

## Shinobi 7: Trials of a Warrior

*L. Benitez (Author & Illustrator)*

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## **Shinobi 7: Trials of a Warrior** L. Benitez (Author & Illustrator)

Enter the feudal world of Shaaku Den...

A world that used to be peaceful until the uprising of the evil geisha Black Rose and the ruthless warrior Rengoku. Together the two are the Blackthorn Clan and they have turned Shaaku Den into their battlefield, conquering and killing the innocent for their own gain. Blackthorn has instigated destruction and the only ones left to fight back is the surviving Kitsune Clan.

Follow the adventures of six young individuals who are now soldiers in the legendary Kitsune Clan. Do they have what it takes to be a warrior and fight against Blackthorn? Can they save their world from Black Rose's evil thorns? This is a time of war in Shaaku Den— seen through the eyes of six unlikely youths. Will they overcome the trials of warfare?

## **Shinobi 7: Trials of a Warrior Details**

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Author : L. Benitez (Author & Illustrator)

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# From Reader Review Shinobi 7: Trials of a Warrior for online ebook

## Bren says

Definitely a page-turner. A fantasy story that makes you eager to know what is going to happen next. Very imaginative plot, lots of action and conflict and a storyline where the pace rarely slackens. Also, a hint of spiritual wisdom shining through on occasions.

Terrific character development, particularly of the six main young warriors in training and heroes of the story. Their strengths and weaknesses, idiosyncrasies, warts and all are exposed. Also enjoyed perceiving what was going on through the eyes, or points of view, of each main character.

The author has the ability to inject humor, even into the most seriously, egotistical characters like Kuroi Kaze, gently persuading you to like him despite his outrageous posturing. As for eight year old, Luna, a mini hurricane of fun, fearlessness and enthusiasm. You cannot help but smile or LOL at her outrageous, but often perceptive, utterances.

I have to say that the writing style took me sometime to “get”. Probably more to do with a generation gap (or several) between the young author and me. But, once I cottoned on, I loved the breezy, uninhibited and amusing way she writes.

Yes, the book is crying out for some tidying up, proof-reading and editing, but I would be very surprised (and disappointed) if L. Benitez does not establish herself as a very successful author in the near future.

A fun read and highly recommended.

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## OpenBookSociety.com says

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/sh...>

Brought to you by OBS reviewer Alina

Beware of possible spoilers

shinobi-7-trials-of-a-warrior-l-benitezAs a child, I was fascinated by martial arts. The moment I discovered a Shotokan Karate club in my neighborhood, I was there ready to train. And I loved watching Kung-fu movies with my dad. I also read a lot of specialty magazines, but never a manga or a novel having ninjas as main characters. And the animes scare me.

Well, here we have ninjas in training. There's 6 of them: Cassie, a 16 yo kind-hearted girl, whom we meet on her way to master Kitsune's school for Shinobis – a special kind of warrior, with supernatural powers, who never age and can summon spirits to help them become more powerful; Hanran, a tall, muscular, but shy boy who fancies Cassie; Luna and her brother Yami; Tabby, who's a sugar addict; and Kuroi, an older boy they join at the school to form Shinobi 7 or Ninja 7, one of the school's 13 Sectors. The story is told through the points of view of these 6 characters, each of them having an important role in its development. Their world, Shaaku Den, is torn apart by war. Two Shinobi clans have united to form Blackthorn, a monster that destroyed the others and threatens to enslave the whole world. The only one left to fight them is the Kitsune clan, who are trying to train new warriors to protect the towns' people and end the war. The three teachers at the school, Akira, Shinichi and Zuko have the huge responsibility of keeping the appearance: their master,

Kitsune, has returned powerless from the Spirit world, after trying to destroy the Mekai-Ishi, a small violet jewel.

