

From Darkness

Kate Hazel Hall

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Childhood friends separated by death reunite in Kate Hazel Hall's supernatural novel *From Darkness*.

Ari and Alex once played in the Australian wilds. Then Alex drowned, and Ari blamed herself. Years later, a snakebite should have killed Ari, but Alex, who became an underworld Summoner, saved her. Alex also stayed among the living, creating a rift between worlds that leaves both vulnerable to the invading darkness.

In this potent spin on Greek mythology, disturbances in Ari's hometown, including visions of bodies and feral hounds who spring from a portal, force Alex to divulge information about her years as a Summoner. Tense events on an eerie pine plantation lead to Alex's imprisonment for defying The Fates. Ari fights to get her back.

Ari's survival through ordeals surprises even Acheron, a lord who is second to Hades. She is heroic in her commitment to rescuing Alex, wishing to atone for the drowning. As Acheron terrorizes Ari and Alex, fate comes to seem changeable, and an underworld father and daughter who help Ari and Alex are a parallel example of love at any cost. Ari's mother, who is told the unbelievable truth about Alex, responds with grace.

This delicate story combines suspenseful twists with emboldening love, threading miracles out of the bleakest moments. Gentle, cloistered scenes in which Ari tries to hide Alex's return contrast with searches in a forest that's pocked with treacherous sinkholes. The novel navigates these shifting environments with ease. Intimacy and threats draw out Ari and Alex's strengths: each possesses sharp intuitions and bravery, but they're still teenagers and concerned with their unfamiliar emotions.

From Darkness is a young adult fantasy that draws upon classic quests as its heroines pursue second chances.

KAREN RIGBY (November / December 2020)

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