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The Language of Thorns: Midnight Tales and Dangerous Magic

Natalie Hatch

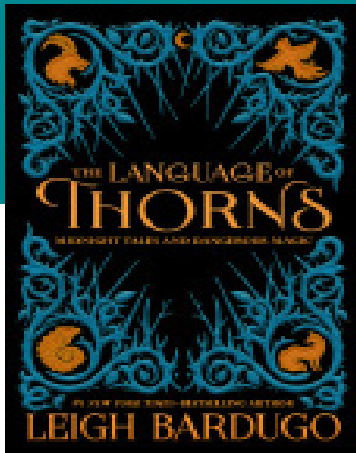
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Book Review

The Language of Thorns: Midnight Tales and Dangerous Magic

Author

Leigh Bardugo

Illustrator

Sara Kipin

Reviewer

Natalie Hatch

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Intermediate, Young Adult

Pages

279

Year

2017

Publisher

Imprint

ISBN

9780062404343

The Language of Thorns is a collection of short fairy tales. Ayama and the Thorn Wood, The Witch of Duva, Little Knife, The Soldier Prince, and When Water Sang Fire are the short stories included in this compilation. The overall tone is dark, haunting, and reminiscent of original fairy tales, where they are more liable to have a dreadful and tragic ending than a happily ever after. Each short story has one or more messages that can be taken away from it, including ‘beauty isn’t everything,’ ‘appearances can be deceiving,’ ‘don’t take things for granted,’ and ‘sometimes in doing things for others we lose ourselves.’

Bardugo writes her take on several classic fairytales, sometimes combining a few together in her own telling. As with the Grimm Fairytales, there is a bit of morbidity, violence, and things that could give younger listeners concern. The characters are believable, with faults, power, mistrust, and hope that color human experiences. Bardugo has revitalized old fairytales with new endings, new meanings, and retained the feeling, magic, darkness, and bloodiness of original fairytales. The illustrations by Sara Kipin change with the turn of every page, adding beauty. Each tale finishing in beautiful two-page spread. The binding, paper, structure of the material book are as well done as the writing of the book itself.

*Contains mild violence.