

Field Trip

By Anna Rose Woodliff

Davion is an angry 13 year old boy. 2022 America is not a safe place for a kid. It's a world filled with hatred and violence. Better to shut down, keep your heart closed, keep your head down. His cousin was recently murdered by MS-13. Davion's dad tells him he has to watch out for his little brother Elliot, who is awkward and different. Elliot has panic attacks and is fragile. He's not tough and Davion needs to be seen as tough to survive. He wants to protect his brother, but he is embarrassed by him. It's field trip day. Davion walks past Elliot on the school bus, leaving him to sit alone on the long drive to the National Park. Davion sits with his cool friends towards the back of the bus, unaware of what is to come.

Halfway to the Park, the bus is stopped in a roadblock on an empty rural road. The two police officers then shoot the bus driver and chaperone. The horrific truth is clear- these are violent criminals and their school bus is being hijacked. One of the men drives while the other threatens the kids with his gun, taking apart their phones, and keeping them quiet on high alert. One girl on the bus, a good friend of Davion, is the daughter of a wealthy crime lord and the gang members are taking her to their boss.

Davion can tell these men are in the same gang that killed his cousin by their tattoo. He knows they will shoot them all without hesitating. Now Davion and his group of friends must use their wits to silently communicate with each other and plan how they are going to fight back and escape, all under the watchful eye of the gang member. How will Davion protect his brother from the back of the bus? How will the kids escape possible death at the hands of money hungry murderers?

This story has TENSION, lots of action, and heart. There are chase scenes, a big crash, and a run for their life through the wilderness. After the crash, Davion sticks with Elliot, his friend, and the daughter. This means even on foot, they are the target.

The emotional climax comes in a style similar to Stallone's emotional breakdown at the end of First Blood. The tough angry kid breaks down after being tested to his limits, no longer able or wanting to hold back on expressing his love, his pain, his emotions.

This is a coming of age thriller for adults and older teenagers. Growing up, evolving, is something that never ends. It continues in layers, levels. This is why everyone, no matter their age, can always deeply connect with a coming of age story. This story also has social commentary on how a wealthy protected girl is the most vulnerable in a public space filled with children. This world is harsh, and it will ask of Davion "What kind of man are you going to be?"

I feel in my gut this would be a huge success. It's thrilling, gripping, and relevant as hell. Speed, but instead of Keanu Reeves, it's the cast of Stand by Me (not really, but that age group and compelling character study). Thank you kindly for your consideration!