I experienced a lot of mixed feelings while reading the book. The prologue left me completely baffled. I could not figure out what was going on, who died, if they died, and why. The writing was very jumbled, totally incomprehensible to me. I braced myself and read on, and the book really sucked me in. The story is very entertaining and exciting. It always makes you want to know what comes next. The dialogue is funny and adequate to the 8 to 16 year old characters, who are very lovable and true-to-life. The writing also picked up a bit, so in the end I kind of started understanding what the writer had wanted to do. I also realized that the book was written by someone very young and inexperienced, but who definitely has a lot of potential. She knows what she's talking about and is not afraid to experiment with writing techniques. It is obvious that she has given her story and characters a lot of thought, but it would have been good if she had cut some unnecessary childish dialogue and descriptions that did not add to the plot and given more attention to building a more credible scenario. The author was influenced heavily by her own readings, especially the Harry Potter and the Lord of the Ring books, I would guess, but that is to be expected from a very young author.

She knows her material very well: her little ninjas sleep on futons, write in kanji, fight with kusari-gamas and shurikens, they address each other with Cassie-chan for girls and Kaze-san for boys, and eat noodles and rice for breakfast. However, the school is very weird. Not only because it's set in another world, where people fly around spitting fire and sharing bodies with evil spirits, but also because the students are not provided with soap, towels etc. I understand they are at war and they need to learn what deprivation means, but still, it's a school, not a nazi camp. The library is shelves and shelves of books and scrolls that need dusting. Wasn't this a school? Are the students from Sector 7 the only ones to use it? Ever? Also, when they drink water, they all share the same jug, because 'Shinobis don't use cups'. Very unhygienic and unrealistic, at the same time. If they were so backward, at least they wouldn't have a hospital, but they do.

;There are times when the sentences don't make sense. Here's just one example: 'Everyone lost hope that master Kitsune truly was a goner...'. Does that mean they wanted him gone and actually knew that he was going to return and were not happy about it? These may well be just mistakes that have been amended, but since my copy was unedited, I did find quite a few of this kind of sentences and spelling and grammar mistakes. There were many times when I just laughed out loud, even if the situation was tragic or at least very serious. But how can you not laugh when a mean character 'turned ballistic'. The combat training sensei raises giant spiders and unleashes them in the labyrinth where Sector 7 conduct their simulation mission: 'You killed my spiders? You killed my babies?' (Dragons, anyone?)

I can definitely say I liked this book. It's messy, but cute and dark and funny and deep, at times. I warmly recommend it to young people interested in martial arts and Asian culture in general. I am curious how the story will evolve and especially how L. Benitez as a writer will evolve.

\*An ebook copy of this book was provided by the author in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Matthew says**

Tsundoku Reviews

Brief Summary: The Blackthorn clan has ravaged the world of Shaaku Den in search of the ultimate

power—the Mekai-Ishi. Only Master Kitsune’s clan stands in their way, led by six brave and hopeful, but untrained, warriors called the Shinobi 7.

The Tsundoku Scale: Middle of the Pile, 7 out of 10.

The Good: I love the characters and the whimsical, self-deprecating comedic tone that they take. Through multiple character viewpoints, Benitez does a great job tight-rope walking the third wall of a story, by making the characters talk almost directly to the reader, without ever disrupting the story’s flow, kind of like the *Pendragon* or *Percy Jackson* series. *The Shinobi 7* always has this great tongue-in-cheek humor that makes it that much more endearing. I love little eight-year old Luna, her off-kilter comments, and how she names everything living animal Jeff, while at the same time she’s probably the most talented Shinobi warrior of them all. I love the dark back-stories of Kuroi and Hanran, and how they struggle to find themselves, while accidentally, and often humorously, they slowly begin to find a home within the *Shinobi 7*. I love the quiet, caring Cassie, the harbinger of hope, and the soul of the story. I love Akira, the somber but fiery instructor, and her own struggle to hold herself and everything she stands for, together. And I even love how I kind of hate the characters Tabby and Yami (they’re really annoying!) because although they are not as interesting, or talented, or funny, or pretty much useful in any way everyone else, it’s almost like the book’s own inside joke. For the reader, the author herself, and every character in the book remark on how annoying these two can be! It’s not often you find a book that is so self aware of itself and still remains a touching, action-packed, and humorous pleasure to read. Oh, and the hand drawn artwork throughout the book is great, and fits the book perfectly!

