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The Breaking Light (Split City Book 1)



Synopsis

In a stratified society where contact with the sun is a luxury reserved for the elite, those kept prisoner in the darkness will do anything to find the light. Arden is beautiful, street-smart, and cynical is one of the citizens of the lowest Level, known as Undercity, of an off-world colony. A blackout band traps Arden in her district, but as sister to the leader of the most powerful gang in Undercity, she has access to Above. There she meets Dade, one of the few lucky enough to be born into the sun-kissed families who reside in the Towers soaring above the rest of the city. But life isn't perfect in the sky. Dade, desperate to escape his upcoming arranged marriage, has a secret of his own, and he's willing to risk everything for it. An unlikely romance develops between the two teens but their love faces opposition from above and below. When her gang pressures Arden to help break the grip of the elite and end Dade's interference with their drug trade, she is forced to make a deadly choice between love and family loyalty. But will the brewing class war destroy the world around them first?

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Customer Reviews

Perhaps I didn't read between the lines of the book's description. I was caught by the Science Fiction designation and the editor's mention of one of the main characters being a wealthy socialite. It appears I should have paid more attention to the book's description, although I only had "two teens" buried in the last paragraph to give any hint that this book is more of a YA than anything else. The book barely fits in the science fiction genre. The author has created a world in the future, one that started as a mining planet and eventually degenerated in a class structure, where the upper class lives in the higher levels (and exposed to the life-sustaining rays of the sun) while others live in the Levels or in the original mines (the Undercity). Other than hovercars and phase guns, the rest of the book is pure YA. The romance that blossoms appears forced, enveloping Arden and Dade in a matter of minutes (undoubtedly spurred by the knife tussle that goes on between the pair). After a few chance meetings between them that probably totaled all of 30 minutes or less, Arden professes her love for Dade. The two of them, of course, belong to totally different worlds, she being a denizen of the Undercity and he the wealthy socialite who lives with the upper class. Because of the short periods of time together, it is difficult to feel any sort of tension (let alone any worry about the characters' Romeo and Juliet relationship), and thus (for me) the story flattened a bit. The science is iffy. The phase guns can kill, and vaporize inanimate objects well enough. Other times the damage done to humans is more like a bullet hole. The mines were originally covered by a thick glass (so sun could reach the miners? It was never fully explained) which now functions as an opaque walkway for the residents of the Levels. It all becomes unbelievable that a city (and a planet of cities) would be erected in this manner. As far as the writing, the author does have talent. Sentence structure, description, and most of the action progresses in a logical manner. Apart from the instant undying love, the characters have some depth to them and their motivations are understandable. Ms. Hansen has also written a book that made it all the way from beginning to end without any offensive language or explicit sex scenes. As a YA novel, there are probably thousands of readers who will enjoy this story. As I said, it is well written and although it is Book One in a series, there are enough strings tied together at the end that it does not qualify to be labeled a cliffhanger. For science fiction fans expecting something different, this book may be a letdown. As far as grading it star-wise, I felt to be fair I had to examine it a second time under the light of the YA genre (as written by the author in her Acknowledgment section when she thanked her children with "It's so much easier to write YA fiction with you in my corner"). So strict sci-fi fans, be warned. YA fans, you will probably like this

book as a YA book, four stars.--edited for typos

This book is not what I expected from the blurb. For me, it is heavy on a romance between teenagers and light on the sci-fi aspect. Arden is from the Undercity and Dade is from the Towers. His is a life of privilege while hers is that of want. The difference in the two areas is what one might expect. Dade's father, Hernin Croix, is the head of the most powerful Solizen Family. Arden's brother, Niall is the leader of a gang which distributes 'Shine', a street drug. There are some interesting tech gadgets included, I might add, as well as the stone, 'Paloosh'. The age-old story between the 'haves and the have-nots' is the recurring theme. For me, the story was too heavy on the romance between the two teenagers and also on the drug/alcohol societies in both the Towers and the Undercity. Think it would have been better classified as a Young Adult story instead of a sci-fi. I will say it may be your cup of tea but it just isn't mine. And, read it if the blurb appeals to you as it may be the one for you this month. For me, however, it was just an OK read. Please note that this is my Kindle First selection for March. .

THE BREAKING LIGHT is a fast-paced, exciting read that is set in a distant future, on a colony where its most of its residents live in darkness, beneath a cloud layer that hides the sun, with only the elite few living in the light. It's the story of an oppressed people doing whatever they have to in order to survive and the wealthy doing whatever they can to maintain their way of life. It is a tale filled with action, thrilling chases, and deadly battles. But at its core it's a star-crossed love story between Arden, a street-savvy girl who does whatever she has to for her family, and Dade, a boy whose idealism makes him a disappointment to his. Their attraction is immediate, all-consuming, and forbidden. And it threatens to alter the course of their lives. At just over 250 pages, this first installment in the series is easy to devour in one sitting. It is gripping and climactic, but would have benefited from a slower pace, more character development, and a bit more world-building at the outset to establish the romance and allow for a stronger connection to both the society and the plight of the characters. Readers get a peek at what life is like for those who live in Undercity, those who reside in the Sky Towers, and those who live in the Levels in between, though the main focus is on Arden and the Lasair gang in Undercity, Dade and the Croix family in the Sky Towers, and the friction between the two. The lack of sun for those stuck living in Undercity has caused a vitamin deficiency that results in death for many, made worse by the elite families' control over the supplement that could save them. The cold climate and harsh conditions have caused drugs to become the escape of choice, providing the

ideal environment for gangs to thrive and creating the need for them to steal from the Croix family who manufactures the pharmaceuticals. It is this conflict that has been brewing - and the actions of the Ghost, a mysterious do-gooder - that sets the stage for the events in THE BREAKING LIGHT. But it is the romance between Arden and Dade that is the catalyst for everything that ensues. While set off-planet, in a future with some interesting technology and weaponry, this first book in the series reads more dystopian or post-apocalyptic than science fiction. It is much more a story about a people repressed by the ruling class than about the planet's hostile climate for those living beneath the clouds. It has moments that are nail-biting, that are heartbreaking, that are incredibly romantic. It promises dramatic fight scenes, daring escapes, secret liaisons, subterfuge, and betrayal, and is the start to a series that looks to be awesome.

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