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Ice



Synopsis

When Cassie was little she thought her mother had been taken prisoner by trolls because of a deal she'd made with the Polar Bear King. Just a fairy tale to soothe a child whose mother had died. But on her eighteenth birthday, the "fairy tale" comes true when the Polar Bear King comes to take Cassie for his bride. Realizing she has the power to save her mother, Cassie makes her own deal with the bear and finds herself on a journey against time, traveling across the brutal Arctic to the land east of the sun and west of the moon. It is a journey that will teach Cassie the true meaning of love and family and what it means to become an adult.

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Customer Reviews

This is the second time I read this book, and it stood up well. The fairy-tale aspects of the plot are woven in well with modern life, and Cassie grows in understanding and maturity throughout the course of the narrative. She's a brave and clever protagonist, albeit flawed- but in ways that seem reasonable, especially since she's merely 18 during the scope of the book. Most 18 year olds are

not particularly worldly-wise, and one raised in an Arctic research station would likely be less so. I think the errors in judgement she made- and then corrected- are ones i would have been likely to make at that age myself. The fairy tale aspects were very well-thought-out, and made perfect sense in the context of the novel- while still being somewhat unexpected. There's good thinking here about what "the best" means, and what risk means, and how to balance them. Too, this book simply could not have worked as it did with a male protag. That was nicely done. I have no idea whether boys would want to read this- but Cassie is a great role model for girls! In short- a solid coming-of-age (and wisdom) novel, with excellently-rendered fairy-tale components, that remind me of several stories but don't replicate any of them.

First of all Ice must have one of the most beautiful covers ever! I just love it, and the picture don't do justice to the cover it's even prettier in reality. I guess I'm a bit slow for not noticing that Sarah Beth Durst actually got her inspiration for Ice from the Norwegian folktale East of the Sun, West of the Moon. I actually did not know that this story was much known outside of Norway, but I guess I was wrong. So the inspiration for the story was well known to me and I enjoyed the twists and elements (some from Inuit/Eskimo myths nicely weaves into the story) Sarah Beth Durst had done to make Ice her own story. I'm not a big fan of ice and cold but the descriptions in Ice almost made me believe that I loved it (that's a pretty great achievement by the author). To illustrate here's a description from the first page in Ice: Ice crystals spun in the Arctic air. Sparkling in the predawn light, they looked like diamond dust. One cannot help but fall for Durst's wonderful character the Bear King, named Bear. Bear is no ordinary polar bear king (if that at all qualifies for ordinary), he is also their munaqsri. And yes, before you ask munaqsri is a real word, it's A munaqsri is a giver and a taker of souls, he gives souls to the newborn and takes souls from the dying. That means that Bear has a great responsibility, if something happens to him what will happen to all the polar bears? Sadly I have to say that I didn't quite connect with the, Cassie, the way I hoped to. I enjoy having a strong emotional tie to the main characters when I'm reading a story. Cassie actually annoyed me at times. Why, oh' why couldn't she just do as I wanted her to do? I enjoyed reading the book and there were some twist and turns so I never was really sure how this story would end. I actually shed a few tears during the last few pages. Why do you say? Oh no, my lips are sealed! The first thing that sprung to mind while reading Ice was the Norwegian film from 1991 called The Polar Bear King.

Based on East of the Sun, West of the Moon On the eve of her 18th birthday, she came upon this

huge polar bear and alone, Cassie chased it down, just for the chance to tag it. But then to her surprise, the bear disappear. This begins her journey. The polar bear was known as the Polar Bear King and on her 18th birthday, he was coming to claim his bride. First off, a very beautiful cover. I'm not a big of this particular fairy tale, but Sarah Beth Durst has changed my mind with her whimsical and amazing retelling. She took an old fairy tale and made it better and gave the old take a stronger, modern plot. Instead of taking place in some obscure wintery city, the story takes place in Antarctica in a research station, where our heroine, Cassie Dasent, works along side her father researching polar bears. Now, the story is broken up into 3 sections: her married life to Bear, her journey to the ends of the Earth and when she has to rescue him from the Trolls. Usually, I always thought the first part of the book was rather boring. But in this version, it was actually quite romantic and very endearing to read how two completely different beings could learn to fall in love with each other, albeit reluctantly on her part. The second and third parts were very intense. Durst's writing is strong and tugged hard on the emotions. She didn't use flowery prose to soften a scene. Instead, she told as it is. The author used nitty-gritty, down to earth descriptions. What she goes through to rescue Bear was quite riveting and you start to sympathize with her. Definitely different from the boring original. However, I do wish the author extended the ending a bit with an epilogue. I like the fact that our heroine is an intellectual but I hate it as well. As a scientist, she doesn't believe in "magical bears" and anything that cannot be proven scientifically. So, it was kind of annoying to read about her denial about the situation. The Polar Bear King, Bear, is a much better hero than other books. Instead of being mysterious and leaving the heroine to herself in his castle, he interacts with her on a daily basis. He has more human qualities, charming and rather quite funny. I actually wouldn't mind being capture by him. I love the soul twist that is added in this version. It makes it more enlightening to give a purpose to why there is a Polar Bear King, why trolls exist and why she was chosen as his bride. These two are a great couple. All in all, an amazing book. If you're not a fan of the tale, then this book will definitely change your mind. It has enough romance and action to keep it interesting till the end. Definitely a keeper.

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