The Bad: There are some moments where the story really, and I mean really, exaggerates itself. For instance one day the kids are made to do 500 pushups... as a morning exercise. And another day they run 25 miles, as just a part of a full day of training. Understandably this is a different world with magical powers and tree-hopping ninjas and stuff, but could it really hurt to tone down the feats to maybe 200 pushups or 8 miles? Then there is one girl who is randomly a sugar addict, and it’s a little weird to read about her going through sugar withdrawal and guzzling 600 packets of sugar—particularly when this addiction has no effect on the story’s outcome or the girl’s character. Bottom line, it’s just another exaggeration—I’d have no problem if she just really liked sugar, or had a sweet tooth, but making it into a full-blown, but pointless, addiction is, well, pointless. And speaking of pointless, the inclusion of a few curses were quite unnecessary, given that this book is clearly designed for a young adult audience (probably middle school and lower), and those words could have been replaced by the more child-friendly ones of “crap,” “stupid,” or even “damn.” Once again, exaggeration, exaggeration, exaggeration! But I guess I’m exaggerating too because the novel is still very good.

Check out [Tsundoku Reviews](#) for more great reviews!

Please note that I received an ARC copy to write an honest review.

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## Lauren says

I was pulled right into this book. I loved Cassie's character. I found the dialogue funny. It made me laugh out loud at times. The characters interact well with each other. As someone who took Taekwondo for three years, I found the setting of the ninja training school very intriguing. Funny but also sometimes serious, the author does a good job of juggling six characters, which is not always easy to do. Well done. You will not be

disappointed with this read.

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### **Ko says**

This book was told in a very consistent flow, had a nice pace, and a very involving atmosphere. The characters were great and they were really easy to like. My favorite character was YamiTsuki, the brainy 12-year-old boy who was the brains of Sector 7. His relationship with his sister, Luna, was really funny. There were a lot of great comical scenes, as well as scenes that had me saying, "What the heck?" in complete laughter. I can't wait until I read the second one!!!

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### **Jolie Mason says**

This youth fantasy novel, written in an almost anime style, is very good. The story of a group of children seeking out a sect of ninjas to join when their own homes are invaded. The youngest is 8, and she is adorable and hilarious. I am actually recommending this for my kids, two avid fans of all things anime. There is a little swearing, but hardly enough to worry me. Overall, I thought it very well done.

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### **Justine Winans says**

I feel like there is a fine line between well-written stories and roll-your-eyes-over-the-cliche when it comes to the martial arts. When I first started Shinobi 7, I was worried the novel might be more of the latter. However, it did not take longer than reading a couple of pages for me to realize that Benitez was able to do justice to ninja stories by crafting an awesome novel.

Shinobi 7 has everything that you could possibly want within a novel. It actively engages the reader throughout the story, for one thing. While reading, I have been at the edge of my seat, apprehensive to what would come next. I have been surprised by events, excited by the action. I have been nearly brought to tears as well as having to swallow down large bursts of laughter. I have been begging a certain character to 'just kiss her, already!' It is not hard to become emotionally attached to the story, and in that case, I was a goner from the start.

I am also surprised at how much I liked all of the characters in the novel. Normally, there is always at least one character who annoys me. I'm sure any reader can relate. The one person whose every decision just makes you want to slap them across the face? But in Shinobi 7, none of the characters made me feel that way. The one who had the type of personality that might lead to annoying me was one of the characters that I related to the most. I am not sure if this is a normal point to bring up, but I feel that it is important to have characters that the readers can connect to.

