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# Arcadia #1: Arcadia Awakens

Lisa Packard

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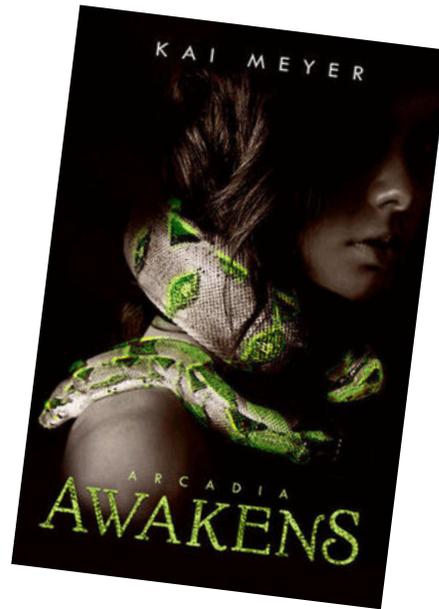
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# Book Review

**Title:** Arcadia #1: Arcadia Awakens  
**Author:** Kai Meyer  
**Reviewer:** Lisa Packard  
**Publisher:** Harper Collins Publishers  
**Publication Year:** 2012  
**ISBN:** 9780062006066  
**Number of Pages:** 451  
**Interest Level:** Young Adult  
**Rating:** Excellent



## Review

Rosa is traveling to Sicily, the home of her ancestors, and along the way meets an attractive young man by the name of Alessandro. Unfortunately, he is off-limits. Alessandro and Rosa's families are rivals. As she is taken into her aunts home, she realizes not everything is as it seems. Rosa knew her family was in the mafia, but she was unaware of their supernatural secret: they are shapeshifters. Rosa and her family can turn into snakes, but her family isn't the only supernatural one. All the ancient mafia families that live in Sicily, including Alessandro's family, have the shapeshifting ability. Alessandro's family can transform into large cats such as tigers or panthers. As Rosa starts to understand the secrets and deals the ancient families make, she's going to have to make a few of her own to stay alive and keep Alessandro alive as well. In the end, she becomes the head of her family and Alessandro the head of his. They team up to look for clues on what really happened to their families and the truth behind their supernatural abilities.

Meyer puts a great spin on Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Although Alessandro and Rosa live, they do suffer major losses. There are many parallels between the two stories like forbidden love, rival families, and protective friends. Meyer also adds a wonderful, supernatural twist of shapeshifting. The author addresses the gravity and emotions that Rosa and Alessandro face with their dangerous situation. They can't help falling in love with one another, but the physical and emotional conflict around them makes their relationship very precarious. Even as Rosa tries to understand her feelings for Alessandro, you can feel the fear of the change that will bring in their relationship, not only in their families, but with each other. It's clear that Meyer did his research on Sicily and even of Arcadia. He not only brought in wonderful scenic landscapes, but even brought in Greek mythology of where the shapeshifting started. Rosa and Alessandro grow and develop as characters throughout the book. They start out as these lost teenagers, but they start to realize that they need to stand up for themselves and fight to survive. By the end of the book, they are strong leaders that no one wants to cross. Arcadia Awakens is a great book to read for those who are interested in Romeo and Juliet, but may struggle with its original context and language.

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