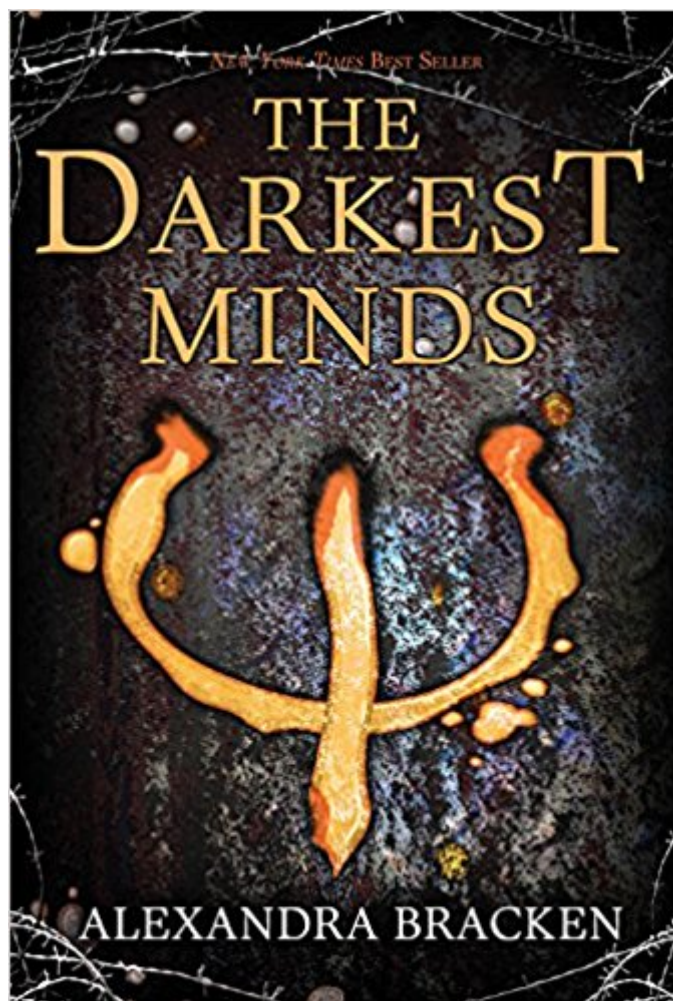


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# The Darkest Minds (A Darkest Minds Novel)



## Synopsis

Soon to be a major motion picture! When Ruby woke up on her tenth birthday, something about her had changed. Something alarming enough to make her parents lock her in the garage and call the police. Something that got her sent to Thurmond, a brutal government "rehabilitation camp." She might have survived the mysterious disease that killed most of America's children, but she and the others emerged with something far worse: frightening abilities they cannot control. Now sixteen, Ruby is one of the dangerous ones. But when the truth about Ruby's abilities-the truth she's hidden from everyone, even the camp authorities-comes out, Ruby barely escapes Thurmond with her life. On the run, she joins a group of kids who escaped their own camp: Zu, a young girl haunted by her past; Chubs, a standoffish brainiac; and Liam, their fearless leader, who is falling hard for Ruby. But no matter how much she aches for him, Ruby can't risk getting close. Not after what happened to her parents. While they journey to find the one safe haven left for kids like them-East River-they must evade their determined pursuers, including an organization that will stop at nothing to use Ruby in their fight against the government. But as they get closer to grasping the things they've dreamed of, Ruby will be faced with a terrible choice, one that may mean giving up her only chance at a life worth living.

