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The Game of Love and Death

Charlotte Esplin

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Title: The Game of Love and Death
Author: Martha Brockenbrough
Reviewer: Charlotte Esplin
Publisher: Arthur A. Levine Books
Publication Year: 2015
ISBN: 9780545668347
Number of Pages: 329
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Excellent

Review

Love and Death are two immortal, personified characters whose game selects two players with only one possible outcome: love or death. Both Love and Death are allowed to manipulate circumstances in this game, but cannot interfere with the two selected players themselves. In this game, Love and Death have selected Flora, a lower class orphaned black girl who sings Jazz at her late parent’s nightclub but dreams to fly airplanes, and Henry, an also orphaned middle class white boy who has everything going in his favor with school and sports. When Flora and Henry meet, they fall instantly into a love deeper than they could imagine, but with Death also playing the Game, a spiral of unfortunate events begin to head their way. In the end, only Love or Death can win. However, this couple defy Death with their love and spend a happy life together.

This book is really touching, and makes the reader seek for a love strong enough to defy death. Themes throughout the book include the belief that every true story ends in death, that someday everyone and everything you love will die, and that death is the price you pay for love. It truly makes the reader think in a more philosophical manner. It’s a deep story line with twists and shocks that keep the reader hooked. An interesting note is that Death is personified as a woman while Love is personified as a man. These two share their own relationship, where Death yearns for what Love has, and Love is selfless enough to halt Death’s loneliness. This book will offer positive examples of interracial relationships as well as homosexual relationships, with the underlying themes being that everyone wants to be understood and have companionship, as well as teaching readers to pursue their dreams.

*Contains references to racial inequality, homosexual relationships, and frequent death.