The plot of Shinobi 7 is action-packed, unique, and entertaining. I did not find one part of the story that dragged on, although I did have to prevent myself from skimming certain portions (because I could not wait to see what would happen next.) I cannot remember if this is going to be a series, but I really hope it is, because there is so much more that can be made from these characters and plot lines. And if there is more, I will fight to get to the front of the line to read it.

If you are a fan of the martial arts, then you should immediately read Shinobi 7. If you are not a fan of the martial arts, you should read it anyway. There is a lot more to the novel than just the fighting and who knows? By reading it, you probably will become a fan of the martial arts.

If I have any complaints, it was that the inner romantic in me was left hanging a bit, and I would like to see more of the elemental abilities. However, both of these just leave me wanting more, so...mission accomplished, I guess.

In all honestly, I was surprised at just how much I enjoyed Shinobi 7, and I am extremely glad I read the novel. I suggest you do the same, as you will not be disappointed.

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### **Shelly says**

Being a fan of ninjas and anything that has to do with defeating bad guys, I was looking forward to reading the book, and L.Benitez did not disappoint! This book was filled with action, butt kicking and awesomeness (in the words of Luna, an eight year old character in the book). I enjoyed reading about all six characters and how they came together to form a team. It was interesting to read this book through the eyes of six different misfit kids. I also enjoyed all the character developments. I was a little disappointed that nothing happened between certain characters (no spoiler!). I really enjoyed the world that L.Benitez created. It's full of ninjas and dark spirits that threaten the safety of everyone living in Shaaku Den. Overall, if you like strong heroes and people fighting their inner demons, this book is for you. I am very excited to read more and I hope that a sequel is in the works!

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### **Adri Sinclair says**

So there I was, minding my own business, when this book came across my screen. I was just going to read a quick chapter. Then another, well, one more wouldn't hurt, after all, it is only 2am right?! GHA! What a page-turner!!

I read it all, in one sitting! Here's the thing that got me: This book took me back to a time when my daughter was only little, and she wanted to watch "Avatar: The last Airbender." & "Avatar: The legend of Cora". This book, had similar elements in it, but... it was MORE. I ALSO LOVED the unexpected treats of visual creativity. BRILLIANTLY clever!

In this book, there were roaring moments of laughter and a genuine naive serenity with a great deal of "OH MAI GRrrR!". My favourite scene by far - and I'd have to say, SO well written - was the stepping into 'manhood' part. What a beautiful, fun and funny way to talk about this major event in any young person's life. I will never look at the word "Cute" the same way again.

L. Benitez did a great job on this writing, and I can imagine this as a super cool graphics novel AND a movie in the Anime Genre. It will be a hit, with old and young - and by far the most original I have seen. I loved the plots, the twists and turns along the paths as you get to know the characters and their journey. I loved the generous dose of culture thrown into the mix and I thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful message behind it all: It matters what is inside you.

I would like to add too: The write-up does NOT do this book justice! I will HIGHLY recommend this book to anyone who's ever taken an interest in this particular genre - and even those who has not, you will find it hits a spot you may have not discovered yet!

Thank you L. Benitez, for sharing this work, I thoroughly enjoyed it - I have passed this book on to my [now] teenage daughter too - it is a personal moment we share in your writing.

As for the writing style: I enjoyed the POV changes, and how they were clearly indicated. I enjoyed the writing style of this author, and the personality traits created for the characters - WELL DONE on these too.

Thank you for sharing this book, and thank you for bringing a work of art with it!!

xxx

Adri

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### **Rowan Lake Jr. says**

I swapped books with L. Benitez and I was very impressed. This book is the first in a series and tells the story of six young shinobis in Sector 7. From cover to cover, I thoroughly enjoyed it. Not only is she a writer, but an illustrator too. That's a plus in my book. But let's review the story:

One major thing I noticed about Benitez's writing style is she uses a lot of POV (point of view) to help the reader get to know each character and the different perspectives of the story. The details in the story are spot on and each character comes alive as you read their POV. It's no easy task, mind you. Even I never ventured down that path. But clearly, she knows how to keep the story on track, regardless if three or more characters are retelling the same point of the story.

