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The Wrythe and the Reckoning

by Yvonhia Leland

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Member Reviews



Mitsuha Y, Reviewer



I had a great time reading this book and now I am looking forward to reading more books by the same author. Many many thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for granting me access to this eARC.

Was this review helpful? 



Sinamile S, Reviewer





DNF 20%

Hayi khona. Hayi khona! **HHAYI KHONA!!!**

I tried, I really tried. From the beginning I was not happy, I was not feeling it. It just wasn't working. The pacing, the voice, the whole setup, it's not it for me, it's just not it!

There's no show don't tell here. The whole story is set up like: and then I did this and then I did that and then I went here but then I went there. And there's nothing interesting about that. Show don't tell isn't a rule I'd enforce because sometimes telling and not showing is good. But yikes!

And the dialogue  ! There are times when a book is meh at best but has witty dialogue that saves it, but this one was competing with the Sahara for dryness. Some of the dialogue felt forced and unnecessary.

And then there were the time skips. Hayi khona! It kept going back and back. Like I get flashbacks, I get going back in time so the reader understands what the new situation is about. But this one kept going back and back and back in time and I don't know. It could've just started there, or been done differently somehow.

I didn't care about the characters. I didn't care that the family was going to lose their house because the main character didn't make me care. She was dry and stiff and everything was so boring and hard to get through. I wanted to keep reading, I wanted to finish it, at least get to the point where the beast comes in and does what it does, but I couldn't.

I'm so disappointed! The blurb gave me so much hope for this book but in the end I was tragically misled. I'm so sad.

Was this review helpful? 




Tina M, Reviewer



I like the story ... it was nice to read! This story is very diverse and it's all about accompanying the protagonist Lina from her teenage years to her becoming a woman. I was also very interested in the lives of the others who appear in this great book! I hope the book will be translated into German in any case :-)!

Was this review helpful? 



 Amy B, Reviewer



An engaging story, but unfortunately it wasn't a good fit for me. I found the writing style a little cold and distant for my liking, which unfortunately kept me from empathizing with the protagonist, Lina. Nonetheless, I'm sure that other readers will enjoy the feminist slant to an eighteenth-century narrative. Considering that the copy I reviewed was just an advance proof, I'd be excited to see how the author reworks certain aspects that other reviewers have noted.


Was this review helpful? 


 Reviewer 300725



I would like to thank the publisher for giving me a copy of this book via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I enjoyed reading this!

Was this review helpful? 


 Caitlin R, Educator



Well...I thought the cover was beautifully illustrated & the description had me hooked to read it. But then I started reading it & it was not what I was expecting. I wanted to like it but it took me forever to read it & I just couldn't really get into the story.

I do have to say that it is very detailed but the writing style or character's voice, something was odd. And it was difficult to follow at times. The main character, Lina, would feel one way or talk about something & then change the subject. I was a little confused at times.

And since this was an early release I didn't get to finish the story. So I have no idea what happens when Lina decides that she does have feelings for Xander.

Was this review helpful? 

 Tahera V, Reviewer



I received the ARC of *The Wrythe and the Reckoning* from Netgalley and let me tell you I was pretty excited when I got accepted for it because my reasons for asking for it were the cover and the blurb which both pointed to a retelling of sorts of an urban legend/ fairytale (which I love to read about in any form). However, my excitement ended when I actually began reading the book...I even considered not finishing it but went ahead since it was an ARC.

The basic premise of the book goes something like this:

Lina is a young girl who, from the beginning of the book, is shown to be a determined, independent and opinionated girl who wants to make her own future rather than get married. She has to shift to Boston city, alongwith her family, to start afresh when their farm land is taken over by the bank and this is the city which is in the grips of the mysterious monster 'wolf-man' who is on a murder rampage.

Now the story itself is not a bad one but one begins to realise the problems the book has when:

- 1) It turns a decent story into a mundane, bland, repetitive series of events and descriptions of day-to-day household chores and activities, which makes the book drag and for the most part have no connection to the story.
- 2) The monster, instead of taking center stage in the story, is relegated only to news paper articles and discussions for almost the entire length of the book...the only proper episode we have of the monster is of Lina coming face to face with it somewhere in chapter 17-18.
- 3) After reading over 400 pages of a 20 chapter ARC, there is a note by the author at the end of the last page saying the story isn't over and we can check out the rest of it when the book is officially published, which makes you wonder, exactly how long will the

over and we can check out the rest of it when the book is finally published...which makes you wonder, exactly how long will the novel be considering that the author could not wrap up the story in the initial 400 pages of the ARC?

