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No Way Out: Shadow House #3

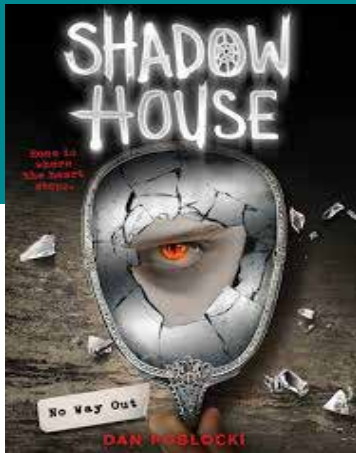
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Book Review

No Way Out: Shadow House #3

Dash, Azumi, and Poppy are trapped on the grounds of Larkspur House when they come to a carnival that traps them in a mirror maze with the shadow creature pursuing them in the guise of Poppy's cousin Connie. They find their way out and discover an old garage where five previous children hid and left behind a walkman with a tape that gives the trio more clues. The three children conclude that they must go back into the house to destroy the contract that Poppy's uncle made with the shadow creature. They find their way to the artist's studio and with more clues they realize that they must find their way back to the picture of the five sided man from the second book. They succeed and the girls leave the mansion. Dash wants to free Dylan who is the only masked child left in the ruins. Dash and Dylan talk while the house crumbles around them in flames. Dylan is free as debris falls on Dash. The girls hear Dash moving and pull him from the rubble. Together they walk to the gate finally free of Larkspur House.

By this stage you might expect that the kids would have pulled together and learned to face things as a group in order to survive. This is not the case. Poppy and Dash argue and bicker and disagree every step of the way. The continued bickering is part of the effect of the House on the children but becomes tiresome and unnecessary. There is more than enough tension and drama in the struggle to survive and in the new discoveries to keep a reader engaged and interested. In this final struggle for freedom it is hard to root for the kids because they have become less of the characters that a reader wants them to be. This loss of connection makes the final installment a bit disappointing. Having traveled with them and having witnessed Marcus' personal sacrifice it seems petty for them to continue arguing. The book as a whole maintains the pace and intrigue of the earlier novels with a nice creep factor all along the way. This series is an exciting and spooky read for children who can handle some intense reading of this kind.

*Contains mild violence.

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Illustrator

NA

Reviewer

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Rating

Excellent

Level

Intermediate

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224

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