



2018

Dread Nation

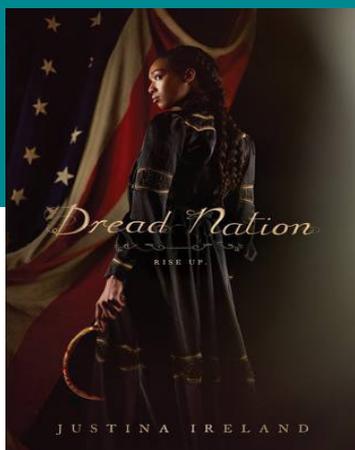
Rachel Wadham

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Book Review

Dread Nation

Author

Justina Ireland

Illustrator

NA

Reviewer

Rachel Wadham

Rating

Excellent

Level

Young Adult

Pages

455

Year

2018

Publisher

Balzer + Bray

ISBN

9780062570604

When the dead rise up on the battlefields of Gettysburg, life changes in America. The Negro and Native Re-education Act sends Black and Native children into combat training schools. Taken from her home in Kentucky, Jane attends Miss Preston's School of Combat in Baltimore. However, Jane's dearest wish is to go home, caring little for the politics of the Survivalists who run the city. But when people begin disappearing, Jane along with her friends Katherine and Jackson are caught snooping by the powerful Mayor, and the trio is sent west to Summerland, a perceived utopia. Then the dead begin to overrun the city and it will be up to Jane and her allies to save what they hold most dear.

This alternative history with a fantasy twist engages a unique view of reconstruction after the civil war. Jane is an adventurous character who offers raw commentary on a complex topic. The book engages with deep themes but it builds on the playful fun of other zombie novels. Ireland uses the setting to provide the perfect backdrop for the themes and plot. By adding in context for both African American and Native Americans there is some contrast, although the later issues are only addressed in a cursory way. Overall the tone is dark and rich with small punches of humor which is perfect for perspective of the book, and since it ends on a little cliffhanger readers will be clamoring to find out what comes next for Jane.

*Contains zombie killing violence.