



The Crooked Forest: Legacy of the Holy Stone

Title: The Crooked Forest: Legacy of the Holy Stone

Author: Joni Franks

Illustrated by: Ayin Visitacion

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Reviewed by: Tony Espinoza

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Pacific Book Review

Throughout one's life, we can never predict whether or not we are going to always have the people closest to us in our lives, so we must learn to cherish those special moments together. Dealing with loss is one of the most difficult lessons we will all be forced to learn one day. Whether it is the loss of a beloved family pet, a best friend, or a parent that means the world to you, loss affects us all. As Walter Anderson once said, "Bad things do happen; how I respond to them defines my character and the quality of my life. I can choose to sit in perpetual sadness, immobilized by the gravity of my loss, or I can choose to rise from the pain and treasure the most precious gift I have – life itself."

In author Joni Franks book, *The Crooked Forest: Legacy of the Holy Stone*, the author explores the concept of dealing with loss through the emergence of a new fantasy heroine. When young Willow finds herself separated from her mother Luna, she must find a way to not only overcome her broken heart, but discover the truth of her mother's fate and what her purpose in life is. Delving into new and established mythologies and legends, the novel explores a hero's rise through story-driven narratives and beautiful artwork from artist Ayin Visitacion.

This was a fantastically written and explored fantasy book. The author found a way to craft a new story for children and young readers alike to not only enjoy, but see themselves in. The cast of characters is as fascinating as the world the author had crafted for them. From the beloved Sir Gyzmo and his selfless service to help mend Willow's heart and help her become the hero she was always meant to be, to the father who allowed his controlling family to keep him from her mother's love, to the divisive nature of the humans and Willow's people, the Shuns, this novel does an excellent job of balancing the character's growth with the magical atmosphere of the narrative and the theme of overcoming loss and discovering the power within ourselves to live a full life.

This is the perfect novel for those who enjoy fantasy reads, especially those that enjoy fairytale style narratives and powerful female heroines who overcome great odds. As a fan of this genre, I think the author did a brilliant job of crafting a wholly original narrative and relatable characters which made the magic of the story feel out of this world yet attainable through the wonder of the mind's own creativity, making this story shine brightly.

A breathtaking, artful, and entertaining fantasy read, author Joni Franks' book *The Crooked Forest: Legacy of the Holy Stone* is a must-read story. Full of heart, imaginative new mythos to explore, and the promise of a new fantasy series that readers can absorb and engage with, this book is a gripping new narrative that fans of children's and middle-age fantasy and fairytale novels will not be able to put down.