



2018

# The Astonishing Color of After

Braxton Church

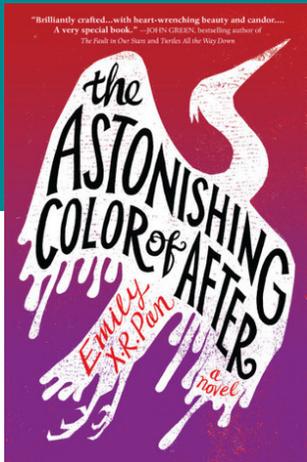
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## Book Review

# The Astonishing Color of After

### Author

Emily X. R. Pan

### Illustrator

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### Reviewer

Braxton Church

### Rating

Outstanding

### Level

Young Adult

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### Pages

462

### Year

2018

### Publisher

Brown Books for Young

### ISBN

9780316463997

When Leigh’s mother committed suicide, she turned into a bird” or so Leigh is convinced. At the bird’s urging, Leigh travels to Taiwan to meet the grandparents she has never known. There she learns about her mother’s past. In this incredible journey that mixes past and present, Leigh learns about her mother’s secrets, her family history, and the people and places that shaped her mother. But ultimately, she learns how to reconcile the idea of her mother as the bright and intelligent piano player with the woman who took her own life, and how Leigh can move forward with her own memories.

In the novel, Leigh finds a box of incense that when burned, shows memories of her mother. This combined with chapters of Leigh’s own memories shifts the novel between present and past, exemplifying the importance of memories. The book talks about the purpose of memory being to remind us how to live. Only when Leigh is able to connect with her family’s past and memories can she truly understand her own life and the lives of the people she loves. The novel shows readers how memory can shape the direction of one’s life, and just how astonishing life can be afterwards.

\*Contains moderate violence.