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The Sisters Grimm #3: The Problem Child

Olivia Noli

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Book Review

Title: The Sisters Grimm #3: The Problem Child

Author: Michael Buckley

Illustrator: Peter Ferguson

Reviewer: Olivia Noli

Publisher: Amulet Books

Publication Year: 2006

ISBN: 9780810993594

Number of Pages: 292

Interest Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding



Review

The Problem Child is the third installment in the Sisters Grimm series by Michael Buckley. It picks up right where the second book left off with Sabrina and Puck facing the Jabberwocky and an insane little girl. Sabrina and Puck narrowly escape the monster from Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass. Throughout the novel, the Jabberwocky and Little Red Riding Hood, driven by insanity for hundreds of years after her family was eaten by the Big Bad Wolf, chase after the Grimm family. Sabrina and Daphne Grimm are joined on this adventure by their Uncle Jake, another relative they had no idea existed until this novel. Jake is addicted to magic and Sabrina struggles with the same addiction. At one point, Sabrina is so blinded by her addiction that she attempts to kill Little Red Riding Hood, but Daphne stops her.

In this story, Sabrina has come to accept Granny Relda and Uncle Jake as her family, however she still despises the family business. Similar to the last novel, Sabrina is prejudice against the Ever After community of fairytale characters, however this theme isn't as prevalent as it was in the last novel. This story primarily focuses on the theme of addictions. Sabrina is attracted to magic because it makes her feel powerful and safe, however it distances her from those she loves. It teaches the struggles of an addict without actually discussing mainstream drug culture. The book also briefly touches on withdrawal since Uncle Jake is irritable without magic "in his system." The story does not handle the issue of mental illness as well and portrays Little Red Riding Hood as insane and homicidal after losing her family hundreds of years ago. While she should be treated with sympathy, Sabrina often calls her a freak. However, Little Red Riding Hood is cast as the villain of the story and often her actions are not her fault. Overall, the story is well written and enjoyable for fans of the classic fairy tales.

*Contains moderate violence.