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Bound by Blood and Sand

Abigail Packard

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Book Review

Title: Bound by Blood and Sand

Author: Becky Allen

Reviewer: Abigail Packard

Publisher: Delacorte Press

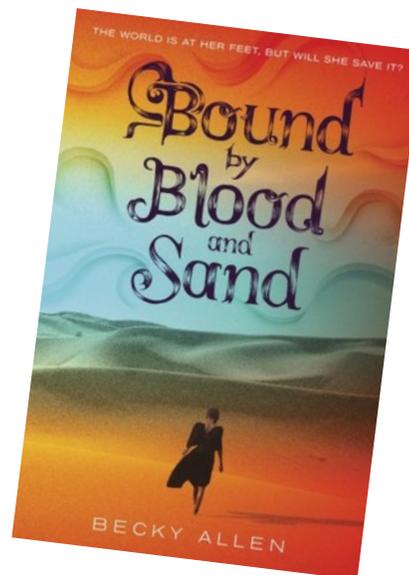
Publication Year: 2016

ISBN: 9781101932148

Number of Pages: 320

Interest Level: Young Adult

Rating: Dependable



Review

Jae is a Closest, a slave cursed to obey all commands. She lives in the outskirts of her desert country and works as a gardener of Aredann. But a water shortage sends Elan, a Highest, to analyze the small estate and decide whether to keep it running. But Elan is convinced the magic binding the water to the kingdom can be found in Aredann. During her work, Jae unwittingly awakens the magic that has been slowly evaporating. Elan discovers her magic and commands her to not use it outside of his presence. But Jae is able to finally break free of the curse and becomes a threat to the order the Highest strive to maintain. Jae, Elan, and Tal escape Aredann and flee into the desert, intent upon discovering the legendary Well. After a perilous trek, they find the Well and learn that it is shrinking because of the curse placed upon the true descendants of the mages that first bound the Well and its magic to the land. Tal sacrifices himself to give Jae and Elan more time to break the curse on all the Closest.

Becky Allen's first novel in this series is intriguing. The idea of a cursed population bound to obey and a magic that only survives because of this class acts as a great introduction to the series. Allen carefully unfolds the mysteries surrounding the magic and its history one memory at a time. However, the magic system is not fully explained beyond vague descriptions. Additionally, Allen's characters leave much to be desired. Jae seems to only ever be angry, enraged, and vengeful. Elan was the more interesting of the two characters, providing some interesting dilemmas of family, tradition, and truth, yet he lacked a true backbone. The relationships between Tal and Jae and Jae and Elan are flat and underdeveloped. Despite these flaws, the novel provides some provoking moral dilemmas and unique fantasy elements that readers will be excited to explore in later installments of the series.

*Contains moderate sexual content and mild violence.