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Little Peach

Emma Patton

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Book Review

Little Peach

Author

Peggy Kern

Illustrator

Reviewer

Emma Patton

Rating

Excellent

Level

Young Adult

Pages

190

Year

2015

Publisher

Balzer + Bray

ISBN

97800622266958

Goldeline by Jimmy Cajoleas is best described as a fairy tale cross between Robin Hood and *The Scarlet Letter*. Goldeline, the orphaned daughter of a witch, lives out in the woods with a group of bandits. Gruff, the leader, has adopted her and raised her to help him rob people. Goldeline is constantly plagued by fears of The Preacher, the man who had her mother burned as a witch. Everything changes when Goldeline discovers a boy about her age hidden in the coach while on a job. On an impulse, she decides to keep him hidden and save him. Everything goes wrong though when he discovers she is a bandit and reports them to the townspeople nearby. The Preacher and his men raid the hideout, and Goldie barely escapes, taking the boy, Tommy with her. The two become close as they struggle through the forest trying to find a safe place. Goldeline also begins to learn about the magic that is inside of her. In a final showdown with The Preacher, she harnesses her magic to save the people who have helped her.

This story is an imaginative mix of fantasy and southern charm. Cajoleas, raised in Jackson, Mississippi, has obviously brought in a lot of his Southern upbringing to the story, particularly with Goldeline and her speech patterns. The novel also has a constant theme of good vs. evil, but challenges what the definitions of good and evil are. Goldeline is the daughter of a witch, condemned for being evil, however her mother always helped people with magical remedies to their illnesses. Meanwhile, The Preacher is supposed to be a holy man, however his motivations are built on hate and bitterness for being rejected by Goldeline's mother. Another internal struggle of Goldeline is to find home and family. In the end, she decides that, for now, home is within herself and who she is. Overall, it is a magical story with many turns that leads to an enjoyable narrative.

*Moderate violence