

The Depths

Kirk Kjeldsen

Grenzland Press (May 31, 2018)

Softcover \$12.95 (228pp)

978-0-9984657-3-9

Kirk Kjeldsen's *The Depths* takes a woman on the edge and pushes her farther, resulting in a dark, engaging, and contemplative thriller.

After a series of miscarriages and marriage woes, Eden Lenaerts plans a Malaysian getaway with his despondent wife, Marah. The two begin to grow close again.

On a diving expedition, they rise to the surface and encounter a boat populated by violent men. These men abduct Eden and Marah, taking them to an abandoned island. Their possibility of survival grows slim, and Marah is forced to make the hardest choices of her life.

The events of *The Depths* unfold entirely through the Marah's eyes. Her story kicks off on the first day of the vacation with little information about her or Eden. However, through Marah's attempts at reconnection and her later panicked thoughts and actions, everyone becomes fully fleshed-out and dynamic. The mysterious abductors benefit the most from this characterization, through information that Marah cleverly attempts to use against them to escape.

Subtle foreshadowing, most evident in Marah's gut reactions, and steadily tense events move the narrative along. Even before Marah and Eden are abducted, she's frequently beset by violent and unsettling imagery.

Hope seems lost, first about Marah and Eden's relationship, and later about their chances of escaping unharmed. Their relationship serves as an interesting barometer; as their loving veneer begins to peel away, they face significant threats.

The Depths takes two average people and shoves them headlong into increasingly unfamiliar and life-threatening conditions. Their reactions lead to introspection about what anyone is willing to do to survive. It's a bleak and violent story at times, but one that paints a visceral picture of humanity and morality.

JOHN M. MURRAY (May/June 2018)

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