## Book Information

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Grade Level: 9 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up-In this dystopian future, most preadolescents and adolescents are dead, brought down by a new disease, Idiopathic Adolescent Acute Neurodegeneration. Ruby Daly and other survivors from her town are taken to Camp Thurmond by the Psi Special Forces to be tested, categorized, and, according to the PR, "rehabilitated." There is no rehabilitation, though, in the concentration camps for young people with special powers, just drudgery and punishment. Ruby hides a secret from the PSF-she is not a Green, but an Orange, someone who can affect other people's minds. Members of the Children's League help her to escape but she is soon on the run from them as well when she learns that they intend to use her to commit violence. She joins the small band of Liam and Chubs, who are telekinetics, or Blues, and Zu, who is a Yellow, a person who can control electricity and machinery. Together the four seek East River, a sanctuary whose leader, the Slip Kid, can supposedly get messages to their parents. Before they can find the camp, they have to evade PSF soldiers, bounty hunters, and the Children's League, as well as solve the riddle of its location. While this story is full of action, it is also given depth by the difficult choices that Ruby faces. There are some fairly disturbing events and images (torture, rape, blood splattering, etc.). This book is a natural for dystopia fans but romance readers will also enjoy the blooming love between Ruby and Liam.-Eric Norton, McMillan Memorial Library, Wisconsin Rapids, WI  
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In the not-so-distant future, most of America's children have died; but those who live find that they have psychic abilities that range from moving objects to getting inside people's minds. Sixteen-year-old Ruby, using her powers as an Orange, has escaped the survivor facility she has lived in for six years. She has also used her abilities to make the doctors believe she is a more docile Green. Now Ruby intends to keep her secret, even from new friends, including handsome Liam, persnickety Chubs, and the mute but sweet, young Zu. This ragged band searches the Virginia countryside in hopes of finding the Slip Kid, who seems to have outsmarted the government. Instead they find trouble on almost every turn of the page, but eventually discover what seems to be a youth utopia. Bracken is skilled at ramping up the action, but there is so much going on here, it's hard to keep it all straight. Still, the character development is good, and the book's ability to tackle larger issues is solid. In the end, Ruby must make an important decision. Then it's on to book two. Grades 8-12. --Ilene Cooper --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

It took me a couple of trips to Barnes and Noble to finally convince myself to pick up a copy of this novel. I hadn't heard anything about it at the time and was unsure of whether or not I wanted to read it. I knew after reading The Hunger Games and the Insurgent series that I liked dystopian novels a lot. I'm really glad that I decided to finally pick up this first novel in The Darkest Minds series. Going into this novel I really appreciated that Alexandra Bracken showed us her world rather than tell us about it. Some authors can get so caught up in telling readers about their world that before they know it they've spent half the book telling us about the world rather than telling us the story. Readers do have to pay attention when reading Bracken's novels, but as long as you are it's easy to follow along. What I love most about the world that Bracken has built is that it isn't all rainbows and unicorns. It is dark and violent and different from most YA novels. The story is told from the POV of the main character, Ruby. She is easy to identify with and very engaging. She has been through a lot and grown from her experiences. She is strong and determined to do what she thinks is right. I absolutely fell in love with Liam right from the start. He has a great sense of humor and an amazing personality. He felt real, not just a character in a book. I also loved the rest of the secondary characters. Without them, the story that Bracken is trying to tell would have fallen flat. I highly recommend this book if you haven't read it yet.

I first read THE DARKEST MINDS in December of 2014. I stumbled across it in an Epic Reads list of books featuring road trips. I really enjoy taking road trips and the title and cover of this book intrigued me so I had to pick it up! I have to say that that might have been the best decision I've ever made. When I picked up the audiobook of this one to do a reread, a little part of me was worried that I wouldn't love this book as much the second time. Thankfully, this was not the case. In fact, I think I may have loved it even more this time around! When I first started listening to this, I wasn't 100% sure what I thought of the narrator, but I really grew to like her. I love all the different voices for the different characters. I think that this audio was about 11-ish hours and it was easy to listen to this narrator talk for that long. This book is a little bit dystopia, a little bit science fiction, a LOT awesome. It has an amazing romance, adventure, high stakes, heartbreak, betrayal, and a wonderful friendship. The book follows Ruby Daly. She was sent to a camp on her 10th birthday. She used her abilities to convince the person running the sorting test that she was a green rather than an orange. She spent the next six years terrified of what she can do. When she gets sprung from camp, she realizes that the people helping her aren't what they seem and she runs away, right into a group of

