shaped fossils—Hiromi finds two army deserters hiding in the seaside cavern—one American, one Japanese. The soldiers don't speak the same language, but they've reached an agreement based on a shared hope: to cause no more harm and survive. Hiromi resolves to care for the men—feeding them and nursing their ailments—despite the risk that, if caught, she'll die alongside them as a traitor. But when a fourth person joins in on their secret, they must face a threat from within. The diary abruptly ends, leaving everyone's fate a mystery.

Decades later, in 2011, a young female university student decides to finally determine who died in that cave and who lived. Her search will lead her to the lone survivor—and bring closure to a gripping tale of heroism at a time when committing to peace was the most dangerous act of all.

Star Sand Details

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Author : Roger Pulvers

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From Reader Review Star Sand for online ebook

Cari says

Star Sand by Roger Pulvers is a beautifully crafted novel that I had the pleasure of discovering as one of Amazon's Kindle First selections for this month. The book's setting on the Japanese island of Hatoma was so atmospheric and painted pictures in my head of a beautiful young woman collecting sand underneath a starry sky while the ocean thrashed against the beach. There was something about even just the descriptions of how Umeno would wrap food into banana leaves and place it in a furoshiki that I found to be captivating.

While I found many aspects of Pulvers' writing in *Star Sand* to be beautiful, I must say that the true power of this book lies within its message of peace, love, and kindness in a time of war and hatred. The idea of two enemy soldiers finding themselves at the mercy of each other as they both fight for survival is poetic and moving. Their hunger for peace and compassion towards each other hit me right in the heart and made this book a memorable one. I also enjoyed how the book skipped forward to 2011 as it made Umeno, Bob, and Takayasu that much more tangible to me. Sometimes it's easy to forget that so many of the brave men and women who survived the war are still alive, and often times under my care as their nurse.

"He was such a gentle soul. All he wanted in life was to live it without hurting another person. He said that if a person could do that, then that person would find true happiness in life. He accomplished that at a time when it was nearly an impossible thing to do."

Beautiful book!
????

Brenda says

2.5 stars - interesting but hard to believe and somewhat unsatisfying.

This book was an interesting concept of talking about WWII from the perspective of a Japanese-American girl that was living in Japan when the war broke out. The discovery of two AWOL soldiers (one Japanese and one American) promised to make this even more interesting. But the relationship between the two soldiers was weird and hard to believe, the dialogue was stiff (maybe because the book was translated from Japanese?). And this was supposed to be a diary - who would actually write a diary with all that dialogue and some of the other details? But still I had hope... the end, where a modern-day student investigates the mystery of the cave, it just seems rushed to come to conclusion. Why did she dress the brother in her clothes? What was the significance of throwing the cast in the ocean? And what was the point of the star sand? Definitely not the best book I've read this year, too bad because it had so much potential.

Shelly says

New WWII perspective

I'm a big fan of WWII fiction AND non-fiction. This read like both!! Quick read but really grabs you from beginning. I felt Pulvers captured the feel of the time period extremely well and that the characters were well drawn for how short the story was. I enjoyed this!

"Isn't that what some people call a kind of love? Being left alone to fulfill your life as you see fit in the presence of others you care about, whoever they might be? Once you are brought together with someone, they can not be ignored or forgotten." (pg 69-70)

"The vital thing is to look after those who come into your reach while you are still alive, good people, bad people, all people." (pg 96)

"I have never been good at dealing with conflict. Rather than defend myself or attack the other person, I simply withdraw into myself and sulk, rehearsing in my mind, often with hand gestures and whispered words, arguments on both sides of the conflict." (pg 105)

Lucy-May says

This book has left me with very mixed feelings; I've put 3 stars on here but really it's a 3.5.

The first chapter totally pulled me in and I was hooked on the story pretty quickly. I'm a bit obsessed with books set in Asia at the moment, and I've always wanted to learn more about World War 1 and 2, so this seemed like a perfect read.

I absolutely loved part 1, Bob annoyed me a little but I still enjoyed his character, just as I did the rest of the cast. I loved the idea of the story; 3 unlikely people being pushed together in an awful time, and I was really starting to get into it! Then it suddenly stopped and parts 2 and 3 just confused me - I don't understand why Pulvers ruined a really deep, interesting story with a ridiculously crap ending! If he had continued Hiromi's story further and then ended it on a cliff-hanger that would have been fine... but it didn't finish at a point that made sense to me, and I just didn't see the point of adding in the last 2 parts! It sort of feels like he got bored of writing the story and wrote parts 2 and 3 just so the book had an ending. I'm devastated because I had been really pulled into the story. I've been left feeling very unsatisfied, and incredibly disappointed.