I really do hope that when the final version of the book does come out (if it hasn't already), then it is a more condensed and taut version of the ARC. (less)

Was this review helpful? 



Jayme M, Reviewer



I honestly had a very hard time getting into this story from the beginning. It was very slow paced and describes everything...and I mean everything. All of this could have been condensed and I would have been much happier. I also didn't think this book needed to be as long as it really was. I never really felt like anything was happening in the story to move along, there was quite a bit of day-to-day things that were told, but we never got to the introduction of the "monster," which is what intrigued me in the first place to read this story. The so called "monster" isn't brought up until the near end of the story when it should have occurred much sooner. I seriously was considering DNFin this book but didn't because I feel it's important to provide feedback that could aid in the final edition. Overall, it was not my cup of tea.

Was this review helpful? 



Annette J, Reviewer



I am afraid I gave up on this book at the 20 % mark, I could not force myself to go any further. Nothing happened and the writing style was incredibly tedious and pedantic. I hate giving up on a book, but this one just seemed hopeless. The dialogue throughout was stilted and unnatural and it seemed like the author just could not bear to use a simple sentence if a more stilted and awkward one could be found. I found myself constantly mentally pruning and rewriting and to be honest it was exhausting.

Was this review helpful? 



Denise M, Reviewer



Y'all, this is the first time in a while that a book has made me so confused. It's also been a while since I was close to straight up not finishing a book. If I didn't feel obligated by NetGalley to do it, I probably would have given up on this book.

The first thing you notice with this book is it's voice. The tone is very old fashioned, reminding me of some of the late 19th/early 20th prose I studied for my English degree in college, except . . . way too simple. It is overly plodding, giving every detail. This book badly needed some edition. There were too many pages where nothing really happened. At all. It could have easily been a short story instead of a novel.

The pacing is also just strange. The first few chapters were reeeeaally long, and then they got really short. And there didn't seem like a point to it. Also, I should point out, that the ARC is 20 chapters long (with chapter 2 broken into two parts for some reason) and it is incomplete. There is a note from the author basically saying to check out the rest of the book once it's published.

So let's talk a bit about the story. The main character is Lina, a young girl who is determined to be independent. Which basically means she doesn't want to get married, which is unusual for her time period. This doesn't stop several men from being smitten with her, despite everyone else describing her as not particularly attractive and very difficult because of her modern views. She attends abolitionist meetings and volunteers for the suffrage movement, but in a very bland way. All of the characters were very bland and they all had very average lives that were very dull at times to read about.

Now let's talk about the "monster," the thing that is really supposed to get this story hopping. There are a handful of hints about it in the book, none of which make it sound too serious. Maybe there is a murderer loose, but that's it. Any hints of it being a "monster" are brushed off by EVERYONE as just superstition. But we the reading, through our point-of-view character Lina, don't actually experience the monster until chapter 18. Of a 20 chapter ARC. That should have happened much, much sooner, but instead we got a lot of day-to-day details that don't really go anywhere and, are frankly, quite boring.

I really hate to give bad reviews, only because I know how much blood, sweat, and tears go into writing a novel. But I also have to be honest, and honestly, I did not enjoy this much at all.

Was this review helpful? 



La Jolla Middle Grade R, Reviewer



In this story set in the mid-1800s, readers see the world through young Lina's eyes. We take a tour through her beautiful small town, where she feels a bit out of place as a headstrong, opinionated, and independent teen. Later in the story Lina and her family move to Boston where she begins to uncover a monster mystery. The story begins as a journal flashback, and is rather slow. I was not able to finish it. I tried, but this book never really hooked me, though I loved some parts. Lina hides some life lessons, which I enjoyed, as she described her daily life in too much detail. Lina wrote in formal language that didn't necessarily fit the setting or her age. The story is a bit redundant, and it isn't something that I would pick up again, but I would recommend this title to someone who has much interest about reading of everyday life and will enjoy a mystery later in a story.

Was this review helpful? 



