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The Rest Of Us Just Live Here

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The Rest Of Us Just Live Here is not about the usual “indie kids” who occasionally team up to fight vampires or soul-eating ghosts or whatever it is this time. Instead, we follow Mikey, who just wants to make it to graduation without the school blowing up (again) and is far too concerned with making sure his sister is eating, struggling with his own anxiety disorder, and staying out of the spotlight of his mom’s political campaign to get mixed up with the indie kids and their quest to stop the mysterious “Immortals,” whose shtick seems to be possessing people and blowing things up with creepy blue light. As Mikey fights to maintain his relationships with his friends and deal with his worries about the future (and the Immortal’s rising body-count), he discovers that people care about him even when he is imperfect and that everyone struggles with the extraordinary, even if they’re never on the front lines fighting an extra-dimensional threat. In the end, the high school does get blown up, but Mikey and his friends manage to safely graduate before it happens.

Patrick Ness masterfully builds the characters and their world in a way that mixes ordinary, real-life concerns with surprising supernatural twists, while managing to treat issues like mental illness with the sensitivity they deserve. In an amusing deviation from the usual paranormal romance, the story of the teenage girl saving the world from the world-conquering Immortals is told in brief epigraphs at the beginning of each chapter while the actual narrative stays with Mikey and his friends, who react to the chaos enveloping their town and try to carry on with their lives like normal people. A recommended read for anyone who has never fought a vampire and who identifies with the ordinary characters in mainstream paranormal fiction.

*Contains brief language, references to masturbation and premarital sex, and descriptions of injury; none of which is graphic.