



The Ugly One

Leanne Statland Ellis

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“[A] quiet, deeply moving story.” —*The Bulletin*

Twelve-year-old Micay walks around her fifteenth-century Incan village shielding the scarred side of her face that inspired the cruel name Millay, or “Ugly One.” She escapes to her huaca rock, avoiding the villagers who shun her. Her world shifts dramatically when a stranger gives her a sorry-looking baby macaw. The bird becomes her dear companion on a journey that ultimately leads her to a new role as shaman in Machu Picchu’s Sacred Sun City. Told in an engaging storyteller’s voice, this is a stirring tale of a girl who finds her own strength.

The Ugly One Details

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Author : Leanne Statland Ellis

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From Reader Review The Ugly One for online ebook

Beth says

DNF at 71/244 pages (Chapter 7)

I had to stop reading this book because I was about throw my Nook across the room. Unfortunately, this title has authentic voice and narrative issues that I just couldn't get past. I wanted to like a book that should appeal to middle grade readers and is multicultural in scope (Incas/Peru) but it has too many flaws to recommend.

Authentic voice issues:

-The author is a white woman that has no connection to the Incan culture beyond a trip to Machu Picchu and a one time "research" trip. Parts of the Incan past are given a white-wash that I cannot get past. And the author chose to write about a time period with little historical information to back up her ridiculous narrative choices - she doesn't infuse the setting with anything that feels authentic and natural. It's been done by other authors, but not this one.

-While the city at Machu Picchu doesn't have a name/has been lost to history, rather than simply calling it the sacred city on MP, the author gives it a really generic name that she chose to make up. Surely there is a better way?

Narrative issues:

-As most tween & teen fiction these days feature an issue du jour, it wasn't unexpected to find the protagonist with self-esteem issues related to the scar on her face. However, the narrative line is one I cannot get behind: Micay bases her feelings of self-worth on taunts by 3 or 4 boys in her village. There is no other indication that ANYONE in the village doesn't like her otherwise. Also, she rejects her family completely when they clearly love her. I just couldn't take it. Even though I didn't finish it, I can predict that by the end, something amazing and/or miraculous will happen and Micay will learn to love herself, which given the clear self-loathing evident in the first 6 chapters is completely unrealistic.

ARC supplied by publisher via NetGalley

Yapha says

Micay has a scar down the right side of her face and believes that she is not just unlucky but cursed. She hides from the people of her village, and accepts that she will be teased and bullied for the rest of her life. All of that changes when a stranger gives her a baby macaw. Suddenly she has something outside of herself to worry about. Set at the time of the Incan empire, this is a timeless story of rising above one's destiny, following one's heart, and making a brighter future. Recommended for grades 5-8.

Ronni says

I have always liked historical fiction. The blending of truth and imagination can be very satisfying, and in The Ugly One the balance of the two feels right. I know the book targets a younger audience (mainly eight to

twelve years of age) but the beautiful writing weaving stories of the Incan Culture with such universal themes as love, regret, shame, hostility, responsibility, fear, and self discovery had this older reader spellbound. I was instantly drawn to the main character (Micay-Millay) and to Sumac, her companion throughout the story. This is a fast read and I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to be transported to a different time and a different culture.

Laura says

A wonderful book for young girls, written by my friend and teaching partner!

Anisa says

It was a little hard for me to get into at first and all of the native american names were a bit confusing, but it ended up catching my attention and was a good book. Not really my type, but I did enjoy it.

Elise White says

I loved everything about the book except the ending. I was confused about the ending, I couldn't tell if the ending was trying to tell me she died or not. Other than that, the book was great.

David Ciccarelli says

This is the second book I've read from Ms. Ellis (Treehuggers) and I was again impressed. I'm a sucker for historical fiction and a big fan of the MG/YA books, and this satisfies on both count. If you have a daughter/niece/cousin/friend in this age range, get it for them. And get a copy for yourself.

Yanelie Manzano says

So this book is kind of a good book. It doesn't interest me a lot and yea... I still finished reading it though. This book is about a girl who has a big scar on the right side of her face. She doesn't like the scar because they make fun of her. I would recommend this book my teacher's I think they might like it! Maybe not sure!

Michelle says

The Ugly One by Leanne Statland Ellis

The young adult book genre has expanded rapidly over the last decade, creating reading niches for a variety

of teenage interests, from the currently ubiquitous choices that include vampires and werewolves to the popular dystopian series. But, one of my favorite growing topics in the world of YA literature is cultural/travel fiction. I think it is outstanding when kids sitting in their suburban American homes can open and book and be suddenly transported to Southeast Asia, South Africa or South America. Leanne Statland Ellis' soon-to-be-released book does just that- taking readers on a journey to Peru and the thriving Incan civilization.

Names are an important part of this tale, with the narrator going by several different ones, depending on who is addressing her. (Tale is a fitting label for this book, as it reads like a mystical tale from the ancient oral traditions, tying the reader up in the story as pages fly by.) She is called by her given name, Micay, by her loving older sister, but mocked as The Ugly One by a young bully in her village. As her story progresses, she gains other monikers, more fitting to her changing situation, but at heart, she remains the same strong young woman.

Read the rest of this review (and more!) at www.insearchoftheendofthesidewalk.com

Mrs. Preziosi says

The Ugly One is a very deep, thought provoking book which could be challenging to many fourth grade readers. It takes place in the time of the ancient Inca tribes and the mythical and spiritual aspects could be difficult to grasp.

Prema says

Beautiful story, something like a Disney story but with a sad though uplifting end.

Jenna says

*****I won this book on Goodreads in exchange for my honest review*****

What a lovely story! I really enjoyed "The Ugly One", though it is a children's book, targeted age of probably 8-12. It is the tale of Micay, a young Incan girl whose face is badly scarred as a child. A boy in her village calls her Millay, The Ugly One, and she feels like an outcast, insignificant, and is embarrassed by her face which she tries to keep hidden with her long hair. Micay's life changes after a stranger from the jungle arrives and gives her a baby macaw to take care of. Soon after, she becomes the student of her village's shaman, and her self confidence begins to improve, and she finds her voice and discovers who she really is. I really enjoyed being submerged in the Incan Culture, and also sharing Micay's journey to self-acceptance. This is a great book for young tween girls, showing them that looks aren't all that matter, and they can be beautiful and successful, no matter what they look like.

Annie says

It was great. Really interesting.

Niki says

I read this book in nearly one sitting, captivated early on by the author's rich description of the community's traditions and by the arrival of two strangers whose presence in Micay's life helps launch her journey of self-discovery. Quechua words have an important, almost character-like presence in Micay's development, as does the interplay between past and present, dreams and consciousness, community and self. Each chapter is layered with descriptions of the land and of Incan beliefs and rituals; readers learn from and with Micay, reveling both in her transformation and in our deepening understanding of Incan culture.

As a history teacher, I would recommend this book for use in classes through the early high school grades. The author has skillfully crafted a narrative that will draw in younger and older readers and has provided a glossary and a list of resources for further study. I am also very pleased that this is a book and story that I can share with my 10 and 12 year old daughters; many of Micay's internal challenges and conflicts with other people are issues that will resonate with them, and I hope they will be inspired by the strength they'll see developing in Micay through her patience and through the care of the community around her.

Stephanie A. says

I really enjoyed this. Very quick read and a nice change of pace from the usual settings many young adult books take place in. Not necessarily the most factual as it is a fictional story, something I think other reviewers forget, but it's clear that research was done and in the effort to create the story's atmosphere, changed for the journey. I thought micay's journey was a good lesson for young readers and would recommend this for a classroom read.