Alana says

I was prepared to give this a "meh, nothing special but fine" 3 stars, until the end. Part 3 (which is probably only 15-20 pages) was just terrible. The narration jumps to a caricature of a moronic girl, supposedly in college but the author seemed to be channeling an 11 year old, and it was just awful. Ruined the whole thing for me.

G.J. says

This was an odd short story, the idea was promising and I found some descriptions of life on a remote Japanese Island during WW2 interesting, however it seems to me the author run out of ideas on how to end it and spoilt it with a silly character introduced towards the end.

Lorri says

This is a lovely book about a girl on a small Japanese island in WWII. She takes care of two soldiers, one American and one Japanese who have deserted and are hiding in a cave on the island. It was well written, kept me captivated, and I still wonder if it's a true story or not! It's a quick read and very worth it!!

Kelli says

A different look at war life

I really enjoyed this book. Written in three parts as a diary entry. It's a short book but written well with the point of view of a young Japanese girl during WW2. I loved all the characters and each one was so well described you understood exactly what was going on in their head. I just really loved it. A must read for everyone

Bobby Schimmel says

I picked this book up because the idea and concept sounded so mysterious and interesting!
A diary from WWII written by a young Japanese woman hiding out in a cave with 2 wounded soldiers from both sides - sounded like a great read. Still does actually which is why I gave it 2 stars instead of one - concept.

This book ended up being so slow and so uneventful and unsatisfying. I usually read thrillers and mysteries and this was neither of those although recommended as one.

The narration throughout - regardless of who is narrating was obnoxious, especially the student at the end. Midway through I felt as if I was reading a novel intended for a younger audience. There was so much innocence in a story that to me, was extremely lacking in elements and depth.

I didn't even realize this was supposed to be a short story since it took me so long to get through.

Katie B (Bisforbookiemonster) says

What a disappointment.

Not that I had super high hopes for this in the first place, but I was expecting it to be an interesting read. And it was, in parts. At other times, it was a chore to get through. And that's saying something for a book that takes less than two hours to read.

It went steadily downhill, until I just didn't care at the end. For that reason, I'm breaking my review into three parts, following the way that the book is divided:

Part One

I liked the idea of Part One. It focuses on the people in the cave: Bob (the American deserter), Iwabuchi (the Japanese deserter), and Hiromi, the girl who stumbles across the both of them and brings them food and supplies. It follows their unlikely friendship and even had some insightful moments:

"There was no past, present, or future; there was only beforewar time, duringwar time, and

afterwar time, and the three melded together like differently colored metals in an intense fire, taking a shape when the fire cooled down until the heat rose once again and a new form of the same thing was created...the making and remaking of time itself.”

The book is very character driven, with little exciting plot. And that’s okay! I like that this is a WWII novel that doesn’t spotlight the fighting or the actual war itself. Rather, it centers on the side effects of the war, on the little bits and pieces that may go unnoticed in other novels. This is a little cave, on a small, nearly uninhabited island, and yet this cave holds two soldiers who are told they should be enemies and nevertheless find themselves bonding over shared experiences. They’re aided by a girl who is Japanese in heritage but American in birth; there is no black and white here. There’s a lot of grey area, and I like that this book showcases the **emotional conflict that comes out of war, rather than the physical.**

The first part out of three was thought-provoking – if not as deep and revealing as it could have been – and for that it earns three stars.

Part Two

There isn’t actually much to say about this part, really...it felt detached but not actually detached enough to be representative of a true field report. Does that make sense? I felt that it was there purely for the author to explain the bare facts of the situation. That was certainly its purpose, but I wish that it had been used in a more subtle way.

Part Three

Part Three is where I really lost any good feelings I had toward this novel and just got angry. From Hiroma’s diary and the field report, we are thrust into the head of Hosaka, a girl – I say girl because she certainly does not conduct herself like a young woman – who is supposedly a rising senior in college and yet expresses herself like a 12-year-old.

Take this, for example:

“I wasn’t interested much in the war thing before I took Professor Shiroma’s class, and now he’s going to be my supervisor next year. That is just so cool.”

The “war thing”? *Really?! As if it’s a passing fad, rather than a big event in which millions of lives were lost and millions more were irrevocably changed.*

Reflecting on that makes me irritated and so I’ll move on, but let me give you some more examples of our new narrator’s immaturity, such as that time she got something in the mail:

“It was the first time ever that someone sent me a special-delivery letter!”

Or that time that one exclamation point just wasn’t enough:

“That’s all okay for him, but I hate economics!!!”

Or that time that she threw a hissy fit about her boyfriend:

“Who wants to go out with a TOTAL NERD LIKE YUTAKA!”

