

INK EXCHANGE

Melissa Marr

Reviewed by: Rachel G., 15

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be The Star You Are! Charity

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The book *Ink Exchange*, by Melissa Marr, is a dark and sometimes troubling story about an urban teenage girl who is dealing with some very bad personal issues. Her mother left, her father began drinking, and her brother was heavily into drugs and kept a circle of very creepy guys around the house. Leslie was trying to keep it all together, and wanted her family to appear as normal as possible, but the truth was, everything was far from normal.

When Leslie becomes entranced by a tattoo design and decides that getting this 'ink' will give her some measure of control in her life, she becomes embroiled in an ancient faery war. Her new tattoo is no ordinary tattoo. The tattoo artist, Leslie's friends, and the intriguing man she is attracted to are all creatures from another world. Leslie becomes the object of desire for the Dark King of the faeries and though she tries to stay strong and true to herself, strange transformations begin to take place within her. The world around her has changed as well. Leslie's mortality is at risk, and once she gets her 'ink' she is no longer the same girl. She can now taste the emotions of others, and can see the faeries that inhabit our world. These are not cute pink fairies that live in flower petals, they are dark and vicious.

I really liked the fact that Leslie, for all her hurt and vulnerability doesn't give into the simple escapes. She is exposed to the ugly side of life, but resists becoming part of it. She is uneasy with the changes that overcome her and though lured to the dark side, stays regains her humanity.

To the uninitiated, this book about faeries can be a little confusing, but the reader quickly gets swept into this mystic world with all the imagery that Marr creates. . This book is not for children under the age of thirteen. There are some very mature issues (rape, drugs, some violence) and the teenagers seem to live without adult supervision. It is a great fantasy story that also has a touching romantic side. It would be a great book for high schoolers to check out of the library or as a gift for a teen who likes this genre.