Claudia M, Reviewer



I tried really hard to read on through the book, but it was just not happening for me. The story was really slow for me and was not much amazed by the plot. Who knows, maybe I'm growing out of YA books? or this one was just not for me. Could have had potential absolutely but I DNF.

Was this review helpful? 



Rachel M, Reviewer



The Wrythe and the Reckoning starts out a bit vague in the beginning of the book. I had to pick up the story details based on clues within the story. It starts out in a rural setting and readers are introduced to Lina on her family's farm. Set in the mid-1800s, the story is centered around her family, but focuses on Lina. She is very different in the sense that she is focused on being independent, while other girls her age are obsessed with fancy dresses and boys. She loves to educate herself about the world that surrounds her.

The description of the setting alone gives me Anne of Green Gables vibes in the first half of the novel. All of the descriptions of her quaint little village sounded so beautiful. The novel is written in the first person perspective and we see the world through Lina's eyes. She has big dreams for her self and we see her hard work and perseverance that goes into wanting to be a dressmaker. Sometimes she kind of rubbed me the wrong way because she came off as a little self-righteous at times, but it was her sister Abigail that irked me the most because she was so spoiled and materialistic.

It's interesting to see how her family adapts to moving from the village to the city. Her family has very strong opinions on topics that differ from the general public such as women's rights and slavery. I felt the plot was more about Lina's life and I wanted to see more of the monster concept that mentioned in the synopsis. Mentions of monster don't show well until the latter part of the novel, and even then the concept is pretty vague.

The book is very slow-moving and sometimes I felt it drag at certain points of the story. The dialogue and narrative are a bit stagnant which was disappointing. Overall, I felt that this was more of a coming of age story than story with elements (per the book's description). The monster aspect was hyped up, but barely scraped the surface within the book. I didn't feel a resolution at all, however, the book will be released in its entirety in April. Perhaps the book will come to a solid ending.

Was this review helpful? 



Angela S, Reviewer



Ahh, I'm not really sure what to make of this story. To be honest, my attention just kept wandering every time I attempted to pick

up wherever it is I left off, although I can't exactly say that it was bad.

There were certain elements to the story that I liked even if it was new to me, but maybe I just couldn't get over how bland the writing was. It wasn't the prose or grammar or whatever technical stuff, it was just that the first person POV was too limiting for me. I needed to see a different perspective other than that of the MC, which I also think would've worked wonders with regards to the pacing, and since I didn't it was rather difficult to finish.

Again, the story wasn't bad but this is something that I most probably wouldn't be picking up again.

RATING: 2.5 stars

Was this review helpful? 



La Jolla Middle Grade R, Reviewer



This is a great book. I strongly recommend it. I am excited to reread this book and am already recommending it.

Was this review helpful? 



Rhonda W, Reviewer



The concept of Yvonthia Leland's debut novel *The Wrythe and the Reckoning* is really intriguing: a historical urban fantasy about a teenage girl coming of age, a 19th century New England town terrorized by a (maybe) werewolf-like creature, all set against the backdrop of the women's suffrage and abolitionist movements. I like the parts, but they never came together into a cohesive whole.

The biggest hang-up by far for me, and what ultimately prevented me from becoming fully immersed in the story, was the writing style. The descriptions were full of detail, to the point of being mundane, yet never succeeded at evoking any images in my mind; they didn't "paint the picture."

The phrasing was often clunky and awkward and redundant; the opening scene of the book describes "leaves overhead above us," and states that "we were on a journey traveling to our new home, to the city of Boston in Massachusetts." This was just one of the many sentences my inner editor was just itching to rewrite or throw out completely.

Another disconcerting element was the word choice. For example: "I located my journal and pencil and began to write." The word "located" just seems like such an oddly formal or unnecessarily neutral way of saying "I picked up my journal," or simply, "I found my journal," or if you want to get a little more flashy, "I fished my journal out of my overstuffed carpetbag and began to write."

Also, if we're going to have the narrator-protagonist write about the events of the book in her journal, why not have the entire conceit of the novel be that the book is the journal she's writing? Sure, it's done a lot (see *I Capture The Castle* for my favorite example), but it's a conceit that would work really well with the setting and with what I think must be an attempt at period language. That's the only explanation I can think of for the strange, clinical word choices; the more neutral or formal word is often used, but it just ends up reading like an academic essay.

