The Alchemy of Forever

Jess Verzello

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Book Review

Title: The Alchemy of Forever  
Author: Avery Williams  
Reviewer: Jess Verzello  
Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books For Young Readers  
Publication Year: 2012  
ISBN: 9781442443167  
Number of Pages: 256  
Interest Level: Young Adult  
Rating: Dependable

Review

On the night of Seraphina’s first ball, she is murdered and then miraculously saved by an ingenious alchemic serum administered by her first love, Cyrus. Six hundred years later, Sera and Cy are living in the heart of Oakland, California, with their coven of fellow Incarnates—individuals who can transfer their souls from one body to another to achieve immortality. However, in order to live Sera and the others must take a new body every ten years; murdering to stay alive. The guilt has overcome Sera, fear has replaced love in her relationship with Cyrus, and she is determined to get away and end this cycle. On the night of her escape, circumstances find Sera taking the life of a local sixteen-year-old girl named Kailey and inhabiting her life. Sera finds herself actually living for the first time in her life with a real family, friends, and the sweet neighbor boy Noah. Torn between the guilt of stealing Kailey’s life and the joy in actually living, Sera almost finds peace until she realizes that Cyrus knows exactly where she is and will stop at nothing to destroy everything she has come to love.

The Alchemy of Forever is entertaining, but not a substantial read. The idea of the Incarnates and their version of immortality is an interesting twist, but fell short of its potential. Avery Williams does address the issues of Seraphina’s inner conflict with murdering innocent people, escaping her abusive relationship, and living a normal life. However, the characters remained flat throughout the novel and it was difficult to genuinely care for what happened to them. There seemed to be a disconnect between the fact that Sera has been alive for six hundred years and only recently has developed a guilt for killing thousands of innocent girls and then can’t even follow through with her resolve to end the cycle. The one saving grace of this book was that it is very well written and edited. Often with lighter novels such as The Alchemy of Forever, the writing caliber is disappointing. This is not the case with Williams’s style and I look forward to her future works.

*Contains mild language and violence.