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Posted on 09 February 2018 By Leanna Renee Hieber

{EBOOK} ì Darker Still ? eBook or E-pub free

The writing was decent, I loved the era and the setting, I thought the author did it justice but the plot is still poorly done When you really think about it, we all know books have to have

high stakes There was no real stake for our heroine at all She got drawn in by the painting, the only reason she helps is because she feels a certain pull to the ridiculously attractive lord and thus must help him Honestly, what if he was butt ugly Different situation entirely If our MC chose not to act, she could have easily walked away with no consequence I guess her motivation aside from her attraction to oh so gorgeous guy is also because she s lonely as she s a mute It s nice for her to be involved and feel appreciated Although it does become ridiculous how she s the only person able to go into the painting and converse with Jonathan, and it s also too far fetched that in the painting she can miraculously talk again which helps her in real life. Also, the book is written in the diary style which puts a distance from the actual conflict You won t actually be worried for the MC because you know she ll be fine I mean she can t give us the end if she s dead right Someone has to write the thing. There are many accounts of our MC s nightmares, which is probably supposed to be the scariest and most exciting bit But too bad I found it inane along with the subplot of her mother I guess we re supposed to worry about the bad guys in this case right But you ll be surprised how easily the MC manages to deal with the problem and get the body back view spoiler In the end all it took was a simple sentence when the actual ritual took so bloody long Goes like this let s ask the guy what he remembers, oh and look at the symbols at the back of the painting Then let s hit some books and do some research and voila We have a solution hide spoiler My review 1.5 of 5 stars Uhhhhh.. Final Page Thoughts Dumb, dumb, dumb throws book First Thoughts So here s the story on how I came to obtain this book I was browsing through the library stacks and I was intrigued by the title and was even intrigued when I picked it up and saw the cover girl was wearing this gorgeous purple dress If you know anything about me, it s that I m a huge sucker for anything purple Yep That s my story Completely necessary addition to my review, I know I start reading it and I m kind of pleased at how it starts it s interesting and original sounding and it s written in the form of diary entries If someone would have told me it was written in the form of diary entries I would ve given them a skeptical look and kindly set it aside My experience with journal entry style books have not been pleasant Plus, I think of how I wrote in my diary when I was a teen Today, I woke up and ate breakfast and then had to take the bus and it was dumb but the day got soooooo much better because Kenny touched my hand when he went to turn his homework in and I m going to be happy for the rest of this week I 3 Kenny Remember not to wash hand Note Not actual diary entry Maybe You can understand my glee at realizing these were well written diary entries Maybe I set the bar a bit low in comparison. The Not So Pretty Like I said, I found the journal entries to be interesting but they turned out to be a requirement as I m not sure how else you d tell a story from the POV of a girl who has been mute since she was 4 years old This girl writes in her diary A LOT but not all of the entries seemed entirely appropriate I ve been captured I know not where I m going I m in a carriage Heading north, I think I can write only a quick note Uhh you ve been kidnapped and you ve decided to write in your diary I think additional comment is

unnecessary Obviously you're able to determine from the summary alone that some type of magic y goodness is involved with lines like He was alive Trapped within his golden frame The magic was lacking in goodness in my opinion The combination of runes, hieroglyphics, dark magic, and elements related to the Saints was definitely original but ended up being a tad far fetched and basically a big hot mess And once it really started snowballing there at the end she totally lost mel called upon that sacred vow granted me as a baby, a vow I renewed now as a woman in this moment, a vow to reject the DevilUhh sure.And come on She's a mute in the real world but she can speak find in picture worldI could speak in Denbury's world It was time I started speaking in this one So she just decides that she wants to speak again And she does Sure That makes PERFECT sense The way she said it was like she was talking about getting the dishes done, that she's just been a lazy ass about it, and she's decided she's finally gonna get it done.The Romance Oh boy, where to begin Let's just say I really had a hard time believing their love Half the book I kept expecting him to turn out to be a big jerk face who was just using her to help him get out of the portrait, but, okay. I was wrong I still didn't feel the legitimacy there view spoiler And what the hell was up with that one scene where Denbury was going on about the two of them coupling their spirits there in picture world And how is it possible that that ends up sounding dirtier than if he had just simply said, Come on babe, let's do it Peculiar hide spoiler

