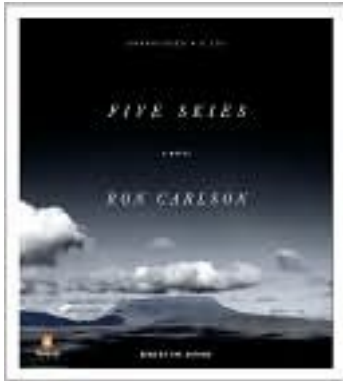

Ron Carlson

Five Skies



Title: Five Skies

Author: Ron Carlson

Format: Audio CD

Language:

Pages: 8

Publisher: Penguin Group (USA),
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ISBN: 1615552871

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Size: 6.9 MB

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Description

Beloved story writer Ron Carlson's first novel in thirty years, *Five Skies* is the story of three men gathered high in the Rocky Mountains for a construction project that is to last the summer. Having participated in a spectacular betrayal in Los Angeles, the giant, silent Arthur Key drifts into work as a carpenter in southern Idaho. Here he is hired, along with the shiftless and charming Ronnie Panelli, to build a stunt ramp beside a cavernous void. The two will be led by Darwin Gallegos, the foreman of the local ranch who is filled with a primeval rage at God, at man, at life.

As they endeavor upon this simple, grand project, the three reveal themselves in cautiously resonant, profound ways. And in a voice of striking intimacy and grace, Carlson's novel reveals itself as a story of biblical, almost spiritual force. A bellwether return from one of our greatest craftsmen, *Five Skies* is sure to be one of the most praised and cherished novels of the year.

Insightful reviews

Elise Hamilton: I struggled with my rating for *Five Skies* and finally gave it a 5. It's not on my hard-to-get-onto "Best Books Ever" list, but it's not far from that. It's a very quiet book, and its power and impact took me by surprise. I'm not sure I've ever read a novel that focuses almost exclusively on male characters and the friendship that develops between them, in *Five Skies*, over the summer in which three men build a stunt ramp over a deep river gorge in Idaho. All three are broken men, each with very different pasts and reasons for their current state of despair, but they each seek absolution and come to find it as so many prophets have done: in the wilderness, in isolation. While they begin the summer in isolation, both from "civilization" and from each other, they are integral in the process of helping each other heal. *Five Skies* is, for lack of a better word, biblical. Each man is haunted by his past and cannot still the voices in his head that torment him. Yet as they work together, and the meditation of hard physical labor begins to work its curative power, they find a way to share their confessions, and to help each other find the forgiveness they seek. The men form the best kind of family, one in which the members support and respect one another, yet teach and challenge each other to be the best they can be. As I understand it, Ron Carlson is primarily a short-story writer and this is his first novel in 30 years. Though collected short-stories is not my preferred genre, I'll seek out other books by Carlson and will hope for another novel that doesn't take 30 years to produce.

Steven: Something about this novel drew me for a long time. It was on my wish list for over a year, and when I finally bought it, I started it immediately. I don't know why. It isn't the kind of book I'd normally be in a rush to read, but for some reason the idea of these three guys coming together and battling personal demons -- metaphorical demons, even -- really compelled me. Demons. Compel. See the influence of what I usually read? haha

Anyhoo, I loved this book up until the end. The three characters are beautifully drawn and their

interaction with one another seems very real, the way these kind of men would talk to each other. Ron Carlson's writing is lyrical and sweeping and minute and beautiful. Carlson moves from poetic descriptions of the vastness of the Idaho desert to the sparse dialogue in a way that perfectly contrasts the men and their surroundings, while at the same time showing how they fit together perfectly.

I had pretty much forgotten about the title of the book until the phrase "five skies" is used toward the end. Once it came up, though, the light bulb went on and I understood it. It's a very appropriate title.

My problem with the ending is that it is simply too abrupt. I can't go into why I think that without spoilers that would just ruin the book, so that's all that I'll say. The defining moment happens without anyone actually seeing it, and then the wrap-up comes too soon.

I listened to this as an audio book. As beautiful as Carlson's prose is, he was not the best choice to narrate the book. It was as though he was trying to keep his voice detached. The narration came across as flat, without a variance of inflection or accent for different characters. It wasn't as bad as, say Toni Morrison reading *Beloved*, but the audio would have been more enjoyable with a narrator as skilled in his craft as Carlson is with a keyboard. This is a book I will likely buy in paper to let the voice in my head reread.

David: There's a lot of emotion in this book for something that is, at least on the surface, about three guys building a ramp in nowhere Idaho. I love the lines too. Quiet, strong, and nothing that isn't needed. I do like me some Ron Carlson.

