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And I Darken

Abigail Packard

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Book Review

Title: And I Darken
Author: Kiersten White
Reviewer: Abigail Packard
Publisher: Delacorte Press
Year: 2016
ISBN: 9780553522310
Pages: 496
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Excellent



Review

Lada and Radu are siblings, children of the Wallachian prince, but they couldn't be more different. Where Lada wraps herself in layers of anger and stark realism, Radu is kind and sensitive. When they are sent to the Ottoman Empire as pawns in a political game, Lada is furious, but Radu is open to the new culture, particularly the religion of Islam. The siblings find common ground in Mehmed, the third son of the sultan. Lada creates a fiercely passionate and loyal relationship with him while Radu harbors strong, forbidden feelings for Mehmed. When Mehmed becomes heir to the throne in an unsuspected twist of events, Lada and Radu rise at his side. But there are many that try desperately to undermine Mehmed's rule and the siblings must save him from an assassin. Lada returns to Wallachia as an ambassador for Mehmed and Radu stays in the empire to help rebuild the network of nobility and leaders around Mehmed.

Kiersten White's first novel in the Conqueror's Saga is an intense, caustic web of political and romantic relationships, intriguing plot twists, and thrilling historical backdrops. Radu and Lada are so starkly different that they stand out brilliantly against each other as the story unravels from their two perspectives. Their different relationships with Mehmed are often agonizingly painful to read about, but tend to be lacking somewhat because Mehmed's character isn't fully flushed out. However, White does an incredible job of weaving all of the historical facts of this age with the fictional elements of her characters and their backgrounds and struggles. The story is extremely complex which lends itself to being confusing at times, but the details envelop the readers in the story's richness. White leaves many ties not only undone, but still completely tangled at the end of this first novel, promising readers an equally gritty and compelling sequel.

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