Another thing I noticed is that each chapter has sub-chapters. This style goes hand-in-hand with her POV writing style. Now, I'm not complaining on how long each chapter was, but it does make the book more unique. Not every author can do that. So kudos to her.

I'm also an artist too. I really liked how each chapter had a drawing somewhere. Not only did it show her art style, but made the book stand out. I've published two books so far and neither one of them have a drawing. Don't get me wrong, I love my books as they are, but I too want to show the world my art style too. Hopefully, I can with my third book. But enough about me: this is Benitez's review.

Overall, I loved Shinobi 7. It has action, comedy, drama, and hints of romance (all things I love). Once you read it, you'll find a favorite character and can't wait for book two. This book gets a 5/5 from me.

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### **Patricia Hamill says**

Fresh style, lot's of humor, and ninjas-in-training.

Shinobi 7: Trials of a Warrior introduces six young ninjas in training in a setting similar to feudal Japan. The story, excluding the prologue, starts with Cassie, a gentle, non-violent sort, who is traveling to the training school of the Kitsune Clan, the only one that has yet survived the violent takeover of the evil Blackthorne



Clan. On the road, she meets Hanran, a quiet boy with a secret, Yami and Luna, siblings who can't wait to be awesome ninjas, and Tabby, a girl who loves sugar. Following Cassie's map, the five soon reach the Kitsune school and along with others who have also just arrived, are welcomed into the school and assigned to Sector 7, where they meet Kuroi, an arrogant young man who has been the lone member of Sector 7 for quite some time and is not happy about having to welcome fresh meat.

Right away, I picked up on the youthful undertones of the book, mostly from Cassie's thoughts and reactions coupled with the teenager slang that comes through them. I didn't realize until later that this unique and appealing flavor was only one of several different perspectives I would enjoy as I read this book. Multiple viewpoints sometimes get a little hard to track, but in this book, the author does a fantastic job keeping them straight. Each one, down to their thoughts and mannerisms, is utterly unique and perfectly consistent throughout the story, and the viewpoints are used to move the story along as well as provide backstory and entertainment value.

Besides the young people in training, the seasoned teachers in the school are also featured in various scenes, particularly Akira, the young woman who is featured in the prologue. She and the other masters have the burden of dealing with their own fears and training the new recruits enough for them to survive an attack from the Blackthorne Clan. They also have a secret to protect.

As for the bad guys, they are pretty scary. Their bloodthirsty battle lust coupled with supernatural strength and powers obtained by linking with evil spirits make them a devastating force. Of the original 13 secret clans mentioned early in the book, only Kitsune Clan remains intact. The leaders of the Blackthorne Clan are sinister. Black Rose, a beautiful geisha, and Rengoku, a fierce warrior, lead the Clan and have their eyes set on ruling the entire world. They need only a mystical gem rumored to be held by Kitsune Golden Tail, the leader of the Kitsune Clan.

As for favorite characters, it's hard to narrow them down. I enjoyed all of the different perspectives. However, if I had to pick one, I'd say Luna is my favorite. She is utterly fearless, exuberant, and a force to be reckoned with, and she's only 8 years old, the youngest in Sector 7.

As a ninja, martial arts story, I must say that the level of detail regarding the martial arts, war and Japanese customs and terminology seem pretty extensive without being overbearing. I learned terms for a few new weapons, enjoyed the well choreographed fight scenes and battles, and the missions (both training and real). Each encounter packs a lot of action and excitement.

However, some of the training scenarios are a little unlikely. For example, I don't think it would be physically possible to come in off the street and complete 500 pushups as a raw recruit, even if you passed out, took a nap and came back to finish them when you woke up. I also noticed a couple of distance and proportion idiosyncracies. One time, the students are running in a field within the walled Kitsune Clan grounds and the field is described as being ten miles long. Sure, the school is described as enormous, but why would it need ten full miles of grassland for running within its walls where maybe one would do the trick. I used to run two to three miles at a time and picturing how far that was and applying it to the field in the school grounds just boggles my mind.