Darker Still is a story that draws its inspiration from a number of great Gothic classics Bram Stoker's Dracula, Edgar Allen Poe's The Murders in the Rue Morgue, and Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray can be found in Darker Still, and yet this story still feels unique in a YA market that is flooded with witches, fairies, vampires, werewolves, and other supernatural creatures I love Victorian literature, and this book manages to tackle some fairly significant modern themes in a historical paranormal romance by examining them through a Victorian lens The story is told in epistolary form through Natalie's diary entries, letters she receives or writes, and police and newspaper accounts This type of first person narrative, in which the whole story is told this way, is uncommon in modern literature It serves a psychological function between the character and the reader that works for teenagers, who are familiar with this structure from their Facebook, Twitter, and blogging accounts It also makes sense for Natalie because she doesn't speak, her communication with other characters naturally happens through her writing, and the reader gets to feel even closer to her than through a straightforward first person narrative Natalie Stewart is seventeen years old and knows her prospects are limited She witnessed her mother's violent death as a small child, and it has left her unable to speak Her father loves her, but he doesn't know what to do with her, so he ships her off to school with other young people who have a variety of mental problems Even worse, when she comes home, people treat her like she's furniture, and openly pity her father because she's not likely to make a good marriage Her life takes a new direction, however, when she hears about a mysterious portrait of a young man who disappeared immediately after the painting was finished Rumor

