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Rage (Riders Of The Apocalypse)



Synopsis

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ONLY. Sixteen-year-old Missy copes with being an outcast at school and stress at home by cutting herself with a razor blade, until Death chooses her as one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, War, and offers her a new blade. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 780L (What's this?)

Series: Riders of the Apocalypse (Book 2)

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (60 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #463,382 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Self Mutilation](#) #7550 in [Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy](#) #8430 in [Books > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy & Magic](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Where to start? The author has a wonderful way with words. The turns of phrase are so often beautiful. The dialogue between Death and Missy or Death and the other Horsemen reflect this so often. I found myself sometimes reading the same phrases again, not because I needed to, but because the sentence was so wonderful I wanted to. But... (and here it comes) I kept hoping as I read this that the purpose of the series would become apparent. That the overall story arc would reveal itself. Unfortunately, I am left concluding that while this is being presented as a series, there is no overall story arc. The books within this series are related, as in the books share some characters, but there is no overriding goal to the set of books, just a goal within each book. The plot here is that we have a teenager who is terribly misunderstood; she thinks no one can understand.

Death comes to appoint her as War (since the last incarnation of War was killed in Hunger) because of all the rage that is inside her (go figure, given the title). She expresses her rage through cutting. She battles the idea of becoming War - but she feels the power that comes with it. And control seems to be a big element of the decision/expression as War, and as a cutter. Then things get kind of crazy. She is pranked. In an awful, awful (let me say it again - AWFUL) way. And, understandably, she freaks out. The girls on the soccer team punish her even further by peeing on her clothes and bag (yep, you read that right). And, to boot, when the soccer coach finds out she's a cutter, he cuts her (definitely no pun intended there) from the team. And again, she freaks. But, here's where I get lost. She is so very angry she could kill. But she doesn't. Instead, she simply decides she's not going to let War destroy. There's a leap there that I missed. At least in Hunger, the catharsis came when the character almost killed her mother. Here, we just see the character go from being as angry as one could be to not accepting the anger in the same heartbeat. I was left thinking how the heck did that happen? What did I miss? And she beats War but takes up the post anyway. ****scratches head**** I have not read any of the author's other works besides the two in this series so far. I hope that she isn't as repetitive in her other works. Having just finished Hunger, I often felt like I was re-reading the same book. There are a few minor plot differences - here she takes up the post where in Hunger the character rejects Famine (yet, we have a woman who is Famine in this book, but we know nothing about her, and yet he reminds us that her prior incarnation killed the prior War. Again, confused...). But, so very much is similar. In both books: the horses, and Death, are surprised that the character names the horses (in fact, the dialogue here gave me *deja vu*) the horses themselves are puzzled when the character's thank the horses both characters think about the physics of Death's bag both are met by another Rider who sort of tells them what to do, but doesn't really either both characters comment on the horses' lack of grooming needs both, at one point, think everything that's happened so far is a dream both have absentee, albeit loving, parents both have a battle with War Do I need to go on? The sense of *deja vu* when reading this was overpowering. I had urges to look at the books side-by-side to see if the dialogue was identical in places (which I resisted for lots of reasons). So, having read one, I felt that there wasn't really a need to have read both. Despite those flaws, however, I give credit to the author. She didn't shy away from things that other authors in the YA category often do. Let's face it, society knows teen sex happens. So why are most of the books filled with teens who don't even know how to spell the word s-e-x. Here, we get the harsh truth that sometimes it happens and then doesn't work out. We get a good look inside how awful clicks and teenagers can be to one another. It's not sugar-coated. The prank, while it made my stomach turn, was something I could totally believe

happening. We've all heard about kids committing suicide because of hateful facebook posts and bullying so this felt very real. The one element that didn't feel real to me was how weak she was trying to make Missy out to be, and coupling that with Missy's love for and ability as, a soccer goalie. As a very long time soccer player, I have never encountered a weak goalie - or one that is so hated by teammates. Despite any oddities, quirks, or differences, the goalie on the team is always loved and supported. At least in my experience. Because when it comes down to it - the goalie can make or break the team. So, I had a little trouble picturing her as the weakling and total outcast at the same time. But, that's just me. There's no way for me to prove that my experience is more typical than what the author wrote. And the opening scene where Missy thinks she killed her cat? Wow. It was so well written it was hard to read. I can't begin to express how relieved I was to read the conversation with Death later where we learn she didn't actually murder her cat. More kudos to the author for not shying away from something hard to read. I am finding it hard to balance (yes, that's a nod to Famine) how I feel about this book. The author can write prose wonderfully and beautifully. The book needs some work on the plot front however. I wouldn't claim victory based on the plot of the book, or the lack of a story arc for the series. I will read the next one, I'm sure. If for no other reason then I want to see if the author can turn things around and find a purpose for the series. And I did so thoroughly enjoy and appreciate her ability to craft a beautiful sentence. But, this is definitely just a 2.5 star book for all the other reasons I noted.

What a powerful story! After the incident at the party I was ready to assume War myself. Missy deals with the pressure of high parent expectations, parental neglect, and a real loser of an ex-boyfriend by cutting herself. The cutting gives her a sense of control and relief. When she is saved from cutting an artery by Death and offered War's sword, she first shuts the door in Death's face. She also has to continually deal with an ex-boyfriend that she still loves but who only wants to humiliate her. And she teased and harassed by other students at her school. She has learned to seal her emotions away and not look like their comments are hurting her. Her only comfort at school is the soccer team where she is the goalie. But when many of the girls on the team turn against her, she loses her only safe spot. It takes time for Missy to come to grips with the idea of being War. She talks about it as having a really steep learning curve. But she is strong enough to do the learning. I liked the idea that she has a bit of a crush on Death. I also liked the glimpses of Famine and Pestilence that we got in this story. The whole story is about control. Control is her key to controlling War. She needs to feel that she has control in her life too. I think that this was an excellent story that could help someone understand what makes a person choose to cut them self. The fantasy setting

made the emotions much more intense than a straightforward contemporary novel with the same theme. This is an excellent companion to *Hunger*. And it makes me even more eager to read *Loss*.

Rage by Jackie Morse Kessler is the second novel in the *Riders of the Apocalypse* series. This series puts girls who are facing difficult social/mental issues in the roles of one of the horsemen of the apocalypse. *Rage* features Missy who cuts herself to deal with the rage and pain she feels inside. She is met by death who tells her that she can either be the horseman War or die. The story details the merciless bullying that Missy receives when it is discovered that she is a cutter from her ex-boyfriend and classmates her sisters hatred as well as her parents who are totally unaware of her problems. This struggle is intertwined with Missy figuring out how to handle her new role as War. She learns slowly that she can work to better the world instead of destroying it. This book is very dark. Much darker than *Hunger* the first book in the series Missy's struggles were so difficult that her cutting seems almost logical. She is suicidal at times and has no friends. She does not change or mature throughout the book as much as I would have liked, instead she sinks into major depression and does not ask for help until it is almost too late. However, the story is well written and I enjoy this paranormal take on social issues. So many social issue novels read like lifetime TV movies which makes this series a nice change of pace. Appropriateness: This is a very dark novel that follows a girl that is suicidal and struggling with cutting. There are graphic hard to read passages of hardcore bullying including a main plot point that involves Missy being photographed naked by her ex-boyfriend at a party where many students are drinking and the picture being passed around the school. I'd recommend this to readers aged 14+ and encourage parents to start a dialog with their teen about the issues that Missy faces in the book.

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