Overall, I recommend this book to martial arts enthusiasts who enjoy a youthful perspective, lots of action, and a good measure of humor. This is definitely worth reading (perhaps even multiple times).

I received a free copy of this ebook in return for an honest, non-reciprocal review.

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## A.Z. Green says

Review done through Bit'N Book Promoters: <http://bitnbookpromoters.blogspot.co....>

Well, where do I start with this book? I still can't figure out what to call it. Is it a manga comic or a novel? It's actually neither. Like a hybrid of the two, and that's pretty brave to do. It's original and shows the author's passion for both manga art, Japanese culture and writing, all in one very long novel called 'Shinobi 7'. The main question is: does it work?

At times, yes. Other times, I'm not so sure.

I wanted to read this book because I love Japanese culture: the films, the books, the manga and anime, even the language which I'm attempting to study as we speak. So I was very excited to read this book.

I didn't expect it to be what it is. I thought it would be something like Lian Hearn's 'Tales of the Otori': a grown up novel about clans, warriors, love, war, death; all the good stuff. But this book reads a lot like a comic. And sometimes it is very effective, other times the writing style can come off as immature. The author likes to use exclamation marks in narrative, and I've never been a fan of that simply because it doesn't look professional to me. Personally, I avoid using them and if there is exclamation marks in narrative, I think maybe a few times would be enough. Not several times a page. Especially when it is clear that something intense is going down; you don't need exclamation marks as a form of expression then, in my opinion.

The other point about her writing is that, yes I know, the characters are young. Most of them are between eight and fifteen years old, so it stands to reason that if we're reading from their point of view, they are going to sound their age. And the author does this brilliantly. But the problem with the young mind is they might ramble about insignificant things and there were times when it really disrupted the flow and killed the suspense. Reading from a young character's point of view was really enjoyable for me, don't get me wrong, just sometimes it needed to get to the point.

Speaking of POV changes: there were a lot. I mean a lot. We have the six main characters and then two or three other POV's, one of which seemed to be from the omniscient third person POV. So you needed to keep up. And the author handled it pretty well, but there were some points where the POV of the person wasn't mentioned, so in the first paragraph you'd have little thought inserts like, Come on, Luna, you can do it, just to help you remember who it is supposed to be. But then, that technique is very blatant. Titling whose point of view it is, is probably better, and easier.

The characters were wonderful. I loved them all for different reasons. Luna, the eight year old, with her spirit, vibrance and energy. Hanran for his mystery and aloofness and a not so secret crush on Cassie. Cassie the girl with a haunted past, full of grief and sadness but always hiding her pain both physical and emotional, just to appear strong; she also has a good heart and sweet temperament. Tabby the runaway, with her sugar addiction, and her sharp tongue giving Kirou a run for his money whenever they argue. Kirou, who was the lone ninja for a long time and never failed to amaze me with his arrogance and short temper. Luna drove him crazy, and only ever referred to him as 'old man' until things got sentimental. Then there's Yami, Luna's older brother, who gets teased by Hanran and Kirou (especially Kuroi, who constantly says to him 'Be a man'). They all have their personalities and quirks and even if it isn't clear whose POV it is from, I could guess who it was by the personality of the writing. That isn't easy to achieve as a writer. The author's strength is her

characters. And her humour. I was in giggles several times.

Her weakness is, I think, her description. She describes what people are wearing way too often, and the way she does it is 'telling' not 'showing'. So she lists what they're wearing like: He was wearing a vest, black jeans and white trainers with green stripes up the side. Just an example here, not what she's actually written. But you get the idea, right? And that's just three items I've written about. She writes about more and describes them like that. It's off-putting. Even when she describes new people and their appearance it's the same technique most of the time. I think she needs to work on writing with more 'show' than 'tell'. The beginning part of the story was a lot of tell. I found the story really got into the swing at around 100 pages in, when Cassie gets possessed by the demon. After that, it started to get really good.

