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Clarion Review ★★★☆☆ ROMANCE

In Between Dreams

Erin Kerr Rooks
CreateSpace (Oct 16, 2014)
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An imaginative premise about what happens when dreams become too real launches this vibrant main character on a thrilling mission.

Saying Bailey Regan has vivid dreams is quite an understatement. Her dreams are a second life: consecutive stories following the same characters, to whom she has grown attached. In fact, Bailey's dreams seem more real to her than her actual life. As the main character in *In Between Dreams*, an intriguing book by Erin Kerr Rooks, Bailey navigates her struggles to maintain a job and relationships while plagued with a misdiagnosed sleeping disorder that causes her to sleep for days at a time.

By day, Bailey is a sickly investigative reporter who barely goes a few weeks without a "sleep attack." She has a job she might lose if she doesn't get her act together, a best friend she hasn't talked to in weeks, and a mom who helps her through her troubles. In her dreams, she is part of a ragtag team that specializes in helping people in difficult, often dangerous situations. She is healthy and vibrant and has two men vying for her attention. The trouble begins when one of Bailey's dream "missions" doesn't quite end, and she's left picking up the pieces.

Starting off, the story is rich with descriptive elements and dialogue. It progresses fluidly and suspensefully until the first dream sequence ends a few chapters in. At this point, the significant differences between Bailey's dream life and real life become apparent. The portrayal of her experiences in the real world is disengaged and superficial. For example, Bailey receives phone calls and texts from her friends, but there is little to no description of these relationships. Most of what is learned about Bailey is through flashbacks that have no relevance to her current plight, giving the narrative a choppy, disjointed feeling.

As Bailey slips into another sleep attack, the story returns to its original flow, filled with action and connection with the characters. The author hints at new revelations in Bailey's own flashbacks, though Bailey doesn't understand what is going on and doesn't ask the necessary questions. The suspense becomes forced and a number of loose ends are never tied up. For example, one dream sequence is abruptly cut short and Bailey is thrust into another mission. She asks herself what is happening, but never questions anyone else, which leaves her in the dark.

The overall plot of *In Between Dreams* is wonderfully imaginative, and the volume is nicely edited. Though the narrative could go deeper into the connections between the characters and Bailey's two lives, the book is recommended for those who like their thrills entwined with a bit of romance and a curious twist ending.

SHANNAN SPITZ (January 15, 2015)

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