

Heartless (Jolene Hall)

By Leah Rhyne

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In a contemporary take on the Frankenstein tale, Jolene Hall is dead – sort of. She can walk, think and talk, but her heart no longer beats. After being abducted and subjected to horrific experiments, Jo wakes up to find her body is a mosaic of jagged wounds and stapled flesh. Jo has a choice: go to the authorities, or team with her best friend Lucy and boyfriend Eli to save herself.

She wants to know who turned her into a monster, and live to see another sunrise. On a trip deep into the snowy White Mountains, to a hidden laboratory filled with bodies of the dead, Jo and Lucy find more ‘creatures’ just like her. Part body, part machine, run by batteries and electricity, these girls are killers, created by a shadowy Order with a penchant for chaos…and murder. To make matters worse, a photo on a wall of victims reveals Lucy is next in line to be "recruited” into this army When Jo’s physical condition takes a turn for the worse, and the and the Order kidnaps those she loves most, saving her best friend and the man she loves might just mean sacrificing herself...or what’s left of her.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal
Gr 8 Up—Jolene Hall is a 19-year-old college student who lives a very privileged life. Her roommate is the daughter of a foreign ambassador, she is dating a medical student, and her parents are wealthy. Late one night, she has a fight with her boyfriend, causing her to abandon his warm, safe apartment for the blizzard that awaits. The next thing Jolene remembers is waking up, strapped to a cold metal table in a place that she does not know. Freeing herself from that prison begins the turn of events that changes the outcome of her life forever. On the surface, this title reads like an engaging, suspenseful thriller. However, the dialogue is overused and forced. The main character, Jolene, is supposed to be a sympathetic protagonist. However, she comes across as a pretentious, spoiled brat. Her only saving grace is her best friend, Lucy, and her jilted boyfriend, Eli. They are the real stars of the narrative. The conflict and story idea are unique and potentially interesting, yet the end result is not successful. VERDICT While this debut YA novel shows promise, it doesn't quite hit the mark.—Amy Caldera, Dripping Springs Middle School, TX

Review

"Every word in Rhyne's HEARTLESS is threaded with menace; every scene thumps with anticipation. Even as you feel for Jo you recoil, not knowing what's coming next... An unputdownable story about life, loss, and the indomitable will to survive."
—S.K. Falls, author of *World of Shell and Bone*

About the Author

Leah Rhyne is a Jersey girl who's lived in the South so long she's lost her accent...but never her attitude. After spending most of her childhood watching movies like Star Wars, Alien(s), and A Nightmare On Elm Street, and reading books like Stephen King's The Shining or It, Leah now spends her days writing tales of horror and science fiction. Her short fiction has appeared in such publications as Abyss & Apex Magazine and Revolt Daily. She writes for LitReactor.com, and for herself at leahrhyne.com. Leah lives with her husband, daughter, and a small menagerie of pets. In her barely-there spare time, she loves running and yoga. Follow her on Twitter at @leah_beth. She lives in Charleston, South Carolina.

Users Review

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Catherine Acevedo:

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