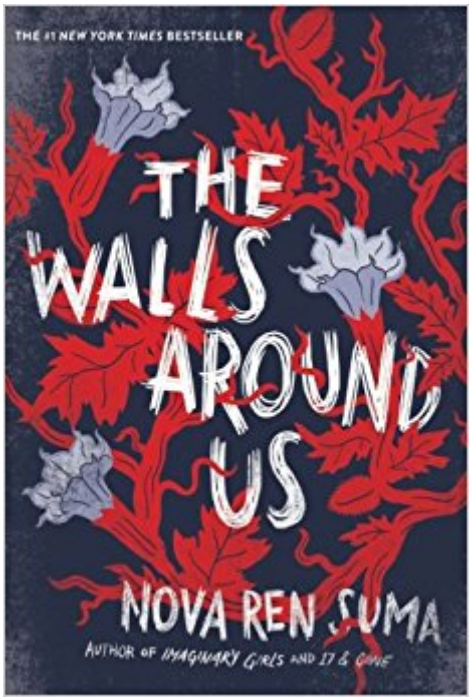
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The Walls Around Us



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Synopsis

A #1 New York Times Bestseller Ã¢â ¬Å“With evocative language, a shifting timeline and more than one unreliable narrator, Suma subtly explores the balance of power between the talented and the mediocre, the rich and the poor, the brave and the cowardly . . . To reveal more would be to uncover the bloody heart that beats beneath the floorboards of this urban-legend-tinged tale.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •The New York Times The Walls Around Us is a ghostly story of suspense told in two voices--one still living and one dead. On the outside, thereÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Violet, an eighteen-year-old ballerina days away from the life of her dreams when something threatens to expose the shocking truth of her achievement. On the inside, within the walls of a girlsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ juvenile detention center, thereÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Amber, locked up for so long she canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t imagine freedom. Tying these two worlds together is Orianna, who holds the key to unlocking all the girlsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ darkest mysteries: What really happened on the night Orianna stepped between Violet and her tormentors? What really happened on two strange nights at Aurora Hills? Will Amber and Violet and Orianna ever get the justice they deserve--in this life or in another one?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 UpÃ¢â ¬â •This haunting and evocative tale of magical realism immerses readers in two settings that seem worlds apart. The book is told in alternating first-person voices from the perspective of two teenagers: lonely Amber, who at age 13 was convicted of murdering her abusive stepfather and sent to Aurora Hills, a juvenile detention facility, and Vee, an insecure yet ruthlessly ambitious Julliard-bound ballerina. Through Vee’s and Amber’s recollections, readers learn about

talented, kind-hearted Ori, Vee's former best friend and a dancer herself, who after being convicted of a heinous crime is sent to Aurora Hills, where she becomes Amber's roommateÃ¢â ¬â •and where soon after a strange tragedy occurs. Though the plotting of this taut, gripping suspense leans heavily on ghosts and murder and will easily attract teens, this is no mere thriller. The prose is mesmerizing, laced with visceral, gorgeous figurative language, and draws subtle parallels between the disciplined, constricting world of ballet and the literal prison in which Amber and Ori find themselves. Believable and well developed, Vee and Amber have strong, unforgettable voices that ring true. Suma's unflinchingly honest depiction of the potentially destructive force of female friendship and skillful blending of gritty realism with supernatural elements is reminiscent of Laurie Halse Anderson's Wintergirls (Viking, 2009), and the eerie mood she evokes is unnervingly potent. VERDICT A powerful story that will linger with readers.Ã¢â ¬â •Mahnaz Dar, School Library Journal --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Ã¢â ¬Å“[An] Intricately plotted psychological horror story . . .Ã Â With evocative language, a shifting timeline, and more than one unreliable narrator, Suma subtly explores the balance of power between the talented and the mediocre, the rich and the poor, the brave and the cowardly--and the unpleasant truths that are released when these scales are upset.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •New York Times Book Review Ã¢â ¬Å“[A] supernatural page-turner . . . In [SumaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s] story, some people are guilty and damnable, and some are innocent and good -- and the ones who fall in between are simply innocuous. This stark character classification isnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t a flaw, but rather, a demonstration of SumaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s fantastic writing. Her images, even the horrible ones, linger like dust and glitter after an epic stage performance.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •The Boston Globe Ã¢â ¬Å“Gripping. . . Just try to put this down.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Shelf Awareness for Readers, starred review Ã¢â ¬Å“ [A] powerful novel . . . The compelling narrative, written in scintillating prose and featuring incredibly real characters, brings the two stories together in an explosive finale with a supernatural twist that results in a satisfying resolution to the struggle between the guilt and evil depicted here.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •VOYA Ã¢â ¬Å“The Walls Around Us passionately testifies to the ways in which girls are walled up, held down, fenced in. It's a gorgeously written, spellbinding ghost story forged from ugly reality. . . Ã¢â ¬ËœEverything I know about bombs tells me they are built to explode,Ã¢â ¬â„¢ Amber observes at one point. Nova Ren Suma's prose hums with such power and fury that when the explosions do happen, they seem unavoidable.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Chicago Tribune Ã¢â ¬Å“Suma excels in creating surreal unsettling stories with vivid language, and this psychological thriller is no exception. . . A fabulous, frightening read.Ã¢â ¬Â•

