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Rage (Riders Of The Apocalypse)



Synopsis

Jackie Morse Kessler's Riders of the Apocalypse series follows teens who are transformed into the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. In the second book of the series, Rage, a teenage cutter becomes War, one of the Riders of the Apocalypse. Missy didn't mean to cut so deep. But after the party where she was humiliated in front of practically everyone in school, who could blame her for wanting some comfort? Sure, most people don't find comfort in the touch of a razor blade, but Missy always was . . . different.

Book Information

File Size: 1951 KB

Print Length: 229 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers (April 4, 2011)

Publication Date: April 4, 2011

Sold by: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Language: English

ASIN: B004S3NV8S

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #688,128 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #39

in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Self Mutilation #142

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Literature & Fiction > Visionary &

Metaphysical #205 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Literature & Fiction

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Customer Reviews

What a powerful story! After the incident at the party I was ready to assume War myself. Missy deals with the pressure of high parent expectations, parental neglect, and a real loser of an ex-boyfriend by cutting herself. The cutting gives her a sense of control and relief. When she is saved from cutting an artery by Death and offered War's sword, she first shuts the door in Death's face. She also has to continually deal with an ex-boyfriend that she still loves but who only wants to

humiliate her. And she teased and harassed by other students at her school. She has learned to seal her emotions away and not look like their comments are hurting her. Her only comfort at school is the soccer team where she is the goalie. But when many of the girls on the team turn against her, she loses her only safe spot. It takes time for Missy to come to grips with the idea of being War. She talks about it as having a really steep learning curve. But she is strong enough to do the learning. I liked the idea that she has a bit of a crush on Death. I also liked the glimpses of Famine and Pestilence that we got in this story. The whole story is about control. Control is her key to controlling War. She needs to feel that she has control in her life too. I think that this was an excellent story that could help someone understand what makes a person choose to cut them self. The fantasy setting made the emotions much more intense than a straightforward contemporary novel with the same theme. This is an excellent companion to Hunger. And it makes me even more eager to read Loss.

I was very wary of this book because *Hunger* was such a profoundly good read that I feared this one would fall short. My fears were completely unfounded because Kessler has written a truly masterful sequel. Much like the author, I have a very limited experience with self-injury and I expected to have a bit of trouble warming to Missy. And it did take me at least a third of the book before I really started to understand her in a way and her turmoil, which I completely attribute to Kessler's skill at exploring the inner-workings of the teenaged mind. While possibly not as visceral as her exploration of eating disorders -- and I can only think that's to be expected given she lacks the firsthand experience with self-injury -- Missy truly comes alive on the page in a way that is raw and gripping. On the outside she may be bottling in all her emotions, but there is a depth to her that practically leaps off the page. Again, I remain impressed by the scope of the story itself and how completely immersive it is. It manages to retain the feel of the previous novel and continue threads into the ongoing series and still be entirely different in scope and feel. Above all, for me at least, doesn't sensationalize violence or aggrandize the idea of war. While these themes are explored in varying detail, the focus is essentially on Missy's internal struggle with her emotions and essentially her battle to achieve control. I also find it commendable that Kessler has once again written about a tough issue that many teens struggle with and tackle it in a compelling and unrelenting way without proselytizing. Missy's cutting is not without its shock value, but is never presented in any other way but tangible and completely real. It's not often that I read something so fundamentally astounding that I have to struggle to find words, but it seems to be a systemic issue for me with this series. It's a rare combination to find a read that is purely entertaining, astonishingly powerful and impeccably written; truly, I was swept away. Not that I'm complaining. I am desperately intrigued to see where

this series goes from here! And I rather like the ambiguous nature this book has left us with Missy and the quartet as a whole.

If you've read Kessler's first book *Hunger*, you know how well she is at packing quite a bit of story in such a small amount of pages. If you haven't then you really should give her a try- her books really are incredible. I've been lucky enough to have been able to read *Hunger*, so I was thrilled when I also got the chance to review *Rage* as well & ended up reading it all in one sitting. Kessler really does have a strong storytelling ability to her & readers will really be able to feel Missy's pain & anguish. While *Hunger*'s weakness was that there wasn't a lot of information about the background of the characters contained within it, Kessler has managed to work out most of that problem in this book. There's more depth & background to the characters, more explanation of what makes their personal issues hit them so hard. However where some readers will get frustrated is in what exactly the Horsemen are responsible for. You know that they're the embodiment of their station & that they can influence how things unfold, but not much information is really given about how it all happens. It all comes out in a rather confusing jumble, which may or may not be on purpose. Whatever the reason, I can't help but wish we had that information. Even in other "incarnation of ____" books (*Sandman*, the *Piers Anthony* series, etc) they have some sort of explanation for the hows of the beings. This was pretty much my only gripe about the book, to be honest. I was able to overlook it for the most part because I enjoyed the rest of the book so much. This is still an awesome book & Kessler remains someone I'll be reading in the future. I'm pretty curious to see how the rest of the series plays out, as there's two more Horsemen for the books to focus on. Haven't read *Hunger*? No worries, you can pretty much read *Rage* without having read the previous book, but you'd be missing out on a good tale. As it is, it's one of those ebook arcs that I ended up tracking down in paper format because I wanted to continue collecting the series. (Just wish I'd been able to get a paper arc to match my other book!)(ARC provided by NetGalley)

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