

Even the Darkest Stars

Heather Fawcett

Reviewed by: Mikha Kounouho, 14

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Sixteen-year-old Kamzin has lived in the small mountain village of Azmiri for her whole life, but she has always hungered for more. Her mother was an explorer for the Emperor, travelling the world making new discoveries in hidden valleys, misty mountains, enchanted forests, and haunted towns. Kamzin wants nothing more than to follow in her mother's footsteps, becoming an explorer for an exciting life filled with the danger and adventure she could never find in her quiet little village. When the Royal Explorer, the highest of the Emperor's explorers, arrives in Azmiri to request the help of Kamzin's strong-headed older sister, Lusha, on his journey to the top of Raksha, Kamzin finally has her chance, a chance to finally become an explorer like her daring mother. The way to the hidden mountain Raksha, scaled only by a few unfortunate explorers who never returned, is only known to two people who still live: Lusha and Kamzin. But suddenly, everything changes. Lusha disappears, having run away with another explorer, and Kamzin, as the last guide, is whisked off on the journey of a lifetime. She embarks on a thrilling journey of danger, magic, trust, and secrets, as she and the charming Royal Explorer race to reach Raksha before Lusha. Nevertheless, her journey holds more than just crumbling rocks and life-threatening cliff falls as dark secrets are revealed and love flourishes, forcing her to question all that she has ever known.

Kamzin's daring adventure is filled with creatures, spirits, demons, witches, and magic in the fantastical mountain ranges of the wilderness. A book that is impossible to put down, *Even the Darkest Stars* is a story of a young girl's strength as she rides on the waves of her unending courage, fearless nature, and rock-hard grit, climbing more than just mountains with her determination. This thrilling story, intertwined with elements of love and trust, will leave you breathless as you crest the peaks of your imagination, reaching for the stars of this magical tale. Heather Fawcett's book is a testament to not only the strength of women but also the preciousness of love, the irreplaceability of the truth, and the thrill of a magical adventure.

Even the Darkest Stars is a book I would recommend to fantasy lovers 10 and up. This is a book for those who love magical lands, rock climbing, and thrilling adventures. It is the perfect escape from reality to faraway lands where dragons glow, witches scheme, and mountains rise high above with snow-capped tips that kiss the heavens. All readers will find a friend in Kamzin and her companions as they guide you through menacing mountains driven by hope and courage. I would recommend this book be borrowed, along with its sequel, *All the Wandering Light*, from the library for a breathtaking and unforgettable journey to the top of Raksha.

Recommended Titles

All the Wandering Light by Heather Fawcett (*Even the Darkest Stars* #2)

Ember and the Ice Dragons by Heather Fawcett

The Language of Ghosts by Heather Fawcett

Sorcery of Thorns by Margaret Rogerson

Song of the Current by Sarah Tolcser (*Song of the Current* #1)