When I finished reading I was pleased with how it turned out. It is flawed, and I was reading an unedited copy too. I think the author needs to cut down on her adverbs, she needs to describe things with more 'show', she needs to always make clear whose POV it is because so many POV's can be difficult to stomach. I also believe the book doesn't need to be as long as it is. It's almost 400 pages and I'm not 'size-ist' but I think it could be reduced. The beginning of POV switches usually focuses on the person's inner thoughts and then gets to the situation. Sometimes the inner dialogue isn't needed, it can ramble. A lot of the time it is enjoyable but if it is trimmed, it'll be sharper and flow better, in my opinion.

After all that, I can say I did like this book. It was different and the author clearly is passionate about martial arts and Japanese culture and it shows. I enjoyed the characters, how they came out of their shell and grew stronger. The demons and magical aspect of it was very entertaining. The dialogue usually had me in giggles and it was very entertaining. The artwork wasn't amazing. It was cute and added a nice touch. But I think she used the wrong materials to draw the artwork. It looks like she used pencil and then a black ballpoint pen and I think if she did them in pens specifically for manga artwork such as Letraset pens, that would make a huge difference to the quality.

So to sum up: the start stuttered, the middle built up and the ending finished it nicely.

Thanks for allowing me to read this book. I'm looking forward to finding out what happens to the Shinobi 7 team next!

3 out of 5 stars!

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### **Suzie Jay says**

Enjoyable and well worth the time and money. The writer is hilarious and has captured the essence of each of the six main characters. They were all lovable and interesting with a diversity rarely seen in a single novel. The book switches between character view points which could easily get confusing if the author wasn't as skilled as she clearly is. The story intertwines and connects through the 6 characters and is an enjoyably read from beginning to end. I would not hesitate to read anything else she writes.

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## **Bradley Poage says**

When I pick a book to read I typically look for certain characteristics in the first few pages. One of my struggles as a reader is staying engaged and interested in the story. In fact, all too often I become disappointed in a book and end up closing it before finishing it.

So when I had a chance to read *Shinobi7: Trials of a Warrior*, I was somewhat skeptical. However, I immediately caught by the first few pages. And right after breaking into this book I found this author instantly captured my full attention and then I later found I wasn't able to put down this book.

This author knows how to tell the story and I felt that I could've been right there. The description and the dialogue fit and give a great view of what the scene and energy is all about. The characters also have a personality that you can easily understand.

Usually I would write a review right after finishing a book, but with this particular book I found I had to read it a couple times. It's not because there were any issues. Rather I wanted to be sure that it was as great a book as I felt it was.

This book and its adventure does not disappoint. I will definitely be recommending this book and others that come in the future as this is a great book for the shelf to experience time and time again.

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## **Bit'N Book Tours says**

Well, where do I start with this book? I still can't figure out what to call it. Is it a manga comic or a novel? It's actually neither. Like a hybrid of the two, and that's pretty brave to do. It's original and shows the author's passion for both manga art, Japanese culture and writing, all in one very long novel called 'Shinobi 7'. The main question is: does it work?

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I wanted to read this book because I love Japanese culture: the films, the books, the manga and anime, even the language which I'm attempting to study as we speak. So I was very excited to read this book.

I didn't expect it to be what it is. I thought it would be something like Lian Hearn's 'Tales of the Otori': a grown up novel about clans, warriors, love, war, death; all the good stuff. But this book reads a lot like a comic. And sometimes it is very effective, other times the writing style can come off as immature. The author likes to use exclamation marks in narrative, and I've never been a fan of that simply because it doesn't look professional to me. Personally, I avoid using them and if there is exclamation marks in narrative, I think maybe a few times would be enough. Not several times a page. Especially when it is clear that something intense is going down; you don't need exclamation marks as a form of expression then, in my opinion.

