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Darkness Brutal (The Dark Cycle Book 1)



Synopsis

Aidan O'Linn's childhood ended the night he saw a demon kill his mother and mark his sister, Ava, with Darkness. Since then, every three years the demons have returned to try to claim her. Living in the gritty, forgotten corners of Los Angeles, Aidan has managed to protect his sister, but he knows that even his powers to fight demons and speak dead languages won't keep her safe for much longer. In desperation, Aidan seeks out the help of Sid, the enigmatic leader of a group of teens who run LA Paranormal, an Internet reality show that fights demons and ghosts. In their company, Aidan believes he's finally found a haven for Ava. But when he meets Kara, a broken girl who can spin a hypnotic web of passionate energy, he awakens powers he didn't know he had and unleashes a new era of war between the forces of Light and the forces of Darkness. With the fate of humanity in his hands, can Aidan keep the Darkness at bay and accept his brilliant, terrifying destiny?

Book Information

File Size: 4201 KB

Print Length: 425 pages

Publisher: Skyscape (July 1, 2015)

Publication Date: July 1, 2015

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00S6Z3S82

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #6,934 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #30

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Customer Reviews

First, I think this is a very talented author who develops characters well and makes you care about

them. She is clearly capable of creating imaginative storylines. My issue with this book is that there are too many storylines here. This is not one series. It is at least two, and squashing all of these ideas and characters in one story, made me want to throw up my hands. I'm fine with the demons and the demon fighter with a gift for languages. I'm even O.K. with the witch who makes a bargain with a demon. I don't know what to do with the side plot about psychic teen grifters, but I get that our hero needs a supporting cast. The author loses me when she throws in time-traveling old testament prophets, and at least one guardian angel. Everyone has secrets and the teen angst and hormones are thick on the ground, and because she has thrown too many plots into this stew, you begin to really notice the flaws and become less absorbed in the story. I suppose teenagers with ADD would find this a great weekly series on the CW, as another reviewer said. This is a worthy author, who deserves a really strong editor - with a red pen, and a multi-series contract.

When I began reading this, I had few expectations that it would be any good, or that I'd even finish it. The story synopsis made it seem only slightly more appealing than the other Kindle First options for June, but I'm a sucker for a free book. I figured that if I didn't like the book, I'd put it down, no money out. Frankly, I expected bad writing. (For some reason, stories involving demons, wizards, etc., that are set in contemporary times seem to suffer from a breeziness that I suspect the author intends to indicate cleverness (or sophistication?). I find that style embarrassing and annoying.) However, after getting just a few pages into this book, I was pleasantly surprised that that writing was workmanlike, unpretentious, and did a good job of telling the story without getting in the way. The story-telling was well-paced and the plot held my attention throughout. The dialog was competent. The characters were interesting. I'll look forward to reading the second book when it comes out. I'll even pay for it.

This was my Kindle First choice for June, and I picked up the audible edition a month later when it was released. I knew I'd eventually read it, but I didn't have a specific time frame in mind. That is, until I saw it was a choice on the YA Debut Author tour. I asked to feature this one, not expecting to actually get it. I was quite excited when I opened my email and saw my name next to it on the schedule. Anyway, I had this on whispersync so I could follow along with it while he was driving. This meant I could totally read ahead a bit and pretend like I totally expected things that were going to happen. Also, I'm apparently annoying as hell to listen to an audiobook with, because I loudly commentate on things. ...little does he know, I do the exact same thing when I read the books. I just usually do that under my breath or in a room by myself. I am an emotional reader! One thing I

absolutely enjoyed about this story was how much of it I honestly did not expect. I'm used to having some idea of what is going to happen, but I was taken off guard so many times - which made things even more emotional for me. It is REALLY hard to put into words how I felt about this book without stepping in to spoiler territory. Just know, you should read it. Now. And then send me a message and fangirl over it with me, because it was awesome. My gawd. When does the second book come out? I need that in my life yesterday. Check out the full review here:

<http://www.platypire.com/j-hooligan/darkness-brutal-by-rachel-a-marks>

I received a copy of this book through the Kindle first to read program. This is a pretty interesting read if you can handle demons and angels. Aidan was born with the ability to see demons and to read ancient languages. His sister, too, is a little something different. Their mother always warned him to hide his abilities, but as a dangerous date nears, he is forced to seek help from a ragtag bunch of kids with unique abilities and a man who insists that Aidan is a key to something very important. This is a book that uses what you (and the narrator) don't know to keep twisting the story and driving the suspense. It was a little frustrating, but, to be fair, you often don't realize that people are withholding info until it is reveal time. The overall plot line is pretty heavy on a strange mix of religion and demonology. I'm sure my deeply religious grandmother would not approve of the combination, and it will probably be an uneasy read for people who aren't sure how they feel about interpretations of religious history/texts with magical and mystical elements. Pacing is fairly consistent, and there is a lot of action, but the big issue of a sexual attraction/romance does bog down the story with a lot of will we or won't we. Character development was a little iffy. Aidan is clearly drawn and given a good dose of dark and light. The other characters often feel like characters instead of people. There were a lot of characters living in the "safe house," and they got confusing, especially the guys. One of them who was barely introduced as an individual played a key part towards the end of the story and I kept trying to remember who he was before he became important. Overall, this is probably a book I could have lived without reading, but for the right audience, it could be very engaging. Mature language and frequent references to sensuality make this most appropriate for mature high school readers.

The writing is smooth, the characters are interesting and complex, and the plot line works. But what I admire the most is the complex world building. Borrowing from Jewish and Christian tradition and folklore, the author has created a very rich world. I can't wait for the rest of the series.

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