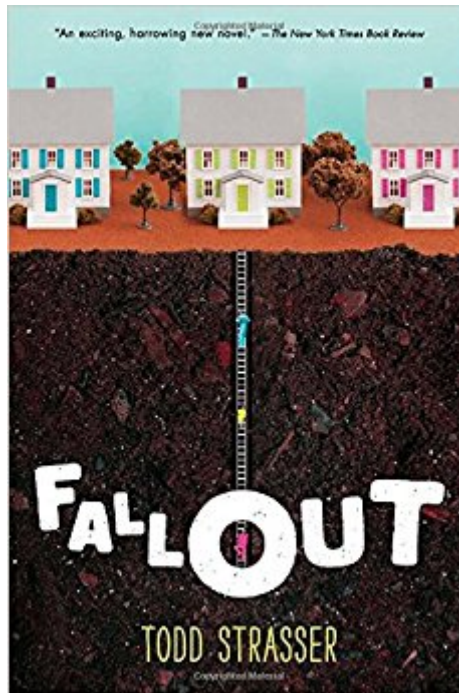




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Fallout



Synopsis

What if the bomb had actually been dropped? What if your family was the only one with a shelter? In the summer of 1962, the possibility of nuclear war is all anyone talks about. But Scott's dad is the only one in the neighborhood who actually prepares for the worst. As the neighbors scoff, he builds a bomb shelter to hold his family and stocks it with just enough supplies to keep the four of them alive for two critical weeks. In the middle of the night in late October, when the unthinkable happens, those same neighbors force their way into the shelter before Scott's dad can shut the door. With not enough room, not enough food, and not enough air, life inside the shelter is filthy, physically draining, and emotionally fraught. But even worse is the question of what will remain when the door is opened again. Internationally best-selling author Todd Strasser has written his most impressive and personal novel to date, ruthlessly yet sensitively exploring the terrifying what-ifs of one of the most explosive moments in human history.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 5-8 "Dad had a gun. Mom was letting us eat in the den. Could there be any clearer signs that the end of the world was approaching? During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Scott's father builds a bomb shelter in their backyard. Most of the neighbors ridicule the idea, but the

day the bombs do go off, those same neighbors try desperately to get into the shelter. A few of them do get in, along with Scott's family, while the rest perish outside. The extra people, along with the lack of supplies, make for cramped, uncomfortable conditions, and tempers flare. They might be safe now, but what awaits them if they ever leave? The chapters alternate between the current conditions in the shelter and the months leading up to the bombs dropping. Before, Scott lives a normal sixth-grader's life, but in the back of everyone's minds are the worries about the Russians and their nuclear missiles. Scott's friend Ronny challenges him to some neighborhood mischief, justifying it with, "We might not be here tomorrow." Eventually Scott and Ronny have a knock-down fight, stopping only when Scott's father pulls them apart. At the end of the story, the shelter's inhabitants leave to find what's left of their world. The alternating chapters might be confusing at first, but it doesn't take long to get into the rhythm. Enough background about the time period is woven into the story so children unfamiliar with the Cuban Missile Crisis will have a basic knowledge of what happened. A well-written, compelling story with an interesting twist on how history might have turned out.

—Diana Pierce, formerly at Leander High School, TX

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Inspired by the summer of 1962 when his family built a bomb shelter, Strasser's alternate-history novel about the Cuban missile crisis is a suspenseful, quietly emotional account of the unthinkable: nuclear war. Eleven-year-old Scott is the only kid on the block with a bomb shelter. Though the neighborhood kids tease, while their parents act disdainful, when the sirens sound, they mob the shelter and force their way in. After a furious struggle, during which Scott's mother is seriously injured, the shelter is sealed with 10 people inside, 6 more than planned for and with many more left outside. As time passes and the supplies dwindle, grief, guilt, and fear turn the relationships among the adults ugly, even sparking talks of who should be put out. Strasser nicely contrasts this oppressive life, where Scott becomes aware of adult conflicts, with his innocence during the weeks leading up to the bomb. The titular fallout isn't just the environmental aftermath of the nuclear bomb but the survivors' emotional devastation, believably filtered through Scott's sensitive but well-rendered child's perspective. Grades 5-8.

--Krista Hutley --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

I really loved FALLOUT. I started this book expecting a fantasy story, but I got so much more. Strasser alternates chapters from before the bomb is dropped with chapters afterward, when Scott

and his family are crammed into their bomb shelter with a few other families from his neighborhood. The "before" chapters are a beautiful rendering of what growing up in the 60s must have really been like: the usual petty dramas of childhood juxtaposed with the fear and unease of the Cold War. I was particularly moved by the way the different neighborhood kids reacted to the threat of The Bomb. Young as they are, they all understand the dire truth that "we could all be gone tomorrow," and the way they react to this fact is fascinating. The "after" chapters are where things get really intense, though. Through Scott's eyes, we see the grown-ups' behavior deteriorate, and the entire experience in the shelter is both physically and emotionally taxing for him (as it is for everyone) as he navigates not just his survival, but the loss of his innocence. In the end, when Scott's father tells him "you conducted yourself like a man," we can see how proud Scott must feel, given that some of the ACTUAL grown men in the shelter had behaved so badly. The subtlety of all these emotions and interactions is even more impressive when you consider that Strasser wrote this book in a spare, simple style with short, tense chapters that young readers will devour. This is truly a great read, both for the young audience it was written for, but also for any adults who happen to come upon it.

When I was looking for a good historical fiction book, my best friend told me that a book will "FALLOUT of the sky." Then she showed me fallout... It is really an amazing book that shows a life of a young boy who is trapped in a bunker from the radiation that is outside... Although the bunker was built for his own family of four, a lot of others manage to get in, in time, not planning for this to happen, the father decides to ration the food and water... Many are hungry, thirsty, and willing to "let some go," this amazing book has turned me inside out and will do the same for future readers.

“Fallout” is a historical fiction novel by Matthew Strasser. It is set in 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The story follows a young boy named Scott who is trapped in a bomb shelter with his family and other neighbors. The book is written in a simple, spare style with short, tense chapters. It is a great read for both young and adult audiences.

My 11-year old son really liked the book. He says it was "intense." While he was reading it, we had several good conversations related to U.S. History and the Cold War. The Civil Rights movement is the backdrop of the story, and it afforded us some opportunities to discuss real-life people and events from the Movement. And Strasser's use of the Cuban Missile Crisis related well with the current shift in U.S./Cuba relations. Overall, Strasser offers some good alternate-historical fiction with well-written characters.

this book is really good! the transition from past to present really sets the mood of this horrific yet fascinating book.

The book is just as riveting and the discretion would lead you to believe.

I really enjoyed this read. Finished it in one sitting.

This a great book for a person who likes history and questions if the bomb really had been dropped on that day

I have never read a book picturing nuclear war as well as this. He was able to explain the horrors of survival and how the human race could destroy themselves at any moment.

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