Ã¢â ¬â •Booklist, starred review Ã¢â ¬Å“A tour-de-force packing immense emotional power . . .Ã Â Suma takes risks here that few authors are capable of, and most readers do not dare hope for.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Locus MagazineÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Suma craftily sets the two stories against one another, moving between VioletÃ¢â ¬â„¢s fiercely grounded account and AmberÃ¢â ¬â„¢s hauntingly destabilized one, enticing readers to figure out how the pieces go together . . . Readers who loved the authorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s spooky but redemptive 17 & Gone) and who are looking for something a little more vengeful will curl up happily with this.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •BCCB, starred review "A suspenseful tour de force, a ghost story of the best sort, the kind that creeps into your soul and haunts you." Ã¢â ¬â •Libba Bray, author of The Diviners and A Great and Terrible Beauty "Fearlessly imagined and deliciously sinister, The Walls Around Us is hypnotic, luring the reader deeper and deeper into its original, shocking narrative." Ã¢â ¬â •Michelle Hodkin, author of The Mara Dyer Trilogy "The wholly realistic view of adolescents meeting the criminal justice system is touched at first with the slimmest twist of an otherworldly creepiness, escalating finally to the truly hair-raising and macabre. Eerie, painful and beautifully spine-chilling." Ã¢â ¬â •Kirkus Reviews, starred review "Written in luscious and deliciously creepy prose not easy to forget . . . This is a story about guilt and innocence, about secrets and how deep we let people into those places within us, and itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a story about how the past can define our present, even if we try desperately to keep that past under wraps. Put it on your radars now; this is an outstanding literary young adult novel more than worth the wait." Ã¢â ¬â •Book Riot "In lyrical, authoritative prose, Suma weaves the disparate lives of [the] three girls into a single, spellbinding narrative that explores guilt, privilege, and complicity with fearless acuity . . . The twisting, ghostly tale of OriÃ¢â ¬â„¢s life, death, and redemption is unsettling and entirely engrossing." Ã¢â ¬â •The Horn Book Magaine, starred review "This haunting and evocative tale of magical realism immerses readers in two settings that seem worlds apart . . . SumaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s unflinchingly honest depiction of the potentially destructive force of female friendship and skillful blending of gritty realism with supernatural elements is reminiscent of Laurie Halse AndersonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Wintergirls, and the eerie mood she evokes is unnervingly potent." Ã¢â ¬â •School Library Journal, starred review

ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“We went wild that hot night. We howled, we raged, we screamed. We were girls ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • some fourteen and fifteen; some sixteen, seventeen ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • but when the locks came undone, the doors of our cells gaping open and no one to shove us back in, we made the noise of savage animals, of men.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•A few years ago now, I read and fell in love with Nova Ren SumaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Imaginary Girls, an emotionally complicated

