

REVIEW OF A *DEADLY EDUCATION*

I've been taught any number of ways to manage anger, and they really work. What she's never been able to teach me is how to want to manage it. So I go on seething and raging and knowing the whole time that it's my own fault, because I do know how to stop.¹

There are a few reasons I might have expected to not like this:

- Stories about high school social dynamics in general can dredge up unpleasant emotions for me.
- The setting involves children being tortured and killed on a routine basis—but only ones you're not invested in; the main characters have plot armor. I'm not always comfortable with fiction that uses suffering and brutality as an aesthetic without asking the reader to really empathize with the depth of horror being described.
- The protagonist starts off with lots of advantages and great qualities—she's beautiful, conscientious, extraordinarily powerful, and the daughter of a beloved famous person—and her character arc is basically: all those things pay off and she starts becoming popular too.

...nevertheless, I loved it. Fun, funny, sweet, and thoughtful.

I like this comment that one of the privileged “enclave” kids makes as they start to realize the unfairness of the advantages they have:

“You just—you know, you get used to things. And you don't think about whether they're good. Or even okay.” She swallowed. “You don't *want* to think about it. And nobody else seems to, either.

“And there's nothing you can see to do about it. ... Because there's not meant to be anything you can do about it.”²

¹Naomi Novik, *A Deadly Education*, First Edition, Lesson One of The Scholomance (New York: Del Rey, 2020), 174.

²Ibid., 298.