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# Splendor



## Synopsis

Splendor, the stunning sequel to Sacred, is a story about changing friendships, family, romance, passion, the study of Kabbalah, and self-discovery. Sometimes the answers we seek aren't ours to find. . . . Scarlett loves her boyfriend, the dashing, mysterious Will Cohen. But now he's gone east for college, and Scarlett is stuck home on Catalina Island. Senior year should be a breeze, but between dealing with her parents' separation and her wild best friend, Lily, things are off to a rocky start. And then there's Gunner. Dangerous, dark, ferociously attractive Gunner. Lily's potential boyfriend, Gunner. . . . Scarlett distracts herself by spending time with her horse and delving into ecstatic mysticism, a way to practice Kabbalah. Through this practice, she hopes to learn to control her emotions, and begin to make sense of her place in the world. But Scarlett's world is increasingly unrecognizable. Are Lily and Scarlett becoming too different to stay friends? Is Will still the love of Scarlett's life, even though she has feelings for Gunner? Does being in love mean only being attracted to one person? The more Scarlett questions, the fewer answers there seem to be. Praise for Splendor: "As in Arnold's earlier Sacred, teens will gravitate toward Scarlett and her problems. Arnold has painted a very realistic picture of teenage girls and their conflicting emotions. . . . Fans of the first novel will appreciate continuing Scarlett's story and finding some closure with this sequel. Readers unfamiliar with Sacred will still be able to enjoy Splendor." "VOYA Praise for Sacred: "Will appeal to many teens, especially fans of the Twilight series." --Booklist "Filled with tension and angst. . . . Readers will be looking for the next installment." --School Library Journal "A poignant novel of loss and grief, but also of hope." --VOYA

## Book Information

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Delacorte Press (November 12, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385742134

ISBN-13: 978-0385742139

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1.2 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,773,083 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #84 in Books > Teens >

Literature & Fiction > Religious > Jewish #1561 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social

## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up "This sequel to *Sacred* (Delacorte, 2012) captures only a fraction of the intensity and characterization found in the first book. Scarlett, now a senior in high school, is dealing with the separation of her parents, her boyfriend Will's departure to college on the other side of the country, and her friend Lily's need to push boundaries. In the midst of these changes, the teen forms a relationship with Sabine, a student of Kabbalah. Favoring the company of Sabine's family over her own disconnected household, she turns to her new friend for guidance about her recurring, prophetic dreams involving Will. Distracted by her studies and by her pregnant horse, Scarlett overlooks the seriousness of Lily's rebellion and destructive relationship with Gunner, the sexy newcomer to their Catalina Island high school. The intense, almost supernatural connection between Will and Scarlett is not fully explained in this book, so teens will need to have read *Sacred* to understand Will's gift for detecting danger before it happens. The book explores Kabbalah, a school of thought founded within the context of Judaism, in a way that is informative but often heavy-handed. The potential connection between Scarlett's dreams, Will's psychic abilities, and Kabbalah are barely touched upon, significantly diminishing the palpable tension felt in the first book. Fans who enjoyed *Sacred* will tolerate *Splendor* out of curiosity." Lynn Rashid, Marriotts Ridge High School, Marriottsville, MD

In this sequel to *Sacred* (2012), Scarlett's boyfriend, Will, has left for Yale; her parents' marriage is crumbling; and her wild-child best friend, Lily, is enamored of a handsome new student to whom Scarlett is also attracted. The minor paranormal elements "Will's precognition and Scarlett dreaming Will's memories" are so gently inserted that they seem almost realistic, especially when surrounded by the tragedies in Scarlett's life. Readers new to the series won't be lost if they haven't read book one "Arnold's latest stands just fine on its own. Recommend this to fans of deeply introspective dramas, especially those who want to think about religion and its role in their lives. Grades 10-12. --Snow Wildsmith

Mr. McCormick made the book. Fab writing. Loved it.

It was an AMAZING book by Elana and I wish there were more! She is such an amazing author !

