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Grisha Verse #1: Shadow and Bone

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Book Review

Grisha Verse: Shadow and Bone

Author

Leigh Bardugo

Illustrator

Reviewer

Natalie Hatch

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Young Adult

Pages

358

Year

2012

Publisher

Square Fish

ISBN

9781250027436

Alina Starkov is an orphan, soldier, and apprentice map-maker. She is in love with Mal, her best friend and fellow soldier, but never tells him. Everything changes when their group attempts to cross the Shadow Fold and they are attacked. Alina releases a magic she never knew she had, attracting the Darkling, the most powerful man in the kingdom. Upon him taking her into 'protective custody,' she meets Genya, who sees to her beauty-needs and then Baghra, in charge of trying to cultivate her powers to fight against the Shadow Fold. As time goes on, Alina realizes she's in more danger than just the Shadow Fold and escapes the Darkling with Gaghra's help. Mal trackers her down, becoming a traitor, but announcing his desire to stay with Alina forever. Together they escape the country.

This is an amazing introduction to the trilogy with Alina, Mal, and the Darkling. The writing style is intoxicating, rich, detailed, and wonderous. The magical realms are brought to life, and the possibility of hidden magic within individuals and magical creatures are explored. Though a little darker than some fantasy storylines, Bradugo does well in making the book life-like. It is less than picture perfect with darkness, despair, lies, betrayal, and the reality that some people, though they care for you, will do almost anything to protect themselves. The characters are believable and full of faults, some having very human reasoning and pride, while others are just slow on the uptake. The characters are developed well, the plot is quick-paced, and the relationships aren't all sunshine and daisies, nor easily seen as black and white. Shadow and Bone is a fantastically relatable story and a wonderful start to the series.

*Contains mild violence.