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The Walls Around Us

Abigail Packard

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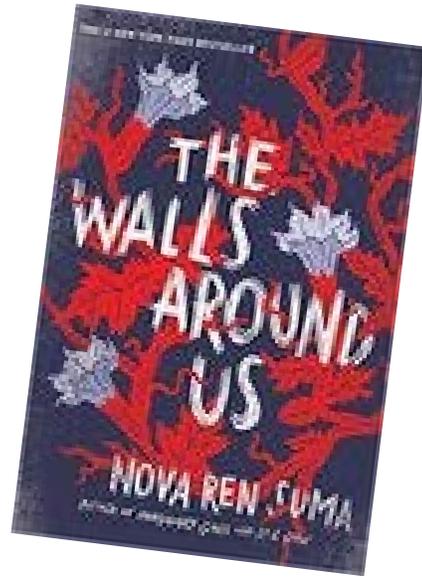
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Book Review

Title: The Walls Around Us
Author: Nova Ren Suma
Reviewer: Abigail Packard
Publisher: Algonquin Young Readers
Year: 2015
ISBN: 9781616203726
Pages: 336
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Excellent



Review

Violet and Ori have been best friends since their first ballet class, but their relationship is tense as Violet, living a life of luxury and riches, doesn't seem to have all that Ori, a poor girl living with her truck driver dad, does. Ori dances with an ease and grace that everyone notices while Violet has precise talent that's stilted and always overshadowed. After Ori gets the star part and Violet's enemies threaten to expose her as a slut, Violet stabs two girls with a box cutter behind the ballet theater. Ori runs out to find Violet and Violet turns everything on Ori, blaming her for the two deaths. Ori is found guilty of Violet's crime and sent to a juvenile detention center. Ori becomes Amber's cellmate and ends up telling Amber everything. But Ori never finds justice as a horrible accident kills all of the inmates. When Violet visits the detention center a year later, she is forced to confront her guilt and admit her crimes.

The Walls Around Us is a phenomenal, mysterious, ethereal read filled with stunning, atmospheric language. Nova Ren Suma has crafted this novel brilliantly, giving readers glimpses of information and writing from two unreliable points of view. And despite the superstition and crimes surrounding Amber, Ori, and Violet, readers will feel an undeniable tug of sympathy for all of the girls. However, because of the writing style the story is hard to completely grasp as it moves from one point of view to another, from past to present, and from solid reality to supernaturalism. Moreover, the ending is particularly troubling and confusing, leaving readers confounded and a bit unsatisfied. Despite the confusion, or maybe even because of it, Suma's novel will captivate young minds with this eerie ghost story about truth, perceptions, deceptions, and justice.