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Small Blue Thing

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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This, the first in a trilogy, taps into young readers' interest in romance and the supernatural. While celebrating the end of exams with her friends, 17-year-old Alex sees a swan in distress, trapped in the mud of the river Thames. As she frees the bird from the wire encircling its leg, she unearths a silver bracelet with a deep blue stone at its centre. The stone, dancing with fiery colour and light, seems to radiate a mysterious power. A few days later, during a visit to St Paul's cathedral and the bracelet firmly around her wrist she sees the image of a beautiful boy reflected in the stone. She is instantly attracted towards him. It is only after her dinner date with the school's heart-throb ends in catastrophe that the image speaks to her and tells her his story. His name is Callum and he's a Dirge, one of many unfortunate apparitions, who, hovering in limbo between life and death, devour human memories to ward off unbearable depression.

Alex falls head over heels in love with Callum, and, in keeping his existence a secret, manages to alienate both her best friend Grace and her family. Her personality and behaviour change: her open and level-headed approach to everyday life of school, home and friendships giving way to secretiveness and passion.

The story begins slowly but gathers pace with the introduction of Callum and the shadowy world of the Dirges. Building on a well-structured plot that twists unexpectedly, intrigue builds as to Callum's true intentions towards Alex.

I must admit to certain misgivings about the genre of romantic fantasy, which seems often to be based on the manipulation of the fantastical elements to serve a romantic end. The fact that Alex's feelings of love and physical attraction are channelled solely towards a ghostly, unreal figure is in some respects a contrived and safe way of dealing with sexual awakening in a book aimed at young teen (or even pre-teen, as the publisher's press release suggests), mainly girl, readers. This apart, the book successfully mixes dialogue, first-person narrative and description into an exciting storyline that is sure to find an enthusiastic readership.

Running Order:

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