



Arcadia Awakens

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Kai Meyer is a popular and prolific author for children and young adults in his native Germany. He is known in this country as the author of the 'Wave Runners' and 'Flowing Queen' fantasy series for younger teens, one series set in Venice and the other in the Caribbean. This opening title in a new series is set in another exotic location, Sicily and, for older teens, offers an equally exotic (and mildly erotic) mix of crime, romance and fantasy. 17-year-old Rosa travels from her New York home to her ancestral hilltop family stronghold in Sicily. She has been born into a crime dynasty and, once in Sicily, is caught up in conflicts within and between Mafia families. She falls in love with Alessandro, the heir to a rival family. Animal passions rise in the Sicilian heat, and gradually Rosa understands that these men and women, including herself, steeped in a legacy of savagery, are beasts in more than imagination. It's a compelling idea, and Meyer exploits it and the Sicilian landscape very well, with Rosa having to come to terms not only with the violence around her but with the power of her own feelings as she mutates into her animal form. Perhaps, if the present teen (and publisher) obsession with vampires is on the wane, this form of supernatural metaphor for the hormonal turmoil of adolescence, which also taps into the continuing fascination with the Mafia, may well catch on. Anyway, it's a stylish and exciting new twist.

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