Vera Marie: As I learn *5 Skies* I spotted I used to be studying anything approximately my father, that I had by no means thought of before. That is the method it truly is with novels that upward thrust above the ordinary. Literature teaches us anything in regards to the humans we know, in addition to bringing to existence places and other people we do not know. "Measure twice, lower once," my father might say. His strict father, a tin smith who labored on furnaces and ductwork, insisted he do issues right. "Live in order that the area should be a bit greater in case you leave." even though my father by no means had formal education as an engineer, he had the soul of an engineer. I keep in mind him making diagrams for a way to plant a vegetable and flower garden. I be mindful the care that went in to getting a house improvement venture outfitted well. The major personality in *Five Skies*, Arthur, is termed an engineer, simply because that's the method he techniques his work. Idaho writer Ron Carlson might have been describing my father while he wrote this passage: "It lower throughout his grain to take advantage of a device for the inaccurate purpose. Arthur Key had by no means used a wrench as a hammer as soon as in his existence or a pliers as a hammer or a pliers the place a geared up wrench used to be the fitting tool." Any time I'm tempted to hit a nail with the deal with of a screw driver, I listen my father cautioning, "Always use the appropriate software for the ideal job." And those similarities among Arthur Key and my father bought me puzzling over the "why" of this predicament with doing issues right, and that I discovered that like Arthur, issues had long gone extraordinarily mistaken at one element in my father's life, and he felt pressured to maintain issues as orderly as possible, to maintain existence less than control. The novel *5 Skies* itself is crafted like a cautious workman's project, utilizing phrases rather than wooden and metal. not anything is

wasted. all of it suits perfectly. like the undertaking they're operating on, the existence tales of the 3 males slowly take shape. They speak it appears that evidently like operating males would, however the speech is solely poetry. A relations grows because the 3 strangers fill their roles, the younger man, the middle-aged man, and the older man. For all of them, paintings is the heart of attention. The paintings offers solace, it offers a feeling of worth, and it presents anything to fill empty areas and close down wondering the disagreeable past. Arthur says, "I think in work." Arthur's occupation earlier than he took this pick-up task at the rim of a canyon in Idaho, concerned growing illusions for movies. yet even illusions take cautious craftsmanship."He hated magic. It made humans careless and hopeful, and he had a low tolerance for something that passed over cause-effect."I take into account my father's disdain for jazz music. "How do they be aware of after they are finished?" All 3 males are right here engaged on this venture with a view to close out anything of their past, and Ron Carlson finds the tales slowly. We know about them as they know about each one other, and the younger man, Ronnie, earnings self assurance because the others turn into father figures instructing him approximately paintings and life. Idaho--with its mountains, cliffs, rivers, weather, and, yes, the skies-- turns into a personality during this novel. the lads discover ways to learn its story, too, and it alternately charms them and betrays them. The opt for a picnic within the canyon:]The river got here via this park winding in an ideal S and the sand and willows and twenty mammoth cottonwoods have been part within the shade. The air rode down the river aromatic with water and willows. That is the type of description that makes you need to see Idaho yourself. (Entire overview at A Traveler's Library.com)

Bookmarks Magazine: Ron Carlson-A form of Flying (2003), on the Jim Bridger (2002), The Inn Eden (1997)-is one of many best-kept secrets and techniques in American letters, even though he hasn't released a singular in 3 a long time (focusing on brief fiction instead), and he definitely does not make his dwelling on flash and dash. Nonetheless, he is one in all the easiest stylists operating today, his identify uttered besides these of Wallace Stegner, Thomas McGuane, Jim Harrison, Kent Haruf, and different writers who discover the terrain and special spirit of the yank West. Carlson's spare, character-driven paintings includes the mark of the real craftsman, deriving its strength from sure-footed prose, understated but poignant relationships, and a willing experience of place. a few critics observe a melodramatic ending, yet all of them suggest 5 Skies for the virtuosity of Carlson's prose. This is an excerpt from a overview released in Bookmarks magazine.

Deverius Jones: Profoundly relocating tale of 3 men, each one separated by means of a generation, haunted through previous mistakes, who come jointly in not going type to construct a good extra not going constitution in the midst of absolute nowhere, Idaho. Carlson's writing, and therapy of ostensibly mundane topic matter, is transcendent, even though i guess it reminds slightly Cormac McCarthy, the belief of the West as a kingdom of mind, anything that is nonetheless a great deal untamed for all our efforts. Like McCarthy, his discussion is honest, his prose crunchy, and he is a hugely expert dramatist, extra so than it's possible you'll supply him credits for considering the fact that no longer lots occurs in 5 Skies, only a lot of building work, a force right into a canyon, a fight, a fall, a fire. extra so than McCarthy, Carlson enjoys taking his time marveling on the basic and undying majesty of the environment, he is a miniaturist at heart: the descriptions of the sky, plateau, gorge, and town as well, are one of the so much elegant i have ever learn ("The poles and the neat stacks of lumber and the tent have been transparent

at the huge expanse. back it used to be a distinct view and made their efforts small. Key was once sobered by way of the panorama, and the vastness smothered his notions that the venture could succeed."). it is a ebook that i do know will suppose a different position in my memory, a kind of novels you learn at a undeniable time on your existence which turns out to talk to you directly, to have fallen into your fingers for the only goal of guiding you thru the present. It concludes with the searing assertion that we will be able to neither run from our earlier nor fix it; to take action is demise and destruction. we will be able to merely attempt to shoulder it as we stream directly to the "next thing."

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