

Shimmer

Dallas Reed

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Winter, a snow-capped town snugly tucked into the mountains, has a name befitting of its favored season. It is also the location of a luxury resort that will bring this sleepy town into the modern world and onto the national map. However, this quaint neighborhood harbors a sinister, forgotten secret in the form of a box. Discovered in the mountains, it is stored in Justin's house with explicit instructions for no one to touch it. Rightly so, it harbors the seven deadly sins. Released, it magnifies them ten-fold, enough to drive humans to insanity. Purging itself of these evils through humans, this force can then live pure and unrestrained on Earth.

Justin is not too concerned about the box and decides to hold a house party. That night, curiosity and spite prove themselves to be vices. When Tess Ward opens the box, she unleashes a chilling storm of shimmering particles that sends Winter into the darkest, coldest winter in history. In twenty-four hours' time, a sickness with the eerie likeness of a zombie apocalypse has struck the entire area. Of Winter's inhabitants, only Kit, Russ, Justin, Emma, and Betina are left to protect the box the of Winter. Luckily, no one can get out- including the infected. Bad news- the kids are stranded on the wrong side of the icy blockade. Realizing that the box may have been none other than Pandora's box, the kids flee towards the renovated part of Winter in hopes of discovering a working computer, and the conclusion of the myth.

Shimmer by Dallas Reed is a retelling of an ancient Greek myth that finds the origins of this legendary artifact and brings it to life in the present time. Reed builds upon the myth in this plot even as he mirrors the actual story of Pandora's box. Reed creates a cast of characters diverse in their motivations, background, and voices. The most timid of characters derives her strength from an inherent goodness, while one of the main characters demonstrates that his limited endurance and selfishness that demands him to give up on life. Furthermore, the divisions are prominent in this book, from the cliques within the school to the stratified social classes and enmity between Winter's original inhabitants and the newcomers. Thus, the setting of the play is ripe for conflict. And underlying the entire story is a chilling warning that humans' excessive depravity may be worsening and that the possibility for it to ruin humans is still very real.

As interesting as the plot is, the language and the characters bothered me at times. The boys seem superficial in their unbidden immature thoughts towards Emma that are incongruous with the plot. In the midst of danger, they comment on her physical attributes and imagine a romantic relationship while Emma is a picture of innocence throughout. Also, the slang and other bursts of crude language seemed to be jammed into the dialogue between the more detached narrations. Tossed into sentences that could achieve the same emphasis without the swearing made the swear words feel superfluous or misused. Considering that the story is more suited for middle school students, the language of its contents should reflect that. Other books to check out after this book include *World War Z* by Max Brooks, *The Kill Order* by James Dashner and Mark Deakins, *Eve* by Anna Carey, *Unearthly* by Cynthia Hand, and *Feed* by Mira Grant