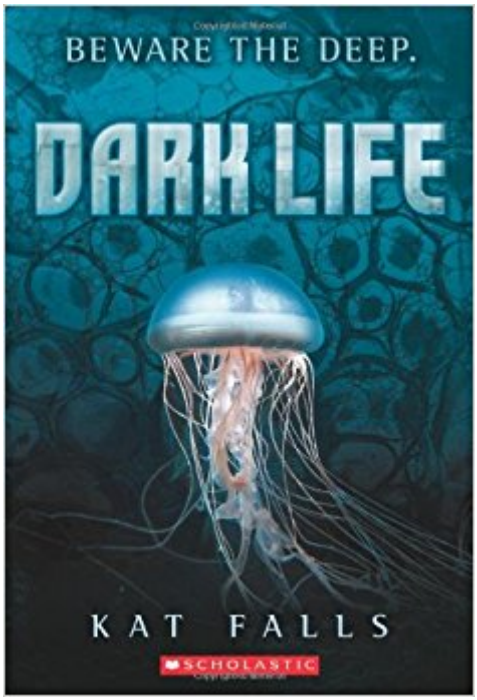
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Dark Life: Book 1



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Synopsis

Dive deep into the vivid underwater world of Dark Life!The oceans rose, swallowing the lowlands. Earthquakes shattered the continents, toppling entire regions into the rising water. Now, humans live packed into stack cities. The only ones with any space of their own are those who live on the ocean floor: the Dark Life.Ty has spent his whole life living deep undersea. When outlaws attack his homestead, he finds himself in a fight to save the only home he has ever known. Joined by Gemma, a girl from Topside, Ty ventures into the frontier's rough underworld and discovers some dark secrets to Dark Life. Secrets that threaten to destroy everything.

Book Information

Series: Dark Life (Book 1)

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Paperbacks (February 1, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0545178150

ISBN-13: 978-0545178150

Product Dimensions: 1 x 5.2 x 7.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 220 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #407,184 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #71 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Pirates #798 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Being a Teen #808 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Science Fiction

Customer Reviews

Gr 6-10Ã¢â ¬â œThe wild frontier meets Jacques Cousteau in this futuristic novel (Scholastic, 2010) by Kat Falls. Global warming has done its job and the oceans have risen. The coasts lie beneath hundreds of feet of water and people living topside are crammed into stacked housing developments, fighting for inches of space. Ty and his family have all the space they want. They have chosen to homestead the ocean floorÃ¢â ¬â •in the Dark Life. Gemma is a topsider who has come to the deep-sea colony looking for her brother and hoping to escape being placed in an orphanage. Ty and Gemma team up to help each other when outlaws begin attacking the ocean settlements. Ty calls upon his dark giftÃ¢â ¬â •the ability to communicate with sonarÃ¢â ¬â •to rescue his community and Gemma. Narrator Keith Nobbs distinguishes the characters well, and his

quick pacing will appeal to listeners. Action, suspense, romance, and a few surprises make this a good choice for middle school boys.Ã¢â ¬â œTricia Melgaard, Centennial Middle School, Broken Arrow, OKÃ Â (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Sixteen-year-old Ty, first child born to the pioneers who live in the depths of the ocean, has little patience for topsiders (land dwellers) until he meets feisty Gemma, who immediately enlists his help to locate her missing older brother. Their search is interrupted by pirate attacks of the notorious Seablite Gang and an ultimatum from the Commonwealth Government (located topside) that makes the pioneers responsible for stopping the raids. Ty and Gemma uncover connections between the pirates, illicit medical experiments, and Gemma's missing sibling, who happens to have secret supernatural giftsÃ¢â ¬â •like Ty. Although set in an undersea future, this rousing adventure has all the hallmarks of a western, including outlaws, homesteaders, and plenty of shoot-'em-up action (only with harpoonlike weapons). Good guys and bad guys are fairly obvious, as is the outcome, but the exotic setting and well-conceived details about undersea living, along with likable characters and a minor surprise at the end, will keep readers turning the pages. Try this with the ecofiction of David Klass. Grades 6-9. --Cindy Welch --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

I picked up Kat Falls' Dark Life on a whim and was very pleased to find it to be well worth the money. Falls is a relatively new author (to me, anyway) and Dark Life was her debut novel.Ty is a fifteen-year-old boy living in the pioneer undersea colony of Benthic Territory, which is located on the ocean floor somewhere off the east coast of the US. Or rather, what was the east coast until a big chunk of it ended up under water due to rising sea levels. His parents were among the first generation to leave the surface world and settle homesteads in the territory, but Ty has lived there almost his entire life. For him and his younger sister Zoe, the undersea world of the territory is _home_.For the most part, life in the territory is good. Or was until Ty comes across a derelict sub on the edge of the territory, a prospector's sub that was apparently attacked by an outlaw band called the Seablite Gang. As Ty investigates the sub, the situation immediately becomes further complicated when he unexpectedly runs into a "Topsider" (someone from the surface world) on the sub, a girl his own age named Gemma who's come down into his world looking for her missing older brother.The author, Falls, is very good at immediately immersing you in the world of Dark Life, bringing it vividly into reality around the reader from the very beginning:"I peered into the deep-sea canyon, hoping to spot a toppled skyscraper. Maybe even the Statue of Liberty. But there was no

