English 1 Mrs. Moldenhauer

Mrs. Gillman A Long Walk to Water essay

12/3/14

Salva Dut, a man who has already inspired millions of people by his survival through the Sudanese civil war, would probably tell you that he was able to do it by relying on adults and being resourceful. Linda Sue Park’s novel, A Long Walk to Water tells the story of Salva Dut and his amazing ability to survive in impossible situations.Snapping crocodiles in a blood-filled river, gun-toting outlaws, and an angry swarm of bees… Salva experienced all this and more, yet kept going.

If it weren’t for the incredible and reliable adults Salva encountered, he surely wouldn’t have survived. By sheer coincidence, he finds his uncle on the walk to Ethiopia, “We are together now, so I will look after you!” (35). Salva’s uncle is more than willing to protect Salva from the dangers of the open savannahs, including possible attacks by lions. Even an old woman who didn’t know Salva at all helped him out, “This one is alone, will you take him with you?” (21). When the old woman decides she must move away because of the fighting, she makes sure Salva will be taken care of by getting a group of passersby to take him into their care. Any of us would be fortunate to have such caring adults on which we could rely in a time of need.

Salva’s resourcefulness clearly played a role in his survival as well. He quickly realized that he had an opportunity to learn English, “ …he was working hard because he wanted to learn to read English before Michael left…”(87). Salva knew he could use Michael as an English teacher before he left the camp and that this knowledge could benefit him if he ever did go to the U.S. Salva and the others with whom he was travelling needed food and did not have the means to get it. “ He had heard of this, that the Jur-chol could follow the call of the bird called the honey guide!”(24). Salva helped harvest the honey and paid the price with some stings. If you are hungry enough, it is worth it to find food in unlikely places. Finding what you need when you need it makes you resourceful.

How do people like Salva survive such terrible times? In Salva’s case, finding adults who were willing and able to rescue him as well as his own clever resourcefulness saved him from doom time and time again. You cannot read a book like this and walk away without being changed. Whether it’s developing a new appreciation for water or living in safety and security each day, your life would be changed by understanding Salva’s story.