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The Darkest Minds

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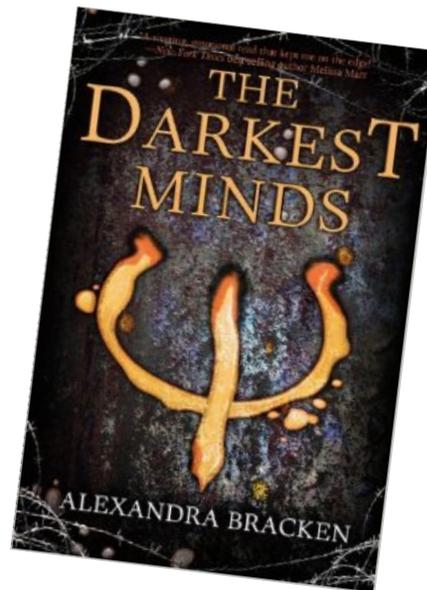
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Book Review

Title: The Darkest Minds
Author: Alexandra Bracken
Reviewer: Liz Kazandzhy
Publisher: Disney-Hyperion
Publication Year: 2012
ISBN: 9781423157373
Number of Pages: 496
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Outstanding



Review

This dystopian novel begins as a disease sweeps across America, killing most children but having a much different effect on those who survive: the development of supernatural abilities. Ruby is a young girl who manifests these abilities and soon finds herself in one of the government's many "rehabilitation camps" called Thurmond, where she spends the next several years as a prisoner with other teens who are similar to her (labeled "Psi"). Eventually she escapes with the help of the Children's League, an anti-government program, but quickly escapes from them as well upon realizing that their intentions not entirely trustworthy. She soon finds her way into the company of Liam, Chubs, and Zu, three other Psi teens, and they travel together, constantly in danger of being killed or captured. They search for and find a place called East River, a refuge for Psi children, but soon even this place becomes unreliable, and Ruby and her friends end up in the hands of the Children's League once more.

This book is absolutely riveting, not just because of the fascinating setting and plot but because the writing itself lends to keeping the audience engaged, both with the characters and the world that they live in. The storyline and character personas are so far from predictable that you are in a constant state of surprise, and the uncertainty that the reader feels is certainly reflective of the state of Ruby's dystopian world. As a kind of hybrid between X-Men and The Hunger Games, this book will appeal to any teen or adult who is a fan of that kind of sci-fi and action. Consistent with the title, *The Darkest Minds* indeed has a "dark" feel to it, but it is offset by the inner goodness of the main characters and their hope for a better world. Character development is subtle but powerful, complete with a medium dose of enjoyable romance, and it is fascinating to watch Ruby's transformation from a confused and fearful child to a young woman who is confident in her abilities and ready to take on the world.

*Contains moderate to severe language.