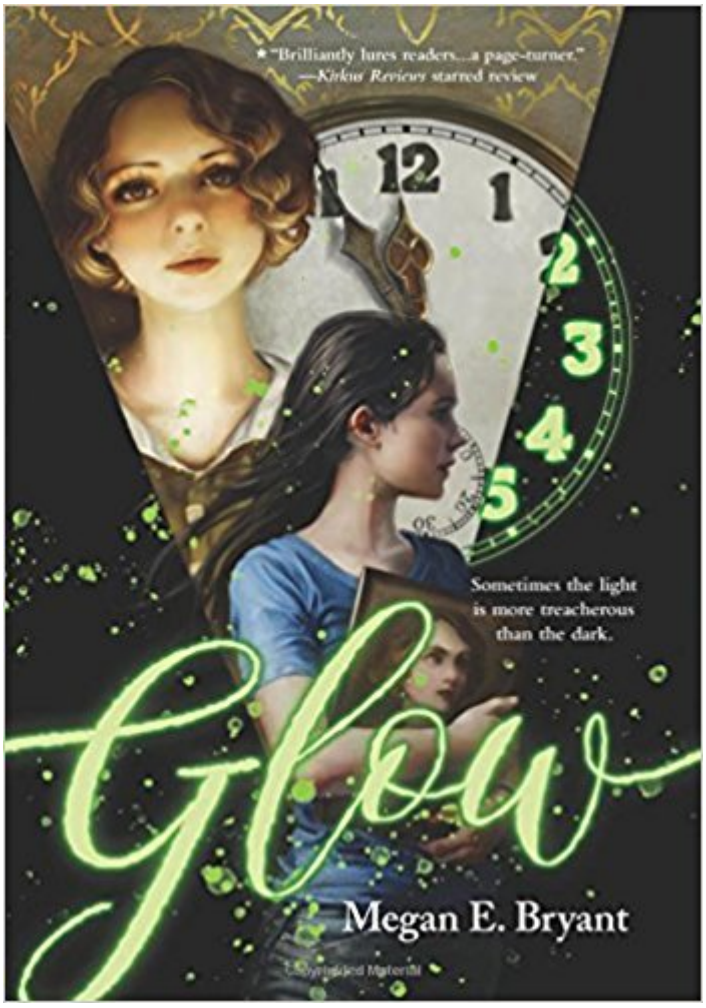
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Glow



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Synopsis

When thrift-store aficionado Julie discovers a series of antique paintings with hidden glowing images that are only visible in the dark, she wants to learn more about the artist. In her search, she uncovers a century-old romance and the haunting true story of the Radium Girls, young women who used radioactive paint to make the world’s first glow-in-the-dark products—and ultimately became radioactive themselves. As JulieÃ¢â ¬â„¢s obsession with the paintings mounts, truths about the Radium Girls—and her own complicated relationships—are revealed. But will she uncover the truth about the luminous paintings before putting herself and everyone she loves at risk?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"STARRED REVIEW! Alternating chapters follow Julie’s quest and present decades-old love letters written by Lydia, a white radium factory worker, both slowly revealing the horrific story of young women who were exposed to radioactive paints. With this interleaved technique, Bryant brilliantly lures readers into an engaging mystery, a page-turner that begins beneath layers revealed in both paintings and chapters. A riveting story of ambitious and self-sufficient women, both in the present and past." Ã¢â ¬â •Kirkus Reviews starred review

Megan E. Bryant has written dozens of books for kids and young adults. She lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and teaches writing at Salem College.

This book is told in two parts, present and the past. In the present, artist Julie discovers some old paintings in a thrift store that glow-in-the-dark. In the daylight, the pictures are normal, but when they glow they portray disturbing and gruesome images. Wanting to know more, Julie begins hunting through thrift stores for additional paintings. Her artistic love leads her on a journey to recreate the type of glow-in-the-dark paint the original artist used, but despite Julie's best efforts she is unable to duplicate the results.In the past, we learn the story of three sisters, Liza, Lydia, and Charlotte Grayson. Liza is able to get her younger sister Lydia a job as a watch dial painter at the factory where she works. The job entails tipping a paintbrush between your teeth to paint the delicate numbers on watch faces for soldiers off at war. The girls working at the factory use the glow-in-the-dark paint to paint on body jewelry, decorate their teeth, even paint their walls.When Liza falls ill, Lydia begins to notice other girls at the factory with similar symptoms. Lydia tries to figure out what is going on, but as girls begin dying, it might be too late. Lydia does her best to stop their youngest sister from working at the factory, but every penny in needed by the family. The two stories converge at the end and several mysteries are wrapped up.My Thoughts-Holy Smokes! This book took my breath away. I had never learned about the Radium girls before (I received this ARC before the other Radium Girls book came out). I could not stop myself from turning page after page. I suspected what was happening, but the author does an amazing job of not tying up all the ends until the very end. The horror of the girls' bodies falling apart, of fake doctors telling the girls' they had syphilis, and of using radium as a medicine were chilling. I can not even begin to convey the emotions this author's work invokes.The characters are strong and relatable. Lydia is easily recognizable as a loving sibling. She is strong, determined and courageous. The emotional roller coaster that her character brings to the reader is noteworthy. Julie, in present time, is a fun character who moves the story along with investigations and a side romance. Her drive to figure out the glow-in-the-dark paint gets her in trouble and at the end of the book I had to take deep breaths.Plot is solid. The tension is high and never lets down. The interweaving of past and present is a puzzle of unsolved mysteries that the reader is dying to get to the bottom of. A true work of art. I give this book 5 stars! You will never forget what you read, especially since it is based on real life trials. The author gives more information at the end of the story that will leave you flabbergasted. (I received an advanced copy for an honest review)