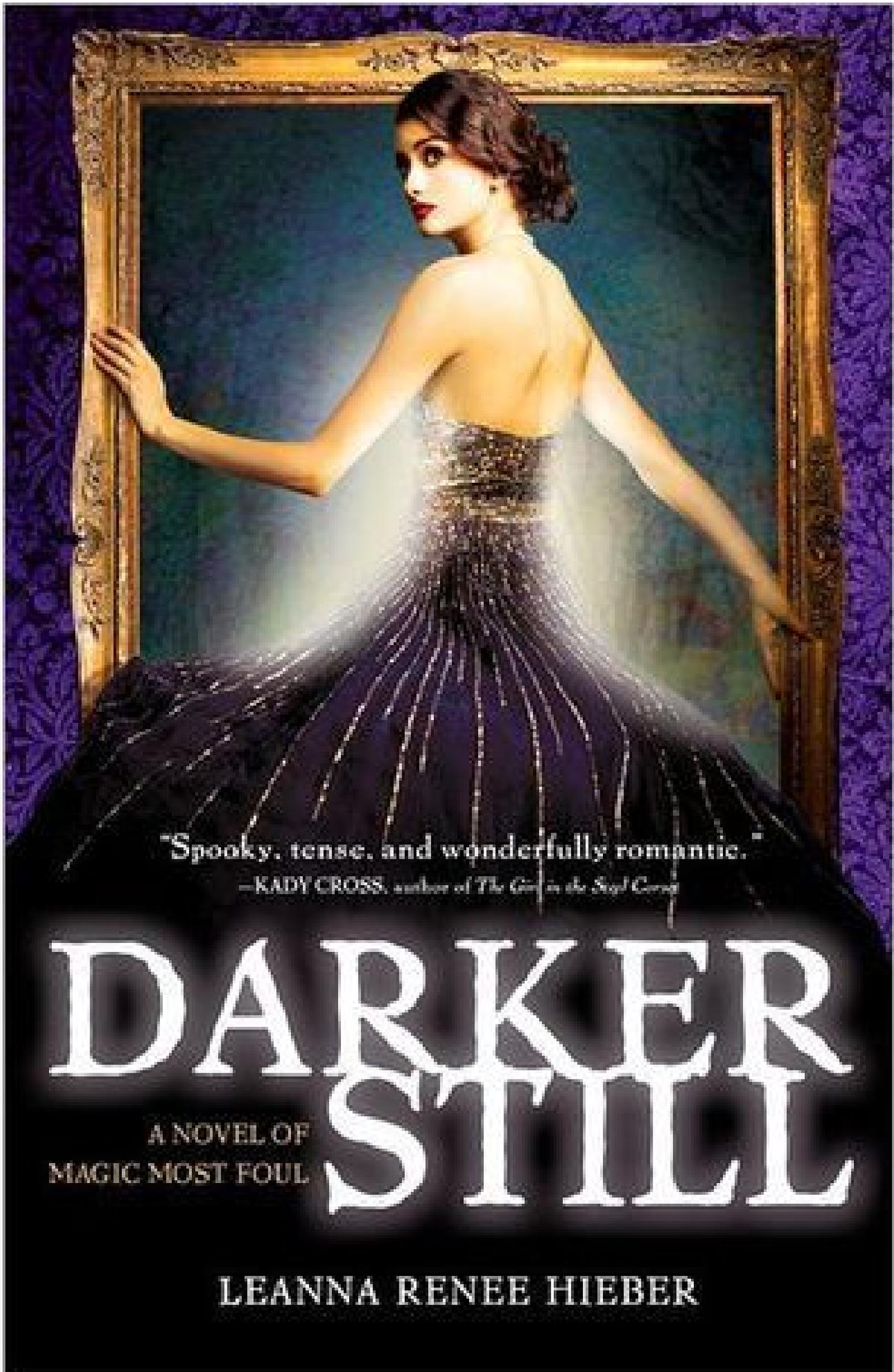
has it the painting is haunted, and Natalie is intrigued enough to convince her father to let her work in the acquisitions department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art where he is a curator. The museum can't afford the asking price of the portrait, however, and the wealthy and somewhat mysterious widow Mrs Evelyn Northe is persuaded to purchase the art and loan it to the museum. But Natalie immediately notices there's something strange about the painting. She's certain the young man, Lord Denbury, moves on the canvas between her glances. Just a few minutes later she sees a young man who looks just like Lord Denbury walk past her and speak to her rudely. Natalie is scared, but intrigued by this mystery. Because of her friendship with Mrs Northe she learns that the older woman knows more than she has previously revealed, and Natalie decides to learn everything she can from the enigmatic widow. Natalie begins to spend increasing amounts of time with the painting until she sees a message asking her to touch Lord Denbury's hand, after which she falls into the painting and meets the real Lord Denbury. Natalie and Jonathon are immediately drawn to each other, and Natalie promises to help Jonathon break the curse and gain his freedom. But women are suddenly going missing in the poorer Five Points area of New York, only to turn up murdered in grisly fashion, and the description of the assailant matches Lord Denbury. Now Mrs Northe and Natalie are in a race against time to stop the murders and determine if Jonathon is friend or foe before the curse becomes permanent. I liked how Hieber explores gender, class, and the question of disability in this novel. Natalie is an intelligent young woman, yet her inability to speak makes her peers see her as broken and of reduced value as a human. Her father's overprotectiveness makes things even worse by making sure she is sent away to a sheltered environment that stunts her development. Her father loves her, but she makes some potentially life-threatening mistakes because she doesn't know any better, which made me even upset. Her father is unable to see the capable young woman he has raised. The book's theme about finding one's voice is larger than learning to speak one's thoughts; it's also about encouraging the young adult audience to challenge what they've been taught, and to reexamine social ideas of perfection and self-worth for value and applicability. *Darker Still* is a page-turner that will appeal to the teenage audience's sense of drama and controversy, while possibly also capturing their imagination and desire to read the classics I mentioned at the beginning of my review. My formal review for this book can be found on [This](#). This started out kind of insta-lovish and cheesy, but the puzzle of the curse and the haunted painting were really interesting and I ended up liking it mainly because of that and the Gothic atmosphere. I was happy enough with the ending that I'm probably not going to pick up the rest of the series, though I don't really need to see where else this goes. I do enjoy this author's writing. Everything I've read by her has had great atmosphere. But I liked her adult series better, and I think I'll wait until she goes back to writing for adults again. This was too YA for me. I've had Leanna Renee Hieber's *Strangely Beautiful* series on my wish list for a long time now so I was very excited to get my hands on an advanced copy of the first book in her new *Magic Most Foul* series. *Darker Still* is a fantastic Gothic paranormal

