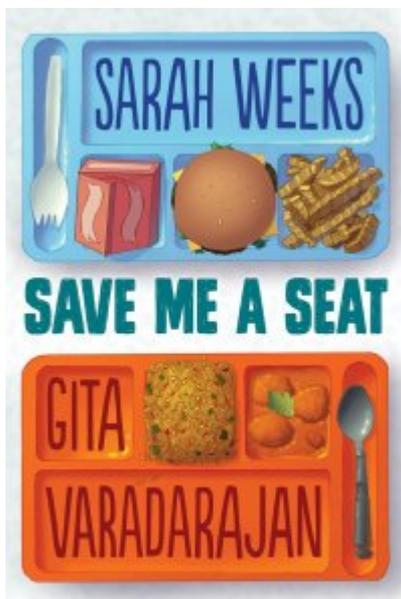


Book review by KidsMustRead.com: Save Me a Seat



'Save Me a Seat' written by Sarah Weeks and Gita Varadarajan, is an absorbing middle-school story that showcases the character development of its main characters set against the backdrop of cultural differences in an American public school.

Ravi Suryanarayanan and Joe Sylvester go to the same school – Albert Einstein Elementary School in New Jersey in America – but they could not be more different people. Ravi is the new fifth-grade kid, whose family has just moved to America while Joe is a veteran of the school. Ravi may be new but he brims with confidence about his proficiency in academics and sports and wants to be noticed. On the other hand, Joe, who has a problem processing things when there are loud noises, tries his best to appear invisible even though he is good at academics. Ravi recognizes that Dillon, a fellow Indian, is the most popular boy in class and wants to be his friend, while Joe, who has been at the receiving end of Dillon's bullying, wants to steer clear of him. Prejudices, culture, misunderstandings, the older generation, and even food drive a wedge between the boys. When Dillon Samreen decides to have some 'fun' at Ravi's expense, will Ravi finally see Dillon for who he is? Will the two boys ever be friends? Read the book to find out.

For Parents: The standout aspect of this book is that authors, Sarah Weeks and Gita Varadarajan, have written this book in co-operation. Gita Varadarajan writes Ravi's story while Sarah Weeks writes Joe's story and the resulting organic alternating point of view narrative brings authenticity to the voice of the story, the cultural practices, and challenges faced by the

characters. Ravi's evolution from a cocky and eager-to-stand-out child to one who realizes his mistakes is a great example of character development. Ravi, the 'popular' boy in his school in India, casually makes fun of another child but realizes that it's not fun when the shoe is on the other foot and he is the one being made fun of in America. Joe, who likes to keep to himself, learns to form a friendship by bridging cultural divides and overlooking his father's prejudices.

Recommended age: This book is a must-read for children 9+ years.



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