

The Hearts We Sold

Emily Lloyd-James

Reviewed by: Mikha Kounouho, 14

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Dee Moreno lives in a world filled with demons, but these aren't scary bloodthirsty, evil demons. They appear as unrealistically beautiful humans willing to grant miracle wishes to those willing to trade a piece of their own body for their wish—a cure for a finger, beautiful skin for a leg, money for an ear. When Dee's scholarship to her boarding school is ended due to school budget cutting, she is out of options. She can't go home to her abusive and alcoholic parents, and she has nowhere else to go. She decides to make a deal with a demon, but the demon has a price—her heart. She meets her fellow heartless, all of whom live their normal lives, except they work for the demon. Every once in a while, voids appear in their world, folds in reality that reach to faraway lands, and they have to close them for the demon. Dee learns to adapt to her new life as a heartless, but then she begins to wonder if she really made the right choice. As she and the other heartless begin to realize the secret horrors of the life they walked into, they are ready to fight to get their hearts back, their lives back, no matter the cost.

The Hearts We Sold is not only a story of a bargain with a demon but also about Dee and her own struggles. Raised in a home with two alcoholic parents whom she could never satisfy, she learned to take care of herself and her parents at an incredibly young age. Finally, when she was old enough, she got herself into a boarding school to get away from home, nevertheless, her traumatic childhood still haunted her. She tried to hide her past and refused to trust anyone. But after losing her heart and starting a new chapter of her life, she learns that there are people she can trust. She is not broken and she can be loved. Her story highlights that despite the troubles you face, your past does not define you, and sometimes putting your faith and trust in someone is the key to moving forwards.

This book is an intriguing and creative mix of a magical and real world. Based on core values of compassion, truth, and trust, this adventure is chilling yet moving, horrific yet beautiful, fantasy yet reality. This story is a romance and a life-changing journey full of hope. I would recommend this book for readers 12 and up who find a thrill in the chill of horror and adventure. I would recommend this book be borrowed from a library rather than bought as a gift; however, it is one that I would possibly go back and reread again.

Recommended Titles:

Illusive by Emily Lloyd-Jones

Deceptive by Emily Lloyd-Jones (*Illusive* #2)

Tithe: A Modern Faerie Tale by Holly Black

The Darkest art of the Forest by Holly Black