story set in Victorian New York and I loved it The story is told in the form of diary entries written by our heroine, 17 year old Natalie Natalie is a beautiful, intelligent young woman but since the trauma of witnessing her mother s death as a child she has been unable to speak Her father loves her dearly but is unsure how to cope with her and she has spent most of her childhood in an asylum with people suffering from various mental illnesses She has now come home to live with her father but is treated as an outcast by society because she is unable to speak and is very unlikely to make a suitable marriage because of her disability Natalie s father works for the Metropolitan Museum of Art and she manages to convince him to get her a job there, afraid that he will send her back to the asylum if she doesn t find something useful to do It is at the museum that she first sees the painting of Lord Denbury She has already heard of the mystery surrounding the painting, the subject disappeared not long after the painting was finished and is presumed dead and there are rumors that the painting itself is haunted but she is just intrigued by the amazing detail in the picture Famous spiritualist Mrs Northe has her heart set on buying the painting and she quickly takes Natalie under her wing Thetime Natalie spends with the painting theshe starts to believe that there is something suspicious going on, she is positive that Lord Denbury moves when she isn t looking and starts to wonder if she really is insane after all It doesn t take long before she discovers that something muchsinister is going on though, the real Lord Denbury has been trapped inside the painting but can she find a way to help him escape and who put him there in the first place Natalie is a great heroine, she has led a sheltered life but is smart and resourceful and you really get to see her grow throughout the story She is terrified of the things that she sees and has to face but is equally determined to find a way to help Lord Denbury It makes a nice change to read a book where it is the heroine who has to rescue the hero rather than the other way around I also loved the fact that the story is set in Victorian New York, I ve read a lot of books from that era set in London and this made a refreshing change I liked Lord Denbury, he is sweet and passionate but doesn t really have a major role to play in his own rescue Trapped as he is there is little he can do but stand by and watch as Natalie faces the dangers on his behalf and I m hoping he will have aactive role in future books in the series.I don t want to tell youabout the story because I think you need to read the book and discover it for yourself so I m just going to say that if you like books with a historical setting, strong female characters and a paranormal twist that is different from the usual vampires or werewolves then Darker Still is a must buy I loved Leanna Renee Hieber s writing style and have purchased her Strangely Beautiful series which I can t wait to start reading I will also be first in the queue when it comes to picking up the next book in the Magic Most Foul series. Darker StillA copy of this book was kindly provided by Sourcebooks Fire Publishing via Netgalley.For Natalie Stewart destiny is scrawled across the morning paper s headlines A story and a photo of a painting capture her attention It is the handsome portrait of a Lord Denbury, who is reported to have committed suicide in England Rumors swirl thick around the picture, some believe

that it is haunted and that the essence of the young man is trapped inside. Our mute heroine, Natalie, is immediately drawn to the painting. She endeavors to gently prod her father, a museum curator, into purchasing the work for the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. A few furiously scribbled notes later he is convinced but it seems there are others interested in the mysterious painting. With the aid of a wealthy widow, Mrs. Northe, the masterpiece is procured and Natalie soon finds herself plunged into a strange, supernatural mystery. There is foul magic afoot. Natalie inexplicably is able to enter into the painting and indeed trapped inside is the soul of the striking, Jonathan Denbury while his corporal body is possessed by the very demon that ensnared him. Natalie is absorbed in a race against time to shatter the curse to free Denbury and halt the horrific murders that are committed by the demonic possessor of Lord Denbury's body. Each time she plunges into the painting she leaves a bigger piece of her heart behind. She has fallen hopelessly in love with the cursed Jonathon Denbury. Will she be able to break the evil spell and save the man she has lost her heart to?

What I Liked: I enjoyed the setting of New York in 1880. The description of the novel at the time of this review states the story takes place in 1882, this is an error for the book starts in June of 1880. It is in the years when the United States is coming out from under the dark, bloody years of the Civil War. New York is bustling with activity and with an ever-growing fascination with the mystical and spiritualism. I was intrigued by the ideas put forth in this novel regarding the occult. It was a time when individuals were open-minded and willing to accept the possibility of supernatural explanations. An era when people openly dabbled in the world of spirits and tried to open lines of communication through seances and ouija boards. This time provides the perfect backdrop for the novel. The characters in this book are unique. Natalie, the lead heroine, is notable by the loss of her voice. As a young child she witnessed a traumatic accident that stole her mother and her ability to speak. She has spent thirteen years trapped as a mute. This is the first time that I encountered a voiceless protagonist. Don't let the lack of speech fool you. Natalie is determined, headstrong, a quick scribe and adept in sign language. I was delighted in the way she finds her voice. This novel provides a candid look at the many obstacles someone with disabilities faced in the past. My favorite character was Mrs. Northe, she immediately becomes Natalie's fast friend. She is intelligent, open-minded, a spiritualist and willing to acknowledge the whisperings of the supernatural. A forward-thinking and capable woman in a male-dominated society. Jonathon Denbury, he is a gentleman, dashing, handsome, charming, noble and a caring healer. It is easy to see why he holds such sway over the ladies even as a painting. I am certain he will set many hearts a flutter. The premise of the book, a haunted painting one that entraps a man's soul. This was a novel and creative story. I liked the idea of Natalie being able to dive into the painting. I also appreciated that the book was told through the writings in Natalie's journal, letters and newspaper clippings. This concept married well with Natalie's handicap. The diary is Natalie's voice. And The Not So Much. I was so excited to read this book, the idea of a painting coming to life. As I delved into