sister-centered story with a touch of creepy and unsettling magical realism. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a story that still haunts me, sneaking from behind the shadows into the foreground of my mind. A book that I treasure in my soul and a level of achievement that I aspire to in my own writing.Nova RenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s latest novel, The Walls Around Us, has the same kind of haunting quality, and not just because itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a ghost story. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a tale that lingers long after youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve put it down.Three girls are the center of this story ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â• Amber is a young woman convicted of murder who has been locked in prison for years; Violet, a ballet dancer with a dark secret; and Orianna, a girl caught in a tide of misfortune who binds the other two together. Their stories weave together unveiling lies and secrets and the truth behind a murder.Alternating between Amber and VioletÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s points of view, the story unfolds with a feeling of inevitability, a sense that everything has happened before and cannot be stopped from happening again. Neither girl is nice or easy; instead they are both complicated and difficult, having made dangerous decisions that lead to catastrophes that define their lives. Where Nova RenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s skill is clear is in how she manages to generate a feeling of fascination and sympathy for both of these girls. Violet in particular is an awful human being, and yet I found myself pitying her and how she has cut herself off from feeling for anyone else in the world and a part of me wanted her to make it to Julliard despite all the things sheÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s done.Amber is particularly interesting to me in the way she erases herself into the group of her fellow prisoners, rarely using the singular ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• and more often using the plural ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“weÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•, as though their stories and her own story were the same, as though they are all one body of girls moving through the prison system. Her own personal story slowly unfolds but never quite condemns or absolves her of any crime. She is both guilty and a victim of society and circumstances, screwed over by the man her mother married and the system. A girl taken for granted, as many in the prison are.Rich, gorgeous prose brings the world inside this prison for young women and the outside world (for this books seems to divide the world into two realms ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ inside and outside) to vivid, brutal reality. The supernatural aspects of this tale are subtle, weaved in among grounded real-world details enabling a level of plausibility. The effect ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • of not just the supernatural elements, but the entire story ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • is unsettling in all the right ways. Although the end is satisfying, this is a novel without easy answers, one to ponder after finishing, and then to go back and reread and ponder some more.

Grade A-In one week. Violet will head to Juilliard to study ballet. Before she leaves, she wants to

visit Aurora Hills Juvenile Detention Center, the site where her best friend Ori died after being convicted of killing two fellow dancers. Amber, jailed for killing her stepfather, recounts her life in lockup. Vee and Amber are connected through Ori.THE WALLS AROUND US is a confusing, compelling, almost poetic novel about the meanings of innocence and guilt, what can be proven, what we acknowledge, what we deny and the lies we tell ourselves and others where truth and lies are Yin and Yang. Nova Suma has created a beautiful story with three very distinct main characters. Although Violet is selfish and sometimes unkind, I felt empathy for her, always in Ori's shadow. Amber, the other narrator, is rougher around the edges and more sympathetic. We see Ori through their eyes and she's less developed than the others. For much of the book, I wondered if what I thought was happening plot wise was occurring, or if I was just confused. Normally, I would hate this and give up on the book, but Suma kept my eyes focused on my kindle. THE WALLS AROUND US didn't quite pull me in enough to keep me up all night reading, but I couldn't wait to start the next morning and I read straight through until the end. I normally don't read ghost stories, I prefer realistic fiction, so this review is high praise from me.I hated the ending of the book. The first 95% was so creative and unique, I thought the ending felt contrived and unoriginal.If you're looking for something different and exquisitely written, you'll enjoy THE WALLS AROUND US.

This is one of the best books I will read all year and probably ever. It's marvelous. One of the best books I've read period. This story follows two girls - two friends (told from both of their POVs), one in a juvenile correction facility, the other living out their dreams of working towards being a ballerina. But it's not that simple as we see in reading the book, following their two very different lives that change on one very distinct night and are forever linked by one very incredible person, one very magical number.This is a mysterious and masterfully woven tale about friends and foes and feathers. Anger and isolation and privilege. Betrayal and coping and power and more coping and oh so much more. It's a fascinating look at what people do for the things they want and cannot have, the perspectives people have and will not see any other way, and the lies we tell, the crimes we commit, and the regrets, the ghosts that haunt us everyday. I say all of that but there's so much that I'm not saying because there's simply so much here to marvel at and I don't want to spoil a single thing.As a writer, I bow down to Nova Ren Suma. This book will make you fall in love with reading, with storytelling, with voice, with the beauty in broken people and strange worlds, with writing all over again. Her words are honest. Raw. Her prose is masterful. I absolutely love the tone of this story, the rhythm of these words, the questions, the revelations...everything. Gave me chills. Simply put, if Nova Ren Suma isn't on your auto-buy list now, she will be after you finish reading this.

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