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Red Winter (The Red Winter Trilogy Book 1)



Synopsis

Emi has spent her entire life hiding from the creatures that hunt her. The savage earth spirits are determined to kill her before she can become the living host of a goddess, so she stays hidden--until the day she saves the life of one of her hunters. Shiro isn't the harmless fox spirit she thought he was. He's mysterious, cunning, unpredictable ... and now hers to command. He's sworn to pay his debt to her, but he doesn't know who she is. If he finds out, he'll kill her. But she can't send him away--not yet. Her future isn't what she thought. The lies surrounding her fate have begun to unravel, and she needs answers before time runs out--answers that lie in the spirit realm. Shiro can take her there ... if she dares to trust him. And only then will she find out how deep the gods' treachery runs. *RED WINTER* includes 10 full-page illustrations by artist Brittany Jackson.

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Customer Reviews

I definitely consider myself an Annette Marie fan because of her other work, the Steel & Stone series (if you haven't read it yet you should), but I wasn't sure what to expect with this new one because it sounded so different from the Steel & Stone series. But this first installment of the Red Winter trilogy turned out to be great. I love that Marie tried a concept so different from her other series and still managed to pull it off beautifully. As someone that has some Japanese ancestry, I especially enjoyed her take on Japanese mythology and the tie in with Japanese culture. It made a great setting for this type of fantasy story. The heroine Emi is a character you'll warm up to quickly even if you have trouble at first. I found her a little hard to understand initially, but by 1/4 or 1/3 of the way through the book I really felt I understood her and her motivations a lot better and I grew very fond of her. There's other characters that you'll love- in my case and many others' cases Shiro especially. To give you a little background without going into spoilers, Emi is a miko, and has trained most of her life for her future role with the goddess Amaterasu at the upcoming solstice. She is relocated to a different, small town shrine for her own safety, as she has had a traumatic past experience at her previous shrine. This happened because there are forces, the yokai (Earth spirits or demons) and others that we learn about, that want to stop Emi from fulfilling her role for the goddess. After she relocates, she makes certain discoveries that change everything she thought she knew. The story unfolds at a pretty fast pace and is engaging throughout. It sticks to a small group of core characters to its strength because it allows the author to really focus on their development and the various mysteries surrounding them. If you're like me you'll love the approach to the romance too- let's just say I'm sure you'll be quickly hooked. Edit: Almost forgot to mention the beautiful illustrations included in the book! A really nice touch that I appreciated. I'm someone that always will picture the characters in my head based on the written description, and it's nice to have a visual to go with the words. It helps bring the story to life- kudos to the artist.

Although I have followed and enjoyed Annette Marie since her first book, I was very pleasantly surprised with her newest effort, Red Winter. Her growth as a writer is undeniable. That said, this book relies a little more on character development and a little less on punches thrown every five pages. The setting is beautifully rendered, and although people with an interest in Eastern culture will certainly love this book, it's not one a particular interest of mine and the story line still sucked me in. I think it would still appeal to anyone interested in fantasy or urban fantasy. The main character begins as an elegant and poised young woman on the brink of adulthood, only coming of age means a lot more to Emi than it does to most girls. Though Emi has always embraced her future as a host to one of the ancient gods, this book is a great example of how the future is never as certain

as one might think and how you never know anyone as well as you believe. Especially yourself.

It took me a while to get in to this one, mostly because I loved Steele and Stone so much that I had this weird feeling that I was cheating on my favorite characters. Yes, I am that strange. I should have trusted Annette Marie's craft more because after I got past all the new terms thrown at me in the beginning of Red Winter I LOVED it. Emi's great, if a little holier than though, but Shiro is just....perfect. I could read about Shiro trimming his toenails and enjoy it. I didn't care for the Tengu much in this book, though he grew on me in the later ones. The mythology was truly original but delivered in a novelized manga like format that worked really well. And those illustrations! They were truly fantastic and added a lot of enjoyment to the story. I started the next one as soon as I finished this one. I just couldn't help myself. It was that good. I think Annette Marie is my new favorite author and I'll be reading anything she publishes. Highly recommended.

Annette Marie head done it again. A thoroughly enjoyable start to another series- the only downside is that I have to impatiently await the next books in the series. Right from the beginning the character development and world building suck you in and make you invest yourself in the outcome.

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