the pages I found that at times the pacing of the story ambled along It took a long time before the pace moved to a jog and it isn't until the last couple of chapters that it speeds to a running finish Due to the slow unfurling I had a hard time staying engaged in the plot Perhaps it was just me I was left confused about two characters The conniving Crenfall, who underhandedly helped entrap Denbury I was unclear over his ultimate role was he possessed by the same demon or was he under a compulsion spell I was also unsure of Mrs Northe's niece, Maggie Upon first meeting there is some foreshadowing whirling around her and Mrs Northe's disapproving looks and annoyance indicated that she was headed towards something problematic or a possibly dark enterprise but alas it did not come to fruition She does make a bumbling attempt at a seance during an inopportune, climatic moment in the story but her role is left unfinished I have a feeling that perhaps her involvement has not ended I certainly hope so because her thread is left hanging I did not like the participation of the police detective I am not sure what the purpose of his voice was in the plot but it felt out of place to me This is labeled as a young adult title but due to the graphic murder scenes and mature themes, I think this is a novel better suited for mature young adult readers. Darker Still is a captivating glance into a bygone era A world of spiritualism and supernatural possibility Grab Lord Denbury's hand and dip into his painting Follow Natalie as she navigates the streets of New York chasing a demon This is an intriguing adventure that immerses you into the world of the occult The door is left ajar to continue the tales of Natalie and Jonathan, who knows what trouble lurks ahead for the two lovebirds. Favorite Quotations I was lost in the music of him Perhaps the Devil knows when a man could do great things and stops him from them Wreaking havoc in his path instead It would take a very wise young woman to know that she shouldn't always trust a fairy tale A soul without purpose withers Great things may not change the world, but they will change the lives around you For reviews visit



"Spooky, tense, and wonderfully romantic."

—KADY CROSS, author of *The Girl on the Train*

DARKER STILL

A NOVEL OF
MAGIC MOST FOUL

LEANNA RENEE HIEBER

Seventeen year old Natalie Stewart has been unable to speak since her mother died when she was a little girl, and so she has lived a rather isolated life After graduating from a school for the deaf and mute and returning home to New York City, she begins writing a diary to pass the time Her father works for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which in 1880, when the story is set, had only been opened for a few years Natalie becomes interested in a painting of Lord Denbury, a young English nobleman who was recently presumed dead. From the start, Natalie is fascinated by the lifelike portrait, and she soon learns why Lord Denbury is not dead, but has been trapped in the painting by an evil demon who has possessed his body Only Natalie can visit him in the painting, and in her dreams, which have always been dark and disturbing Natalie and Lord Denbury soon begin to fall in love, but can Natalie save him by defeating the demon and breaking the curse that traps him in the painting

Darker Still is a book that really stands out from the sea of young adult paranormal romances out there Both the setting New York City in 1880 and the story a demon who trapped someone in a painting are very unique, as is the format, since the story is told through Natalie s diary If you are like me and love young adult paranormal romance but are sick and tired of the endless modern vampire and werewolf books, I highly recommend this book, and I think fans of historical fiction would enjoy it as well. Disclosure Review copy provided by publisher. I should first off say that this review will contain no spoilers as this book is not being released until November 2011 although it is a crime to make someone wait that long to read this wonderful piece of pure art I should also say that I am very much in love with the writing of Miss Hieber, and as such I may appear a little biased But I assure you, this review is meant wholeheartedly and with the mind that I have never before met and or heard of Leanna Renee Hieber To give a false review is to lie to the author and it s ten times worse than to say oh, your child is so cute when in fact, it is not With that said I started this book a couple of weeks ago with the hopes of finishing it before I was to be thrown back into the havic that is high school This, however, did not happen and therefore has taken me longer to complete I have spent a lot of my study hall time reading this book, wishing that first period would last all day so that I could just sit and read But I should start at the beginning. The novel appealed to me from the first time I heard the premise of the story The phrase that Hieber uses with signing this novel is Find your voice , and the dedication is to those who have ever struggled to do so and to be heard, this too intrigued me further as this is a obstacle that I often struggle with although not physically The narrator of this diary is Natalie Stewart, a 17 year old mute, home from having completed school Her father, being a single parent, has no idea what to do with his unfortunate daughter this being 19th century New York Mr Stewart, being an employee of the Museum of Art comes across the story of a painting coming to town with quite a contrivarsial reputation The portrait of young Lord Denbury is said to be haunted, that as you stand before his likeness you can feel a sort of presence as if his very soul lingers with the painting Lord Denbury, after losing his parents, was presumed dead by suicide shortly after the painting had been

