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Iron Hearted Violet by Kelly Barnhill; Illustrated by Iacopo Bruno

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Author: Barnhill, Kelly

Title: *Iron Hearted Violet*

Illustrator: Bruno, Iacopo

Year of Publication: 2012

Publisher: Little, Brown & Co.

ISBN: 9780316056731

Number of pages: 424

Rating: Excellent

Reading/Interest Level: Young Adult

Keywords: Novel; Princesses; Choices; Books and Reading; Dragons; Fairy Tales; Beauty; Fantasy.

Review:

Princess Violet is lively, curious, and smart but definitely not pretty. Demetrius, the son of the stable keeper, becomes her best friend and together they explore the castle where they find an evil force trying to get free. The evil force, slowly becoming more powerful, speaks to the people, flattering them to do his will. Violet, listening to the voice, helps the evil force then realizes the folly of her choice. She asks the last dragon, who her father has captured, for help in making things right while Demetrius and others in the kingdom prepare to defend the castle. Two great battles ensue, and in the end the good conquers and the survivors set out to find a place in the new world.

Iron Hearted Violet is told in third person by Cassian another character in the story. The story is well written, suspenseful and compelling reading. The characters spring to life from the pages and one can see them and feel their emotions. Barnhill cleverly draws several storylines together in successive chapters and weaves them into an entertaining and delightful tale. There are imaginative new details about dragons and this magical world of storytellers, princesses, kingdoms and castles that explain some things that readers may have often wondered about in other fairy tales. Violet is a strong role model for girls who struggle with their identity in a beauty-obsessed world and this character can help readers to understand that each of us has a role in life that is not dependent on our physical appearance.

Reviewer: Nancy Haight

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