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A Darkly Beating Heart

Meagan Andrus

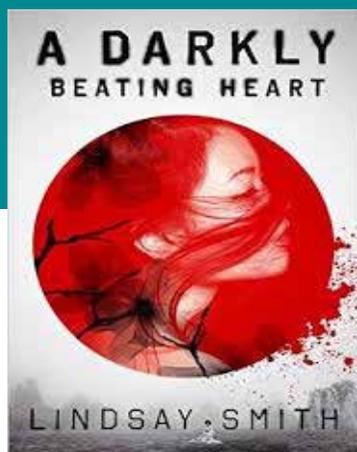
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Book Review

A Darkly Beating Heart

Author

Lindsay Smith

Illustrator

Reviewer

Meagan Andrus

Rating

Excellent

Level

Young Adult

Pages

264

Year

2016

Publisher

Roaring Brook Press

ISBN

9781626720442

Reiko wants nothing more than to exact revenge on everyone who has ever wronged her. While working in Japan with her aspiring fashionista cousin, she visits Kuramagi, a village determined to preserve historical accuracy. In Kuramagi, Reiko stumbles upon a historical artifact that allows her to step into the life of Miyu, a girl from the Edo period of Japan whose heart also craves vengeance. Reiko believes that in order to exact her own revenge, she has to help Miyu with hers. However, Reiko does not know all of the secrets surrounding her sojourns into Miyu's life, or what has been going on in her own modern timeline. She learns the dangers of giving in to hate and is finally able to purge both herself and Miyu of their vengeful desires.

This book is difficult to rate because it is very dark and disturbing at times. On the one hand, Reiko is pretty messed up and is a very unreliable narrator, often fantasizing about killing herself or others. On the other hand, the narrative is richly detailed and the plot is very compelling. The historical details are accurate and fascinating. Smith does a really good job of weaving together a powerful, if unconventional, story between the two timelines. While this is an enjoyable read, it should be noted that this book might contain triggers for those who have been victims of domestic abuse or who struggle with suicidal or self-destructive thoughts and tendencies.

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