The other point about her writing is that, yes I know, the characters are young. Most of them are between eight and fifteen years old, so it stands to reason that if we're reading from their point of view, they are going to sound their age. And the author does this brilliantly. But the problem with the young mind is they might ramble about insignificant things and there were times when it really disrupted the flow and killed the suspense. Reading from a young character's point of view was really enjoyable for me, don't get me wrong,

just sometimes it needed to get to the point.

Speaking of POV changes: there were a lot. I mean a lot. We have the six main characters and then two or three other POV's, one of which seemed to be from the omniscient third person POV. So you needed to keep up. And the author handled it pretty well, but there were some points where the POV of the person wasn't mentioned, so in the first paragraph you'd have little thought inserts like, Come on, Luna, you can do it, just to help you remember who it is supposed to be. But then, that technique is very blatant. Titling whose point of view it is, is probably better, and easier.

The characters were wonderful. I loved them all for different reasons. Luna, the eight year old, with her spirit, vibrance and energy. Hanran for his mystery and aloofness and a not so secret crush on Cassie. Cassie the girl with a haunted past, full of grief and sadness but always hiding her pain both physical and emotional, just to appear strong; she also has a good heart and sweet temperament. Tabby the runaway, with her sugar addiction, and her sharp tongue giving Kirou a run for his money whenever they argue. Kirou, who was the lone ninja for a long time and never failed to amaze me with his arrogance and short temper. Luna drove him crazy, and only ever referred to him as 'old man' until things got sentimental. Then there's Yami, Luna's older brother, who gets teased by Hanran and Kirou (especially Kuroi, who constantly says to him 'Be a man'). They all have their personalities and quirks and even if it isn't clear whose POV it is from, I could guess who it was by the personality of the writing. That isn't easy to achieve as a writer. The author's strength is her characters. And her humour. I was in giggles several times.

Her weakness is, I think, her description. She describes what people are wearing way too often, and the way she does it is 'telling' not 'showing'. So she lists what they're wearing like: He was wearing a vest, black jeans and white trainers with green stripes up the side. Just an example here, not what she's actually written. But you get the idea, right? And that's just three items I've written about. She writes about more and describes them like that. It's off-putting. Even when she describes new people and their appearance it's the same technique most of the time. I think she needs to work on writing with more 'show' than 'tell'. The beginning part of the story was a lot of tell. I found the story really got into the swing at around 100 pages in, when Cassie gets possessed by the demon. After that, it started to get really good.

When I finished reading I was pleased with how it turned out. It is flawed, and I was reading an unedited copy too. I think the author needs to cut down on her adverbs, she needs to describe things with more 'show', she needs to always make clear whose POV it is because so many POV's can be difficult to stomach. I also believe the book doesn't need to be as long as it is. It's almost 400 pages and I'm not 'size-ist' but I think it could be reduced. The beginning of POV switches usually focuses on the person's inner thoughts and then gets to the situation. Sometimes the inner dialogue isn't needed, it can ramble. A lot of the time it is enjoyable but if it is trimmed, it'll be sharper and flow better, in my opinion.

After all that, I can say I did like this book. It was different and the author clearly is passionate about martial arts and Japanese culture and it shows. I enjoyed the characters, how they came out of their shell and grew stronger. The demons and magical aspect of it was very entertaining. The dialogue usually had me in giggles and it was very entertaining. The artwork wasn't amazing. It was cute and added a nice touch. But I think she used the wrong materials to draw the artwork. It looks like she used pencil and then a black ballpoint pen and I think if she did them in pens specifically for manga artwork such as Letraset pens, that would make a huge difference to the quality. Like this:

So to sum up: the start stuttered, the middle built up and the ending finished it nicely.

Thanks for allowing me to read this book. I'm looking forward to finding out what happens to the Shinobi 7 team next!

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