kids who are in about the same predicament as she is. Together, they roam West Virginia, searching for the safe haven of East River. Ruby is probably my favorite book heroine ever. She goes through some really fantastic character growth in this book. In the beginning, she's basically scared of her own shadow. She won't let anyone close to her, afraid that she won't be able to control her abilities and they'll see her for the monster she believes she is. It takes her a long time to open up to anyone. But along her journey she kind of starts to own her powers. She starts to not see herself as so awful for what she can do. She doesn't truly trust her powers yet, but she sees that she can use them to help her friends and keep them safe. The only real fault that I can think of in her is that she is CONSTANTLY like, "Nooo, just leave me behind. Leave me here. Forget about me." Ruby, just stop. No one is ditching you. Liam Stewart is my number one book boyfriend. He's so swoon-y. He's so sweet and kind to everyone around him. He's caring. He's funny. I feel like he kind of comes off a little bit as though he's got a bad boy side. Mostly just because it's mentioned that he has been in some fights and he wears a leather jacket. I guess that doesn't necessarily equal bad boy status, but there ya go. He's super protective of his friends (especially Ruby) and would do anything to keep them safe, even if it meant sacrificing himself. If I ever had my own Liam Stewart that called me "Darlin'" in his sweet southern accent, I would absolutely melt on the spot. Chubs is a little bit abrasive at first. He is 100% not okay with Ruby tagging along with their group. He doesn't want to be caught in the crossfire if/when the people chasing Ruby catch up with them. He doesn't understand why they should put themselves at risk for someone they don't even know. I think that I didn't really like Chubs the first time I read this book. I wanted him to be nicer to Ruby. But this time around, I didn't find myself disliking Chubs before he warmed up to Ruby. As much as Chubs sometimes seems to need to get a sense of humor or something, I think that he would make a wonderful friend. He's good to have around in times like this because he's really smart and he's got a little bit of medical knowledge! Zu is the one who initially lets Ruby into their little group. She is the youngest of the group. She's such a little sweetheart and is super girly. You don't really get to learn a lot about her in this book though, so that's about all I can say! The romance in this book is so adorable. Ruby and Liam are my favorite book couple. The scenes with them being cute together completely give me life. I just want to put them in a protective bubble to keep them safe forever. I just think they work really well together! I really can't think of anything in this book that I didn't enjoy. I love the characters. I love their friendship. I loved going on this adventure with them. I love everything about this book. Overall, I don't think there should be any question in anyone's mind that I 100% recommend this book. To everyone. If you like awesome character growth, WONDERFUL FRIENDSHIP, super swoon-y romances, or books about road trips, READ THIS!

I think that this book is overall an excellent read... But I did take issue with some key points in it. When we meet Ruby we were literally thrown into the book so it is incredibly hard to follow at first, she's a bit whiny and doesn't fully explain anything so the reader is left lost and confused for awhile. I had no idea that I was basically going to be decoding the entire first couple of chapters. Minus Ruby being a tiny bit whiny in the beginning, I actually really like her character. She's complex enough to be interesting without having so many quirks that you want to punch her in the face. And the whole no control of her powers thing is great because she has so much room to grow. So now another issue, why are blues and greens in the camp? Is it just to make an overall statement to the public? To be honest greens need to be spies or something and blues could have government jobs too! I understand the other colors but not blue and green. So we see Ruby deal with erasing herself from her best friends mind... That was alright. She was so dramatic about it though. "And then I didn't speak for a year" all right Ruby whatever works for you. When she meets Liam, Chubs, and Zu ... I really started to see her change. A secret holding her down and so confused about what was going on, she started to get a lot more interesting for sure. That group needed a cute nickname though, they were such an awesome ragtag bunch, I loved it. Traveling with them was interesting, I like how I didn't immediately learn everything about each of the characters. It leaves a lot more room for future books, or just for this one really. I think Chubs is underrated. From the minute I met him I knew I would like him. Sometimes introverts make the best characters because when they do finally come out of their shells, they're awesome. He is one of those characters that you're supposed to hate but you kind of love just for who they are. But Zu is really the MVP of this group. She's so kind and quirky and this young girl has had such a terrible life but she sees the best in people. I just want to go shopping with her, maybe she could vamp up my wardrobe. I need to see more of her in the next book! Liam was ok, the whole knight in shining armor act was kinda lame. But I can see how he will be a better character if he can get something quirky or fun about him. Ok, so we are finally at the traveling goal for this group: Slip Kid. Can we talk about how that was NOT a plot twist. The minute I heard the name Slip Kid, I knew exactly who it was. I thought he was a total creep from the beginning and I still think that. And that whole implied rape scene made me feel super uncomfortable. I struggled to read past that. But at least Ruby got some control of her power. The end is lame. I don't like the sacrificial heroine act at all and I think if Liam ever found out, he would be pissed.

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