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Blackhearts

Tessa McMillan

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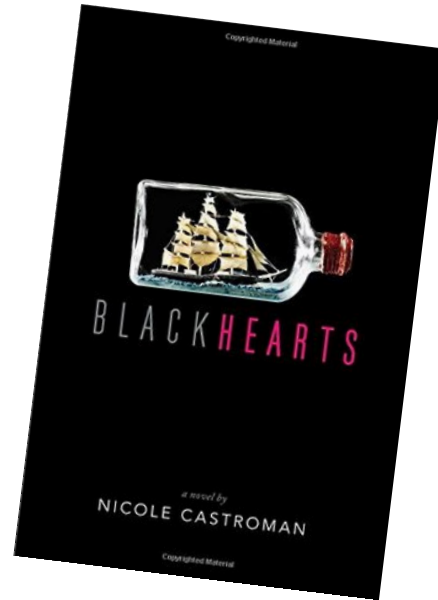
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Book Review

Title: Blackhearts
Author: Nicole Castroman
Reviewer: Tessa McMillan
Publisher: Simon Pulse
Publication Year: 2016
ISBN: 9781481432696
Number of Pages: 384
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Outstanding



Review

For five months Anne has been surviving servitude to the rich shipping merchant, Master Drummond. However, Anne secretly plans to escape to the West Indies—the location where Anne’s English father and her West Indian mother fell in love. Anne’s goal is sidetracked when she meets Master Drummond’s son, Edward “Teach”. Teach, freshly returned from a year at sea, is immediately drawn to Anne because of her strength, intelligence, and beauty. Teach offers her friendship, but she hesitates because he is engaged. As time goes by, the pair cannot deny they have met their match in one another. Teach decides to end his engagement, but his intended bride and Teach’s father refuse Teach’s decision. It isn’t until Anne reveals that Teach’s fiancé is pregnant by another man that the engagement ends. But when Teach openly courts Anne, Master Drummond pays to send Anne away to comfortably live in the West Indies. Unfortunately, the people he paid to watch over Anne take the money and leave Anne abandoned on a boat. Teach secretly secures a position on one of his father’s ships to pursue Anne’s vessel.

After visiting sites associated with the pirate Blackbeard, Castroman began wondering what motivated Blackbeard to become a pirate. From these musings and her research, Castroman created *Blackhearts*, her debut teen novel. Castroman puts forward a noteworthy piece of literature that will have readers spellbound by her two incredibly strong, leading characters: Anne and Teach. Anne doesn’t know where she belongs because of her English/West Indian background. All she knows is that she needs to escape. Teach doesn’t want to live an aristocratic lifestyle. All he knows is he needs an escape. When the two meet, Anne finds a refuge and Teach finds an equal. With *Blackhearts*, Castroman expertly shows that a book can still be considered a “romance” when sex is not included. Anne and Teach’s relationship is more of a meeting of minds and hearts, similar to characters like Jane Eyre and Mr. Rochester. A bright literary future awaits Castroman if she creates such quality reads like *Blackhearts*.