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The Vault of Dreamers

Liz Kazandzhy

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Book Review

Title: The Vault of Dreamers
Author: Caragh M. O'Brien
Reviewer: Liz Kazandzhy
Publisher: Roaring Brook Press
Publication Year: 2014
ISBN: 9781596439382
Number of Pages: 432
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Excellent



Review

Rosie Sinclair has just been accepted to the prestigious Forge School, an elite high school for art students and also the source of the nation's most famous television program, *The Forge Show*. Viewers get constant feeds of all the students at Forge and help determine who stays and goes. After miraculously making it through the first cut (with the help of her new boyfriend Linus and some new popular friends), Rosie is relieved to be staying in the Forge School. However, she begins skipping the sleeping pills that they are given every night and starts to discover some suspicious activity. She begins to spy on the school under the pretense that she's working on a school project. She also continues skipping her sleeping pills, preferring instead to discuss her concerns over a walkie-talkie with Linus. She also uses that time to explore the secrets that Sandy Berg, the school dean, seems to be keeping about dream mining and seeding, an illegal medical endeavor involving harvesting dreams from people and giving them to others. In the end, Rosie is caught breaking the rules and considered insane for her incredulous accusations, but she finally learns the truth about Dean Berg's secret operations.

In a time when many dystopian young adult romance novels seem predictable, stale, and sometimes overly dramatic, *The Vault of Dreamers* is pleasantly fresh, creative, and balanced. Rosie is a very likable character—independent, compassionate, spunky, intelligent, and humble. The romance between Rosie and Linus is believable, enjoyable, and directly connected with the plot, not sappy and tangential like in some YA novels. As for the plot, it was riveting from beginning to end and timely unfolded itself, both physically and psychologically. The idea of a broadcasted high school brings in themes of self-worth and the teenage tendency to “perform” for others, and it also questions what is ethical when it comes to education, television, and science. Overall, this is an extremely engaging and enjoyable book that will hook the audience into reading until the very last page and then anxiously awaiting the sequel.

*Contains mild language, mild violence, and mild sexual content.