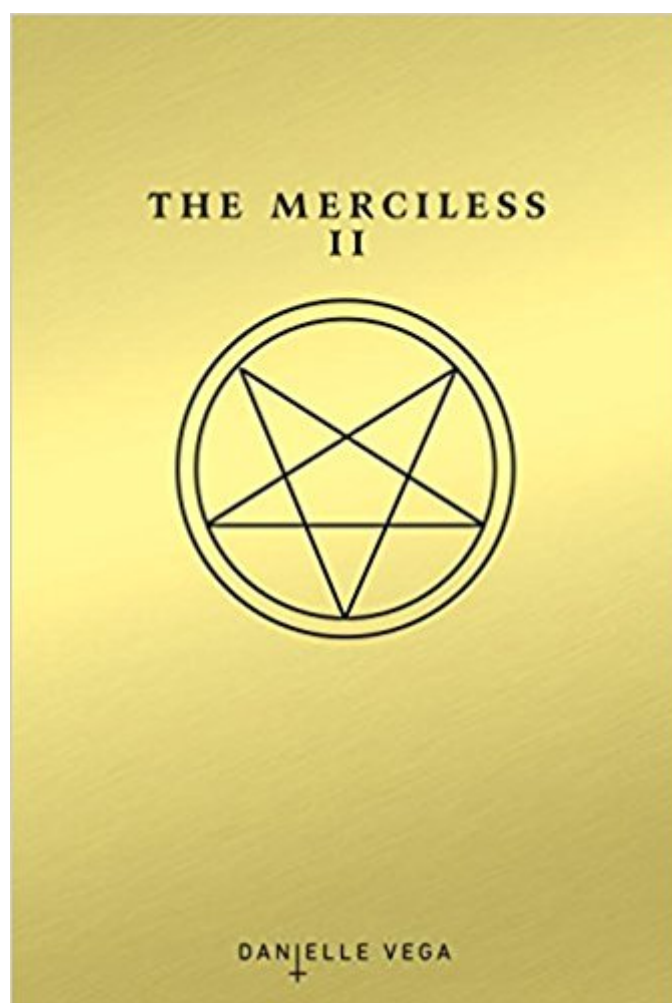


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The Merciless II: The Exorcism Of Sofia Flores



Synopsis

Danielle Vega's YA novel, once again brings major scares in the spine-tingling sequel to horror hit *The Merciless*, which MTV calls "Mean Girls meets *The Exorcist*." Sofia is still processing the horrific truth of what happened when she and three friends performed an exorcism that spiraled horribly out of control. Ever since that night, Sofia has been haunted by bloody and demonic visions. Her therapist says they're all in her head, but to Sofia they feel chillingly real. She just wants to get out of town, start fresh someplace else . . . until her mother dies suddenly, and Sofia gets her wish. Sofia is sent to St. Mary's, a creepy Catholic boarding school in Mississippi. There, seemingly everyone is doing penance for something, most of all the mysterious Jude, for whom Sofia can't help feeling an unshakeable attraction. But when Sofia and Jude confide in each other about their pasts, something flips in him. He becomes convinced that Sofia is possessed by the devil. . . . Is an exorcism the only way to save her eternal soul? Readers won't be able to look away from this terrifying read full of twists and turns that will leave them wondering, Is there evil in all of us?

Book Information

Series: *The Merciless* (Book 2)

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up • Sofia Flores has lost everything. After months of therapy following Riley's murder, she has finally convinced herself that Brooklyn's demonic possession was all in her head. When her

mom gets into a fatal car accident, Sofia has to relocate to a Catholic boarding school. It is old, with a strict morality code. Sofia meets her new roommates, sweet Leena and bad girl Sutton. The protagonist manages to catch the eye of a hot altar boy during mass. He happens to be the same boy whom Leena fancies. As temptation clouds Sofia's judgment, she starts to believe Brooklyn's distant claim that she is indeed evil. Can she resist sinning? This pulse-pounding follow-up to Vega's *Merciless* focuses on Sofia as she attempts to put the horrible events of the first novel behind her. As Sofia deals with unfamiliar religious surroundings, she begins to think that she's beyond redemption. She tries to find support in friendly Sister Lauren and creepy Father Marcus but can't shake a dark sense of foreboding. With strong, well-developed supporting characters, this novel is a terrifying delight of a read. Sometimes Sofia can't help but give in to her dark side, but readers will be hard-pressed to root against her. This sequel could potentially work as a stand-alone but will be especially enjoyed by fans of the previous volume. With an intensely violent climax, this story will work well for horror readers who don't shy away from prose that may make some readers squeamish. VERDICT Hard to put down, this scary novel is a must-read for teenage fans of fright. — Ryan P. Donovan, Southborough Public Library, MA

“With strong, well-developed supporting characters, this pulse-pounding follow-up to Vega's *Merciless* is a terrifying delight of a read. Hard to put down, this scary novel is a must-read for teenage fans of fright.” — School Library Journal

“Gripping, intense horror for teens with strong stomachs.” — Booklist

Turning to a classic Stephen King style horror plot that relies on an isolated setting as much as bloodied bodies and hellishly inventive violence, Vega's grisly second installment rips into biblical platitudes to lay bare the notions of deliverance and redemption.” — Kirkus Reviews

Praise for *The Merciless*: “Sick. Wicked. Twisted. This is my kinda fun.” — Marlene King, executive producer of *Pretty Little Liars*

“Chilling.” — “I think *Mean Girls* meets *The Exorcist*...a fast-paced thrill-ride.” — MTV.com

“*Pretty Little Liars* fans, get a sneak peek at your new favorite book! *The Merciless* is a nail biting thriller.” — Seventeen Magazine

“*Mean Girls* with an occult twist.” — Kirkus Reviews

It was, what I expected.