sign of the old East Coast, just a sheer drop into darkness.--A ball of light shot past me - a vampire squid, trailing neon blue. The glowing cloud swirled around my helmet. Careful not to break it up, I drifted onto my knees, mesmerized. But my trance was cut short by a series of green sparks bursting out of the gorge. I fell back, every muscle in my body tense. Only one fish glittered like an emerald and traveled in a pack: the green lantern shark. Twelve inches long and deadly as piranhas, they could rip apart something twenty times their size. Forget what they could do to a human.--I should have seen them coming, even this deep. I should have known the squid had squirted its radiant goo to divert a predator. And now my helmet's crown lights served as an even brighter beacon. With a jab to my wrist screen, I snapped them off, but it was too late - I couldn't unring that dinner bell.--I pried a flare gun from my belt and fired into the midst of the electric green frenzy. Two heartbeats later, light exploded over the canyon, shocking the sharks into stillness, eyes and teeth glittering. Quickly, I scooped the anchor of my mantaboard out of the muck and hauled myself onto it. Lying on my stomach with my legs dangling, I twisted the handgrips and took off, making serious wake. If my lungs hadn't been filled with Liquigen, I would've whooped aloud.--Not that I was in the clear. As soon as the flare died, the sharks would be on me like suckerfish on a whale. I thought about burying myself in the thick ooze of the sea floor. Bedding down with the boulder-sized clams had worked before. I chanced a look over my shoulder. Sure enough, the darkness twinkled with stars - vicious little stars, shooting my way."Falls is also very good at giving depth to her younger characters, capturing the feel of both what it is like to be that age and what it would be like to be living in the very different world of Dark Life, with Ty who has grown up in his undersea pioneer settlement and Gemma who grew up in her over-crowded Topsider world. And I absolutely adored Ty's younger sister Zoe who insists on keeping dangerous sea creatures as pets and who everyone who knows her tries to avoid making angry. In truth the only reason I rated this book 4 stars instead of 5 was that I felt the characterizations of the adults were not on the same level or depth as that of the younger characters. That said, I definitely want to read the sequel, Rip Tide, that's already been published.Highly recommended not only for young adults but for anyone who likes well-written science fiction with engaging characters in a different setting.

Kat Falls' Rip Tide is the sequel to her first novel, Dark Life. I picked up Dark Life on a whim and liked it quite a bit, enough to order Rip Tide because I wanted to read more about the characters and about the undersea world they inhabit. To my surprise and even more to my delight, the sequel proved to be even better than the first book.In the near-future world of Dark Life, we were introduced

to Ty Townson, a fifteen-year-old boy living in the pioneer undersea colony of Benthic Territory, which is located on the ocean floor somewhere off the east coast of the US. Or rather, what was the east coast until a big chunk of it ended up under water due to rising sea levels. His parents were among the first generation to leave the surface world and settle homesteads in the territory, but Ty has lived there almost his entire life. For him and his younger sister Zoe, the undersea world of the territory is _home_. We also met Gemma, a "Topsider" (someone from the surface world) girl Ty's age who came undersea to look for her missing older brother, Richard, whom she discovered now goes by the name of Shade and is the head of a band of outlaws called the Seablite Gang. And we learned about how the children who grow up undersea seem to acquire Dark Gifts - special abilities like Ty's bio-sonar and Zoe's ability to deliver electric shocks - that they don't want people to know about for fear of ending up being treated like lab rats.Rip Tide begins just a few months after where Dark Life ended, with the story once again being told from Ty's point of view. Ty's parents are in the process of opening a new market for Benthic Territory settlers' crops. But it's not as simple as it sounds as the potential buyers are the "surfs", a group of sea dwellers who live in enormous globe-shaped floating vessels called townships (literally town-ships) and are viewed with wary suspicion at best by most settlers. And who in turn view most settlers with equal suspicion and often with open hostility, not, as it turns out, without reason. Things quickly go downhill when Ty discovers a sunken township that has been sabotaged and chained to the sea floor, and later when his parents are kidnapped by the very surfs they were meeting with to negotiate the trade deal. And on top of finding his parents and solving the mystery of who's been attacking the surfers' towhships, Ty also has to figure out what's going on with Gemma who seems to have developed sudden but intense panic attacks while deep sea diving. Which is a real problem for an undersea boy like Ty since he's also having typical fifteen-year-old boy problems figuring out how he feels about Gemma and just what he should do about it.What I particularly liked about Rip Tide was how Falls brings out YA issues like learning to see the world differently as new experiences give you new perspectives, even when those perspectives are things you don't want to believe. And like having to make decisions even when you're not sure of the outcome, trying to figure out who you can trust and how much, and learning that even people whom you think you know can still end up surprising you.Highly recommended for anyone who likes a good scifi novel with engaging characters and particularly for anyone who likes a story set in the other great frontier, the world under the sea..

A worthy sequel to the first book, my only complaint being that far too much of the action takes place above the waves. We have no shortage of books set on the surface. This series, for me, is

intriguing mainly in that it establishes a potentially very popular and mainstream science fiction universe centered around the ocean, submarines, pressure suits and undersea habitats instead of the usual outer space, spaceships, space suits and space stations. There are so few science fiction worlds set under the sea and none enjoy the mainstream popularity of Star Trek or Star Wars. Dark Life has the potential to fill that niche, but if it does, then embrace it. Create enough diversity of locations under the surface that it isn't necessary to leave that world in order to tell a compelling story.Here's hoping for a Dark Life 3 which never leaves the underwater world, in which our heroes are only dry if they visit an undersea colony, and in which the surface world is mentioned only in passing, certainly never traveled to.

Ty Townson knows all about life underwater; Benthic Territory is his home turf. But for Gemma Straid, it's entirely new ground she's had to venture to find her brother. Meanwhile, outlaws are deflating homes, the Territory is running out of Liquigen, and the sheriff wants nothing more than to return Topside.This futuristic Western YA comes with a great male narrator, shifty characters, claustrophobic setting, some genuinely creepy moments, and the first steps of a realistic romance. Towards the end it gets more paranormal, which doesn't work for me (I've read enough teens-with-strange-abilities books), but I'll stick with this trilogy for the futuristic elements.

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