commissioned Natalie is taken with the story of the painting, having always been interested in the supernatural, having been aware of a sort of whisper since she was young She tells her father that she would like to be employed at the museum as well mainly so that she can be around the painting Her father, seeing this as a suitable plan, agrees They come in contact with the owner of the painting Mrs Evelyn Northe Natalie is eventaken with the painting than she had thought, the very sight of Lord Denbury giving her chills, and not just from the cool air that surrounds the painting Although, one day she sees a figure that looks like Lord Denbury, save for the eyes As the story progresses, Natalie and Mrs Northe realize that there is something, indeed, magical and mysterious about this portrait Together, they set out to solve this mystery The painting changes, as if Lord Denbury is summoning Natalie into his world With a step, her life changes Both good and terrible things are instore for Miss Stewart, but perhaps, she has found a reason to speak And maybe, just maybe, she has at last found her voice.P.S If anybody may come across such a man as Lord DenburyDIBS P.S.S I honestly, 100% loved this book PLEASE read it when it comes out this November My name s in the back {EBOOK} ? Darker Still É A Lush Gothic Tale That Begs For ReadingI Couldn T Put It Down New York Times Bestselling Author Sarah Maclean I Was Obsessed It Was As If He Called To Me, Demanding I Reach Out And Touch The Brushstrokes Of Color Swirled Onto The Canvas It Was The Most Exquisite Portrait I D Ever Seen Everything About Lord Denbury Was Unbelievableutterly Breathtaking And Eerily Lifelike There Was A Reason For That Because Despite What Everyone Said, Denbury Never Had Committed Suicide He Was Alive Trapped Within His Golden Frame I Ve Crossed Over Into His World Within The Painting, And I Ve Seen What Dreams Haunt Him They Haunt Me Too He And I Are Inextricably Linked Bound Together To Watch The Darkness Seeping Through The Gas Lit Cobblestone Strets Of Manhattan And Unless I Can Free Him Soon, Things Will Only Get Darker Still With the back blurb giving a sort of mishmash of well known books forced into one YA book, I was happily surprised and relived how well Hieber weaved the stories of Dorian Gray and Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde into Darker Still taking well known stories and giving it her own twist on these tales and making it new. New York City 1882 Natalie Stewart a smart and clever seventeen year old life has been trouble since after a traumatic accident that killed her mother and left her without the ability to speak With nightmares and visions that haunt her dreams nightly This doesn t stop Natalie from seeking out the world through books and trying to break from her shelter living Her life changes when she happens across a painting of Jonathon Whitby, Lord Denbury, with his startling blue eyes that seem to see deep into her soul, almost like he s aliveshocking of all, trapped in the painting and it s only up to Natalie to set him free and face her nightmares and the devil that trapped Denbury in the paintingNatalie is the type of heroine I love, no pity party for this girl Losing her voice and being mute hasn t stopped her from living and expanding her world, while sheltered, she takes everything with a grain of salt and while what happens to her is on the border of crazy fantastic she takes the role she

s given and runs with it and still dealing with her building emotions There was a few instances where I thought she travel down the road of borderline TSTL, she surprises me when going into danger not risking her neck out to far, but being able to protect those in danger Much of the story is told from her POV in present past tense through her dairy and police reports While it s nice to think she could write down all these small details even in a time of crisis I didn t really buy into the format While the idea is great and the author still pulled off an amazing tale, I would have liked it better with just her POV I felt a lot of emotions scenes felt a little lacking in punch especially when faced with the demon that locked Denbury in the painting Denbury was charming and sweet, the scenes where very he and Natalie are together were at times sweet, hot and sad Natalie brings the life back into Denbury s life and the hope all will be well Denbury becomes the anchor in the storm for Natalie, she s been afloat and alone forced into silence by the event that killed her mother It was kinda cute of Denbury taking the role of the princess in distress and Natalie being the knight in shining armor Denbury doesn t have to much of a hand in his release, he supports Natalie with calming of her mind and facing down her nightmares that haunt her Both Denbury and Natalie have gifts that makes them targets and there s still those who would love to get their hands on both of them, there s also those like who Mrs Evelyn Northe who wants to protect and help them There was a lot of loose threads left in the end and some hints, but I fell in love with how Hieber made this story that I ll be looking forward tonext book in this series.

New Post

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The Participants
The Hunted
Holes
Knight of the Purple Ribbon
Cruel Beauty
The Titan's Curse

The Final Reckoning
The Great Hunt
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