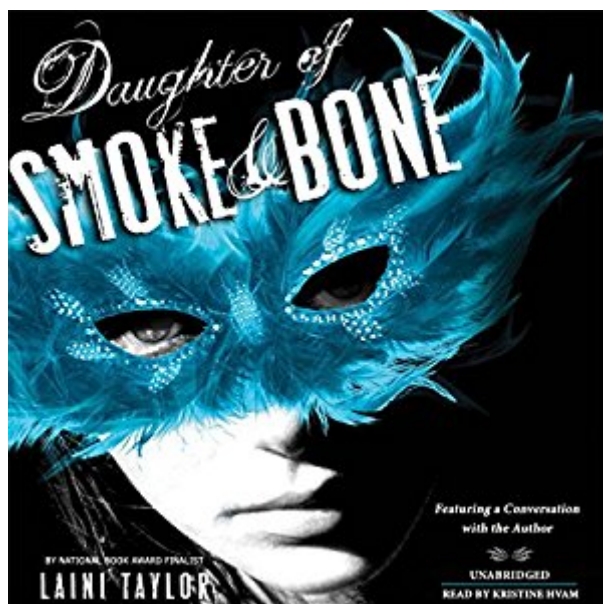


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Daughter Of Smoke And Bone



Synopsis

Around the world, black handprints are appearing on doorways, scorched there by winged strangers who have crept through a slit in the sky. In a dark and dusty shop, a devil's supply of human teeth grown dangerously low. And in the tangled lanes of Prague, a young art student is about to be caught up in a brutal otherworldly war. Meet Karou. She fills her sketchbooks with monsters that may or may not be real; she's prone to disappearing on mysterious "errands"; she speaks many languages - not all of them human; and her bright blue hair actually grows out of her head that color. Who is she? That is the question that haunts her, and she's about to find out. When one of the strangers - beautiful, haunted Akiva - fixes his fire-colored eyes on her in an alley in Marrakesh, the result is blood and starlight, secrets unveiled, and a star-crossed love whose roots drink deep of a violent past. But will Karou live to regret learning the truth about herself?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I would like to start off this review by saying that I really didn't want to read this book. The people who decided on the back of the book description did a crappy job explaining this story in an interesting way. Now that I have read it, the back looks good, but from a fresh perspective, it fell flat. If it weren't a Vine book, given to me for free, I would have never picked it out among the thousands of books out there. I am so glad I gave it a try. This complex story is about a girl who has no idea of who she really is. Her life has been filled with creatures that would cause terror to most but have been family to her. Karou is a strong, talented seventeen year old who helps her "family" of demon

like characters collect teeth. The teeth have a use, but Karou has never found out what exactly. She just goes to designated sights through portal doors to collect the teeth and then goes back to her private art school and her one friend. Her lonely life is interrupted by the sight of an angel who is trying to put a stop to the teeth trade and the creatures who traffic them. Even though he should destroy Karou, he can not bring himself to kill her due to her similarities to his long lost love. What follows is an intriguing tale of forbidden love in a lush, imaginative world. I know, I know, collecting teeth sounds so...weird. I promise that the author pulls this off and then some. I struggled with what to say without giving too much away, but I wanted to tell more than the back cover. Karou is an interesting heroine who is beautiful, exotic, and real all at the same time. The world building is really the star of this novel. Everything is different than anything I have read. Yes, it has angels in it, but the author still makes everything fresh.

This is a Gothic urban fantasy, dark and stunningly written. Laini Taylor weaves words together beautifully and she crafts narratives so that you are completely pulled into her world, hopelessly captivated. You simply devour her words. She is gifted and has given us ample proof that stories labeled as Young Adult can easily appeal to adults. Due to very mature themes, this story is not for children and I would recommend that only teens 16 and older read it. This is a story about a girl named Karou living two vastly different lives in two vastly different worlds. The joy of this story is discovering Karou and her role in the other-world known simply as "Elsewhere." I was mesmerized by Elsewhere and the fascinating descriptions of its inhabitants and I was completely smitten with the black market concept of trading teeth in exchange for wishes of varying degrees of potency. The teeth are a source of great intrigue and the author does not disappoint when their purpose is revealed. That's where the real story begins. Overall, I was satisfied with her characterizations, though I think the male protagonist, Akiva, needs further development. Since the author utilized a dual perspective, she could have easily developed Akiva more fully. But she didn't and I'm really not sure why. That is the power of that perspective. However, she does a fantastic job bringing secondary characters to life. I was also very pleased with the complexity of motivations. The opposing forces are not solely good or evil, but a fine shade of gray, multifaceted. The premise is imaginative and the possibilities are endless. But then a superficial romance is thrown into the mix, confusing my impression of this seemingly carefully crafted tale.

Pow. Pow. Pow. That's me shooting holes in this book in frustration and disappointment. There is nothing worse than an entertaining, well-written, interesting story that goes SPLAT half-way

through. And that's what happened here. The first 50% is wonderful. It's the tale of Karou - a seventeen-year-old art student in Prague who moonlights traveling the world through magic portals to collect teeth (human/animal/reptile/etc.). Karou and her friends (in Prague and inside the magic portals) are unique and fun. I really liked her and them. I loved the central mystery of the story - who is Karou (she doesn't know herself) and what happens to the teeth after she collects them (she doesn't know this either). Add to that an arch-enemy who is marking all the magic portals for unknown reasons and trying to kill her. She comes up with a plan (an interesting, scary, fun plan) that I assumed was going to drive the rest of the plot. That's the first 50%. Like I said, it's great. 4.5 stars great (I was even thinking I might round up to 5 stars). And it's well written. The author has a great way with words. Her metaphors are beautiful and more than once I stopped to reread something because it was just so well said (How often do I say that about a novel? Almost never!) SPLAT Second half of the book. Spoiler Alert: I won't talk about plot details, but I am going to discuss the story structure. The immediate action completely stops. The second half of the book is backstory as Karou and her new-found love interest discuss (shown in lots and lots and lots and lots of flashbacks) the answers to the story questions and kiss each other. Occasionally they change locations and there's one battle, but that's maybe 5% of the pages.

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