When I was first asked to read and review Megan E. Bryant's Glow, I was instantly intrigued by the Radium Girls aspect. As a chemistry graduate student, I'm always interested in (1) anything that has

do with science and (2) seeing how factory workers' conditions once were, especially regarding the case of radium.As it turns out, Glow was a stellar read! Beautifully blending together historical accuracy and two girls's coming-of-ages, Glow was a book I easily devoured in one extra-long sitting.One of my favorite aspects was the dual narrative. As I've said before, sometimes it works in books and sometimes it doesn't. Thankfully, in the case of Glow it truly managed to work quite well. Megan E. Bryant did a beautiful job of blending together Julie's narrative point of view with that of Lydia's letters to Walter. It was incredibly easy to not only connect with both characters but also get to truly know them over the course of the story. Additionally, Megan did a great job of switching between the two at just the right moments - building up suspense for both Lydia and Julie's respective stories.Lydia's letters particularly struck a cord in me, as they managed to grab ahold of my heart and squeeze it. When Glow first introduces Lydia, she's the typical lovesick wartime girlfriend, sad to see her man off to war, even thought she knows it's for the good of the country. Soon enough Lydia throws herself into a new gig, painting dial watches. Over time, she begins to feel some more importance - she's doing this great deed for the solders, helping them to tell time even when it's dark outside. I loved seeing her cultivate her skill and gain a family within the workers at the factory. Those relationships are what made her so life-like and real to me. I also loved her bond with her sisters and mother, especially when it came to protecting her little sister. While all these relationships ended up breaking my heart even more as the times got tough and the conditions got worst, I was so happy and even honored to get to read the story of Lydia and her fellow factory girls. It was one that shined an important light on the narrative of a radium girl, truly making the reader understand and feel the thoughts and feelings they experienced.I also throughly enjoyed Julie's POV. Julie's a character who is incredibly down on her luck. She's had to forfeit college to save her family, and by doing so, she's managed to alienate herself from everyone who loves her. From the start, I was impressed by Julie's determination to earn the money to put herself through college; however, I was hoping she'd be able to finally open up to someone about how lost she has been. Over the course of the book, Julie god from being a "watcher" to a "go-getter," someone who's not afraid to ask the college boy for help, or break into a factory to get answers, or even stand up to a friend who's been treating her bad. I loved seeing that development occur, especially when it involved Julie cultivating her scientific and detective abilities. There was one aspect, though, that did bug me about her character: the amount of time it took her to truly understand what was going on. However, I can only be so taken aback by it, as it did help to make the storyline more interesting - constantly waiting for the moment Julie realized what was going on.As hinted to above, the plot of Glow is also incredibly addictive. I loved how Megan brought to

light a time so often ignored in history: the time of the Radium Girls and the horrible, deadly poisoning they were unknowingly subjected to at the time. I hate to admit this, but prior to reading Glow, I didn't know too much about the Radium Girls. Over the course of the story, however, I learned a lot and every time a new detail of ignorance from the higher-ups or a new odd sickness of one the girls came to light, my stomach turned. I was internally screaming "leave the factory, don't continue with the painting!"In all, Glow is an amazing and thought provoking story. Throughout the story, it's easy to feel the pain, the hope, and most importantly, the love these characters posses. If you love science and brave female characters, you simply must add this to your TBR!Grade: A

I really loved this book. It's intended for teens however I read it as a 20-something and found it absolutely captivating. There is a sense of mystery that makes it hard to put down and the characters are so rich and complex I found myself thinking of them multiple times throughout the day even when I wasn't reading. The historical element is effortlessly woven into the story and you develop a lot of respect for the real people that are represented. I'd recommend this to older teens and anyone who enjoys young-adult novels.

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