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Dead To You

Lisa Packard

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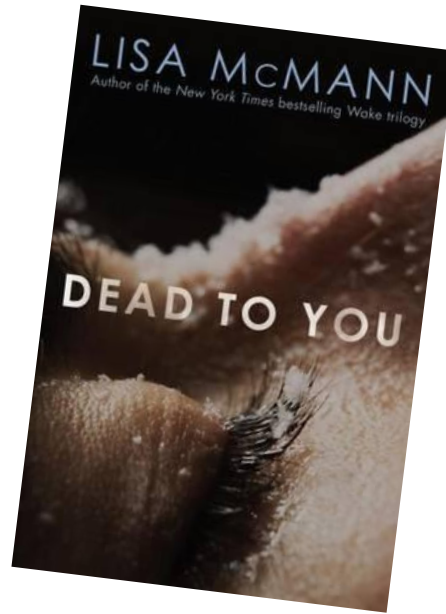
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Book Review

Title: Dead To You
Author: Lisa McMann
Reviewer: Lisa Packard
Publisher: Simon Pulse
Publication Year: 2012
ISBN: 9781442403895
Number of Pages: 243
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Excellent



Review

Ethan has finally found his family. He was taken as a child and raised by a woman named Ellen, but she abandoned him. He realizes that Ellen is not his true family and after searching, he finds them, the De Wildes, in Minnesota. As he tries to get used to being in a family again with people who love him, his younger brother Blake doesn't trust him. Blake insists he's a fake, especially if Ethan can't remember anything before the abduction. He doesn't even remember grandparents or neighbors and it causes distrust and torment in his family. Just as he begins to feel welcome and accepted, the police show up at the door. They have found the remains of the true Ethan De Wilde, who was killed nine years earlier. That's when Ethan starts to remember that his real name is David and his mom was Ellen, not a kidnapper. Ellen left him because she could no longer take care of him. When David found the De Wildes with a missing son, he started to believe he was Ethan, when all he really wanted was a family to love him. In the end, David runs away from the De Wildes before he can cause anymore pain.

McMann brings to light the frustration a teenager would feel about being abandoned, confused, and misplaced. As the story progresses and the reader can understand Ethan better, and it becomes clear that he doesn't know how to deal with love and kindness after so much loss. Even when Ethan is taken by surprise, he is unsure of how he should react. Readers can gain insight to how difficult life can be for someone that has been on the streets and doesn't really belong anywhere and what kind of toll it can take on them mentally and physically. Because Ethan is a teenager, another conflict he is dealing with is how to interact with and around girls. Although Ethan is experiencing these changes and has these physical reactions to just a touch or a word from a girl, it doesn't feel essential to the story and distracts from the overall message of finding a sense of belonging to someone. However, this would be a great to read for dealing with family problems. The De Wildes may not have the best sense of communication, but they embody a family who are trying. There is a lot of pain and anger that the character Blake goes through. And although he is a secondary character, he gives an excellent insight to how difficult family situations affect other family members. *Dead To You* is most appropriate for older audiences who will understand the intense emotions and content of this book.

*Contains moderate violence, severe language and sexual content.