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Shine

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Part ghost story, part futuristic nightmare, part love story, part revenge drama, a lot is going on in this powerful novel. The main story describes the life of Rosa, living alone with her father and a faithful servant after the horrible death of her mother who, like her daughter, suffered from a strange affliction known as 'The Calm.' This renders its victims mute and heavily scarred. The result is that they must stay hidden away lest they be hunted down by the superstitious population living in the primitive rain-swept island where this story is set. Frustrated by her solitude, Rosa breaks all rules by chatting to a boy on the internet. By this time the main narrative has come to share space with the tragic story of Rosa's mother and her jealous twin when they were children.

The author writes well, and this is an intensely imagined tale. But sadly it veers off into melodrama just when it could have become more interestingly challenging. Nagging questions also begin to suggest themselves. What was life really like on the island? (We are never told). How could Rosa remain successfully concealed for over 15 years? And most basic of all, has the author really got anything very much to say? Other readers must come to their own conclusions here about this original but finally somewhat frustrating piece of writing.

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