



Kitty Doe has been given a III. A III is a pretty low ranking in the dystopian world of Pawn that determines your value to society by a placement test. Once you've been branded with your rank you are given a job, a place to live, and sent on your way. Unfortunately for Kitty her job is uprooting her from the only home she's ever known and separating her from the only boy she's ever loved, Benjy.

Fortunately Kitty meets Daxton Hart, a member of the controlling family of Kitty's dystopian world, and quite possibly the most powerful man in the world. Daxton offers Kitty the opportunity to discard her III and become a VII, the highest rank reserved only for the elite. Unfortunately the offer comes with a pretty strict addendum, take the opportunity or reject it and die.

Though becoming a VII sounds wonderful Kitty soon discovers, after waking up from a drug induced slumber, that it comes with a price. Her entire body has been surgically transformed to mirror that of Daxton's niece Lila, who we find out has died in a skiing accident. Kitty, sharing enough similar features, was selected to step in for Lila, a member of the Hart family who hated the ranking system and provoked rebellion any chance she could, and quell the rebellion left in her wake. Now Kitty is thrust into the battle for power within the Hart family. Each family member using her for their own ends. Will she make it out alive?

Pawn starts off extremely well but quickly fizzles unfortunately. Kitty is just a non-character in the grand scheme of things. Carter introduces us to the main character as an illiterate young girl whose been branded with a low rank that will destroy her world, but that world is pretty vague. Were introduced to her mother figure, the group home matron where she lives, but only long enough to run the gamut of the standard connective devices that make her important in the most generic of terms. We meet her boyfriend Benjy whose existence is pretty subtle and then extinguished until way later in the story. The back story between the two doesn't do much to provoke a sense of urgency about Kitty's plight so right off the bat there's nothing tying you to the oncoming adventure. It also doesn't help that Kitty goes on and on about her less than invest worthy troubles with Benjy for the next two chapters.

Despite the rocky start I was a bit surprised by the sudden left turn the story takes as we meet various members of the Hart family. In less time than it took to explain Kitty's situation I was instantly charmed by Lila's fiancée Knox, who may or may not be a bad guy, but whose charm seems honest enough that you willingly step a bit deeper into the story.

It's not just Knox though. Lila's mother Celia is an interesting character bordering on protective and repulsed. Celia makes it known right away that Lila's death was probably not an accident. It's here that we start to see some light shining through the Hart families facades and also where the story really begins, but let me throw yet another "Unfortunately" in the mix though.

Carter wants to expand on this world of secrets and lies, and for the most part it works. So many of the Hart family members have such conflicting personalities that you pick your favorites, pick your most disliked of the group, and are taken down a windy road of political and familial subterfuge that you never know which way is up. Still, the complexities of Carter's story start to unravel the more Kitty gets involved.

Kitty is pretty much a nuisance when it comes to furthering the story. She's like a child pouting that it's unfair. A bad actor from a third rate drama whose emotions never really swell beyond her boyfriend problems or being generically written in as a bleeding heart anytime something happens. What's worse, when given the opportunity to be used as a device for illuminating the theme of class rankings Kitty simply reads like the product of someone whose never really dealt with living rough, or at least someone who doesn't have the capacity to put that in writing and chooses not to do so. If all Kitty cares about is herself and her boyfriend, how can she become any type of relatable character?

By the end of the book I was feeling pretty disconnected with the story. I assume that this would have been the exact same way I would have felt if I had read the Twilight books. Less romance, but more than enough space taken up by a lead character I care nothing about. The story only survived by the charm of a grouped amount of characters with differentiating personalities and a villain whose



only time within the story is written to put into context the mortal danger the main character is in. In the end though you're left with fleeting instances of connectivity with the remaining characters that have barely hung on to your heartstrings but no real reason to continue on with the story as it hints at a sequel.

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