



2016

Asylum

Cynthia Frazier

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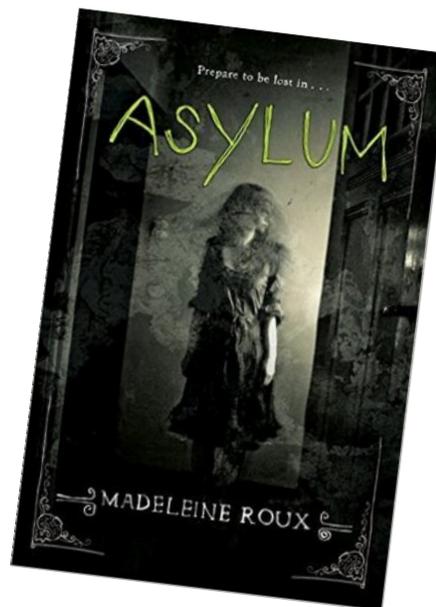
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Book Review

Title: Asylum
Author: Madeleine Roux
Reviewer: Cynthia Frazier
Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers
Publication Year: 2013
ISBN: 9780062220967
Number of Pages: 310
Interest Level: Intermediate, Young Adult
Rating: Dependable



Review

Dan is sixteen and has come to New Hampshire College Prep to get a jump on college courses over the summer. Since the regular dorms are under renovation, students are assigned rooms in an old crumbling structure, a former psychiatric hospital called Brookline. Dan and his new friends Abby and Jordan decide to explore the building and discover disturbing photographs of patients and old case files in a dusty office. Curiosity leads the trio in detecting a hidden door leading to an old operating theater in the basement. Murders start happening, strange notes appear in Dan's room, messages are sent from his phone that he didn't send, and he is plagued by bad dreams. Just when things couldn't be creepier, it turns out that the former warden of Brookline's name was Daniel Crawford, which is Dan's name, and one of Abby's aunts was a patient, and Jordan also has connections to Brookline.

This novel could have been very good but the protagonist Dan, a socially awkward young man, has always had a hard time making friends. However, within hours of arriving he makes two bosom buddies and one, Abby, becomes more than a friend. This love interest seems to be inserted by the author as something that is necessary for a successful YA novel. The cover of the book is interesting and reminiscent of a series of novels by Ransom Riggs who uses actual vintage photographs of mysterious people to illustrate his books. However, the images that are included in *Asylum* don't seem real, nor do they support the plot. A good mystery plot doesn't lead the reader by the nose to answers. Hints and clues are given out that direct the reader to possibilities. *Asylum's* author practically points a finger to the person responsible for the murders. As this is the first book in a series (#2 *Sanctum* and #3 *Catacomb*) perhaps Roux will more fully flesh out her characters and build on the storyline introduced in *Asylum* through these subsequent books.

*Contains mild language.