I think the only reason I enjoyed the first book so much was because I was new to the horror genre

and this sequel affirmed that for me. The more I reflected on the last one, the more I could see the obvious writing flaws in retrospect. Unfortunately many of those same flaws were apparent in this story as well. There's very little character building and as a result I felt very little sympathy, relation or even understanding to any of the characters, this made it difficult to keep reading. At one point every character, setting and plot device felt like a huge cliché. The same horror tropes are trotted out over and over again making the plotline supremely predictable and nothing original created. I felt this way so strongly I found myself rolling my eyes and feeling annoyed often especially towards the end of the book. At times it was so outlandish and unsurprising it bordered on parody and mockery. There was so much potential in the beginning but ultimately fell flat. I really wanted to like this series so much but now I'm uncertain if I'll want to buy the next one when it comes out.

I read the first book in under 2 hours and, quite frankly, was questioning my judgement in reading it home alone. I read the second one within 2 hours also and was still unnerved- even without being home alone this time around. I came to the end of this one and quickly closed it, stealing a nervous glance around my room to make sure the possessed Sofia Flores wasn't going to jump out and attack me. It was fantastically terrifying. I highly recommend this sequel to anyone and everyone who loved the first book and is looking for a good follow up.

Review: 4 / 5
“You should be careful what you wish for, Sofia,” Leena says in a small, trembling voice. “Jude may have chosen you, but God pushes sinners. You’ll see.”
This is my third novel by this author and I have to say that I think I love each of her books equally. That is something so hard for an author to do in today's time. I mean, there is no pleasing everyone with everything you do, but I think that Danielle Vega has defied the expectation that a sequel has to be bad. This doesn't compare to the brutal and insane nature of the first book, but I don't think I would compare it to the first novel. I first read the original book when it first came out about two years ago, yet for some reason it still sticks with me to this day. I see the second installment as another book entirely. Sure, the events of the first book is mentioned and they help play a role in the story, but to me it seemed that even though the reader was following the next trials in Sofia's life, this was a different book entirely. There are similarities, but I see a lot of differences. From what I remember about the first book, I see that this book has more of an emphasis on the darker side of religion (which I loved).
“You don't know how hard this is for me,

Sofia. You look like you, and you sound like you, but you're possessed by something terrible. I need to find a way to keep it quiet while I do my work. ... I'm afraid this is going to hurt. ... Danielle Vega The book's location is even different from the first (I didn't read the description beforehand because I already knew I would enjoy it) and that came as a shock to me. The way that this book sets up everything makes me think of all of the other boarding school books that I have read over the past few years, yet the story changes in the amazing Danielle Vega fashion to something completely DARK. I just thought that the setting really elevated the story because of how cut off it is from reality. Everything is intense and familiar because of all the elements carried over from other books that I have read. I loved that aspect. ... I believe that when someone does something unforgivable, a demon.. attached itself to them. ... Danielle Vega Why should you read this? BECAUSE IT IS AWESOME. I do think that anything this author writes is pure horror gold, but not everyone would feel that way. I really encourage you as a reader to try it and get out of the comfort zone that normal YA thrillers have created because it is really something to be marveled at.

Danielle Vega is the pen name of Danielle Rollins. Daniel is the author of the YA horror novels THE MERCILESS and THE MERCILESS II. Sofia is still reeling from the terrifying events that occurred when she and three friends performed an exorcism that changed their lives forever. Ever since then, Sofia has been haunted by bloody and demonic visions. Even though her therapist says they're all in her head, they feel all too real. Sofia just wants to start fresh somewhere else. But when her mother dies suddenly, Sofia realizes that her wish might not be what she really wanted. Sofia is sent to St. Mary's, a creepy Catholic boarding school in Mississippi. There, seemingly everyone is doing penance for something, most of all the mysterious Jude, for whom Sofia can't help feeling an unshakeable attraction. But when Sofia and Jude confide in each other about their pasts, something flips in him. He becomes convinced that Sofia is possessed by the devil --- is an exorcism the only way to save her eternal soul? THE MERCILESS II was so not what I was expecting. I thought I had read it all with THE MERCILESS, but no, I was not able to put this book down. I read it in one sitting like THE MERCILESS. You know those books that you can read a 100 pages in what feels like 5 minutes? This was one of those. I don't usually read horror novels, so this was quite a shock to me. I actually really liked reading about the main character Sofia, and the new characters in this novel were very

intriguing. I found myself wanting to yell at Sofia the entire book because everything she did was so frustrating. Like with THE MERCILESS, this book is filled with those same, if not more surprising, twists that will come out of nowhere. I don't want to give away too much about the story because it is relatively short. I actually found the book to not be as scary as I expected, though it was definitely horror-filled. These books are definitely creepy reads and are perfect for fans of horror! THE MERCILESS books are actually pretty violent so I would recommend them to a more mature YA audience. I read these at night, which was probably not the best plan. Pick up THE MERCILESS II and be prepared not to put the book down until you are finished. Reviewed by Grace P., Teen Board Member.

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