

Shimmer

Dallas Reed

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Shimmer, written by Dallas Reed, brings the reader into an average suburb of Colorado, where a mysterious box disrupts the peace of the quiet town. At his very first party, Justin, the new kid, rejects the popular Tess's advances; Tess, in revenge, opens the strange box which Justin had warned her from touching. An amorphous substance is released, and Tess goes home feeling dizzy and sick. The next day, the entire school has an eerie atmosphere, and one by one, students show symptoms of mental instability. Everyone, in their strange trance, seems to want the box for unknown intentions. Justin, Emma, Russ, and Betina, the only ones unaffected, strive to understand exactly what is trapped in the box, and what power it unleashes. However, the more they try, only more questions come up, and danger lurks in every corner; everyone is pitted against each other.

In *Shimmer*, Reed delves into an interesting plot and an original idea which had the potential to dive off the page. However, he lacks everything else: from characterization to unnecessary details, the story is unable to move through at an appropriate pace. The dialogues are often exaggerated, overusing profanity and popular language. The characters are all too perfect, too stereotypical, and too unrealistic: Justin, the attractive, generous, thoughtful, rich new kid; Emma, the beautiful, down-to-earth, and smart love interest; Betina, the smart, sarcastic, and assertive best friend. If Reed developed the characters emotionally and mentally instead of focusing on their physicality and outer personality, there could have been deeper connections between the characters. Nevertheless, the book does have a fresh element; unlike most fantasy-fiction, Reed makes sure that the reader comprehends the situation, allowing each new event to sink into the reader's head. Also, he presents the information in great buildup and suspense; it gives the reader time to think about what is indeed in the box. Potential readers should be ages 14 and up, for drug references and language.