As a 20-year-old woman myself, I cannot help but be extremely offended that this is how the author thinks we view things. Contrary to his belief, we do not feel the need to scream and shout about every little thing that happens, and we are capable of feeling emotions and having complex thoughts like any other human

being.

I know, that's absolutely mind-blowing to learn, isn't it?

I get that some college students do behave in this way, but I have a hard time believing that such a person would choose to write a thesis on a topic as serious as WWII. (view spoiler)

Of course, she then has to go and ruin it by using three more exclamation points to express the fact that her eyes are blurry from crying.

Oh well, at least there was a moment there where I thought that maybe she is a real person after all. (hide spoiler)]

Part Three completely ruined the book for me due to the inexcusably childish narrator and wiped out any good things that Part One may have set up.

Final Rating: 2 stars (because Part One deserves more than 1)

Kathleen Wells says

A very engaging story of a Japanese soldier and an American soldier hiding together in a cave in the final days of WWII.

Amber Garabrandt says

Star Sand, By Roger Pulvers was my Kindle First pick for the month. It was originally released last year in Japanese and will be out in English on 5/01/2016.

For me, this was a beautiful novella, flowing seamlessly over the timespan of the story. The chapters went together fluidly, just the right pace to make a perfect story. My one complaint is that it felt so very short. I worked an eight hour shift today and still read the whole thing in one day! I could not let it go!

It begins April, 02, 1945 on Hatoma Isle in Japan. Umeno Hiromi is half Japanese, half American. Having followed her father back to Japan while her mother and brother stayed in Los Angeles, she feels even more torn apart by the war than others. In the first part we view the world through her diary. She is alone on the island, unsure where her father is or if he is alive. One day while collecting Star Sand from the beach she sees a man going toward the entrance of the cave with a gun pointed at his own head. This is to be her first meeting with two men that will be everything to her in this part of her life: Iwabuchi Takayasu, a Japanese deserter, and an American deserter named Bob. Both are weak and sick, though Bob more than Takayasu. Both are gentle spirits that are disgusted with the war. Hidden in a cave on Hatoma Isle, they rely on Takayasu's uncle and Hiromi to bring supplies and keep their secret.

When Uncle is in danger of being taken prisoner on minor charges (keeping livestock he should have given up) he leaves the trio alone to fend for themselves-but not before throwing in one large complication. Iwabuchi Hajime is Takayasu's older brother and completely different from the gentle soul. He hates Takayasu and Hiromi for what he perceives as their crimes against Japan. In gentle Bob, he can only see the American enemy. The four cannot exist together and it ends explosively with three bodies and a diary in a cave.

Part two is a post-war report on the finding on Hatoma Isle. By part three the date is December 12th, 2011. A young college student is working on what she calls her Okinawa project. Basically, about how much was still

unknown about Okinawa and how the war ravaged the lives of the people there. Hosaka Shiho delves deep into the libraries and surfaces with the diary of a young girl. Finding inconsistencies, she brings them back to the experts and they find that The diary was written years after the incidents in the cave took place. Shiho can't let these things go- the diary was found in the cave with the bodies! She has to find out what happened and how it got there! The truth is unbelievable- you have to read it to see!

Again, this book isn't out in English until 05/01/2016, but you can have it now through Kindle First for \$1.99 or preorder it for \$5.99. Don't let this one pass you by!

On the adult content scale, I give it a two. There is violence, but this is a book I would hand anyone ten and above. I don't feel it was meant to be a young adult novel, but it works for both that genre and adult fiction.

Janette McMahon says

Beautifully written book of war, WWII . Asks the the questions of who is the enemy, what makes an enemy, and about survival.

Dee Mills says

I liked this book, although the writing was a bit choppy. The first and third parts were enthralling; the mid-part slowed down a bit for me.

It's a fast read and afterwards, I felt as if I had been on an isolated beach with a lovely grotto nearby.

Connie says

Source: I downloaded this book via Kindle Unlimited.

Cost: Free

Title: Star Sand

Author: Roger Pulvers

Genre: Realistic fiction, historical

Overall Rating: 3 stars

I wanted to rate this book higher, but because I found myself getting bored at parts through this book, I just couldn't. This book follows Hiromi, a 16 year old Japanese girl in WWII as she makes her way through the war with no family, and barely any friends and she comes across a Japanese army deserter and an American soldier who have become unlikely allies. She journals her adventures with them, then after the war, the diary is found along with three bodies, but not Hiromi's herself.

This had such an brilliant premise, unlikely to happen, but it sounded so good but parts of the diary came across as tedious and unnecessary. I finished the book a tad disappointed.