4.5 Stars 'Splendor' is a beautifully written young adult novel full of hope, faith and love. It continues to follow lead character Scarlett Wenderoth as she deals with life's obstacles and struggles. Her boyfriend, Will, has headed east for college; she started her senior year of high school; her parents have separated; and her best friend Lily is being wild as always. On top of all that, there's Gunner - the handsome and dangerous guy that might become Lily's boyfriend. Gunner has Scarlett questioning her love for Will and what exactly it means to be in love with someone. To clear her head and think things over, Scarlett turns again to her horse and also to Kabbalah - a form of mysticism - to help clear her mind and harness her emotions. But the more answers Scarlett attempts to find, only more questions seem to appear in their place. This was a enchanting young adult novel that revolves around several deep issues such as friendship, loss, grief, family, self discovery, faith, and love. The characters continued to be incredibly realistic and unique. Scarlett continued to be a great lead character with her flaws and obvious issues, but she showed more character growth in the novel and continued to search for answers to life's many questions and problems. There were new issues in the romance department with the introduction of Gunner's character, which I felt made things more interesting and yet more complicated at the same time. I enjoyed watching how Scarlett dealt with her feelings for both Will and Gunner and how things played out between them. I felt that the setting was again perfect for the novel - Catalina, a small island off the coast of California, provided the perfect sense of familiarity for the reader as well as the characters and it was also a beautiful backdrop to the story as a whole. The plot had a lot of difficult situations and questions that needed answered, but it was filled with hope, faith and love as we continue to watch Scarlett grow into the young woman she's meant to be. The novel's writing was beautifully done so much so that I was immediately drawn into the lyrical prose and the vivid details and descriptions. The pace was natural and flowed effortlessly throughout the book. I'm eagerly awaiting the next novel to see what Scarlett will have to face next and how she'll get through it. Highly recommended for fans of YA fantasy and contemporary fiction! Disclosure: I received a copy of the book in exchange for an honest review.

I love Elana K. Arnold's books. Her writing is understated, beautiful, and vivid. Burning is my favorite, but I also really liked Sacred, the first book in this duology, along with Splendor. When I first finished Sacred I was surprised to see there was going to be a sequel. I felt like the story left off in a good place and it wasn't necessary to keep going, but since I love Elana's writing and I enjoyed the story I was happy for the opportunity to read more. Even after I started reading I remained skeptical. There's a lot going on in this book. There's Will going away to

college, Scarlett's parents splitting up, Scarlett's friend Lily going through a rebellion, Scarlett's Kabbalah practice, the mysterious new guy who moves to Catalina island, and the pregnancy of Scarlett's mare. For a while I thought I was going to have to write a review, of one of my favorite author's books, an author who seems like a really nice person, saying I just didn't get this one. Eventually I settled into the story and I came to like all the different parts. I didn't love that Will was all the way on the other side of the country at college, but I appreciated that it gave Scarlett room to be her own person and do her own thing. At first I was taken aback by the storyline about Scarlett's parents splitting up. At the end of Sacred they seemed to be a really good place. Part of me wishes that storyline would have been explored a little more, but as I've said, this was a pretty packed book. The Lily storyline I really liked. In Sacred, when Scarlett is struggling to move on after her brother's death, I loved what a good friend Lily was; it was interesting to see a less confident, more rebellious side of Lily. Scarlett's Kabbalah practice I had mixed feelings about. Some parts of it, like the explanation of Sukkot, I already knew about so I was a little bored. Other parts of it, like the mystical gifts people are given and the ways we are all connected, I found really fascinating. Gunner, the mysterious Brit who moves to Catalina Island, I hated personally, but I liked the storyline. He drove a wedge between Scarlett and Lily, which upset me, and I was so afraid he would drive a wedge between Will and Scarlett. And the pregnant horse, I learned way more than I ever wanted to know about how a horse gets pregnant, and I felt kind of bad for the horse, but I thought it was an interesting decision on Scarlett's part and I wish we would have learned more about why she made it. See? A lot of things were happening. Elana had told me that this is her favorite ending of all her books, so the bar was set pretty high, but even 50 or 60 pages from the end I wasn't sure how it was all going to come together and wrap up. But then it did, and I really loved it. It's a bittersweet ending, but I really appreciated how everything converged and how things said earlier in the book came around and connected. And I will agree with Elana, this is also my favorite ending out of her books. "The thing about life, I thought as Star drank his mother's warm milk, is that you have to choose it. And then you have to keep choosing it, again and again. You can choose it by staring out at the vast horizon. By focusing on the smallest stone. By feeling humbled by the greatness of others. By claiming victory in a challenge. By judging. By loving. Through balance. Through knowledge. In wisdom. In grace." Bottom Line: If this wasn't already established before I am an Elana K. Arnold fangirl all the way. I adore her writing and her stories and I am so sad I have to wait until next year to read another book by her. If you like smart, well written, different, but not too different YA, you have to give her books a shot.

Even though it took me a little while to settle into what she was doing with this one, I still loved her writing and when it all came together it was just lovely. I received an ARC of this book from a friend who used to work at Random House. All opinions are my own.

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