



# Dark Room

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[Val Randall](#) [3]

~~Not on Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

**Dark Eye** is the fifth title in the **Red Eye** series, which aims to tap into the teen horror market for horror with a mixture of pop culture, violence and technology-a very contemporary approach which is echoed in the eye-catching and fashionably menacing cover.

Darla and her degenerate father Hopper are making another new start, fleeing yet again to avoid the self-inflicted catastrophes in which Hopper specialises. This time the new beginning is in Saffron Hills, an uber-wealthy town where Hopper appears, yet again, to have a dubious contact who leases them a run-down chalet on the outskirts of town.

The odds seem stacked against Darla when her father resumes his old habits of fighting, drinking and womanising and her school proves to be dominated by self-obsessed girls concerned only with outward show and viciously dismissive of those who do not follow suit. To add to her troubles she begins to hallucinate, seeing visions of brutally murdered bodies and photographic representations of them. She doesn't fully understand the significance of the images until the first of her classmates is killed whilst taking a selfie. The body count soon mounts and the 'Selfie Slayer' continues to prey on Darla's contemporaries and to appear at the edge of her vision.

There is much to commend in this book-the carefully targeted narrative with its modern feel, the rapid pace, the sense of intrigue and Darla's helplessness. Her warnings are ignored and she almost begins to doubt herself. However, although tension is credibly built in the first two-thirds of the story, it loses impetus as a result of the convoluted and over-complex nature of the concluding part. Family and community connections become too tightly woven, driven, it seems, by a need to bring the story to a climactic conclusion which is rather misjudged. When it is revealed that the reason for the failure to apprehend the murderer is a sex-change operation which, naturally, has muddied identity, then the story loses some credibility, which the subsequent happy ending does little to restore.

Nevertheless, this is a bold attempt to capture the teenage market and its accessibility and entertainment value will fuel the imaginations of those young adult readers who relish this genre.

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