The story itself also never really seemed to get off the ground. This could be because I admittedly just skimmed for most of the book, but nothing much seems to happen. There are some flashbacks with excruciatingly detailed descriptions of the protagonist's old home and town that read like a travel brochure, and then they arrive in Boston and... that's about it. They do things, I guess?

They hear reports of a human-like creature in the woods, and there are mysterious deaths, but trust me, it is not as exciting as that sounds. We never really see any action, and then the book just kind of ends. (Because this was an ARC, the last chapter of the actual book isn't in it, but I don't see how another 2000 or so words could really improve the story.)

I really, really wanted to like this book, as it's the first ARC I've ever had the honor of reading, and the premise sounded so great. But I found myself skimming after the first few chapters because I could not get past those sentence-level hang-ups to fully

immerse myself in a story that never really went anywhere.

Rating: 1 out of 5

Was this review helpful? 



Marieke M, Reviewer



I really like the cover of this book, which is what attracted me to it in the first place. Lesson learned, I guess? Judging a book by its cover can definitely lead one astray.

before i explain why i couldn't get into this book, let me say when you could still be the right reader for this novel:

- this novel would be a great gift for a younger girl in your social circle, say in the age range of 12-16 (full disclosure: i am not good at judging reading ages for material), especially ones with a budding interest in feminism
- we meet the main character as she is a girl, mostly reminiscing over her youth in smalltown america. she doesn't care about appearances (even though her older sister and basically every other female peer we meet does) or boys (who she has sworn off since discovering they do care about female appearance). as a result she questions the imposed gender roles present in her society
- as such, this could be a good book for someone who's just starting on the path of feminist fiction and needs a varied palette of writing in order to determine their specific preferences

now, as to why this book didn't appeal to me specifically:

- it was written in the first person. this is not an issue inherently, but it becomes one when it doesn't provide us with any additional insight into the pov character's state of mind. rather than sharing her thoughts with the reader, the main character simply told us every, singly, tiny, thing, that happened.
- which leads me to my next issue: there is a lot of telling, and very little showing. in this case, that meant a lot of characters stating what they were doing or, on a rare occasion, how they were feeling, but this was never shown in their actions. it was all laid out explicitly without much evidence other than the word of the characters to back it up.
- very clinical writing style, which was rather tedious to get through. we learn about all the things happening in excruciating (and usually unnecessary) detail. all the steps of picking up a pot etc.
- the dialogue came across as rather forced, especially within the family of our main character: they all spoke completely civilly and agreeably to each other all the time, which really doesn't strike me as authentic.

I received an ARC from NetGalley in return for an honest review.

Was this review helpful? 



Marta I, Educator



I received this eARC from the publisher through NetGalley. Opinions expressed in this review are completely my own

The Wrythe and the Reckoning details a female protagonist who not only tries to solve a murder mystery, but also tries to fit in a society that is not necessarily open to opinionated and individualistic women. While the premise sounded interesting, the dialogue and the development of characters seemed forced, almost unnatural. I think that is why I had such a hard time connecting to the characters, especially Lina. Additionally, the pacing was rather slow, and I was disappointed that there was no ending – I will wait until the publication date to finish the story! On a more positive note, however, I can see younger audience, especially girls, liking this style of writing and the bigger ideas it tries to highlight about feminism, individualism, friendship, sister relationship, and even marriage.

Was this review helpful? 



Shweta A, Reviewer



A book should be judged by the words and not the cover.

I found the story very slow paced yet beautifully detailed, woven and explained. It gives you a real glimpse of the life of Lina & her family and the society at large.

Lina is a beautifully created character who very innocently tells us so much about life, marriage, the position of women, the economic structure etc. in America at the time the story takes place.

Though I loved the writing style & the detailing I was disappointed with the over all pace and development of the book. I wish there was more to the whole book than just the life of a family with all it's ups and downs.

Was this review helpful? 



Aly R, Reviewer



From the amount I was given, I'm definitely interested to see how everything ties together in the end. A historical fantasy with a female MC who is headstrong and wanting to be her own person in society. What more could I ask for? The writing wrung me in right away, leaving me glued to the pages. The monster is intriguing and keeps the mystery and plot moving. I thought it was very well made, and it's a shame it has fallen so far under the radar. Definitely a hidden gem that needs to be checked out.

Was this review helpful? 