



Froelich's Ladder

Jamie Duclos-Yourdon

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Uncle Froelich nurses a decades-old family grudge from his perch atop a giant ladder. When he's discovered missing, his nephew embarks on a rain-soaked trek across a nineteenth century Pacific Northwest landscape to find him, accompanied by an ornery girl with a most unfortunate name. In their encounters with Confederate assassins, European expatriates, and a general store magnate, this fairytale twist on the American dream explores the conflicts between loyalty and ambition and our need for human connection, even at the highest rungs.

Froelich's Ladder Details

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From Reader Review Froelich's Ladder for online ebook

Grace says

First of all, I had no idea what to expect with Froelich's Ladder. A modern story? A fairy tale or folk tale? Set on the Western Front? With no expectations, I was sucked in from the very first page. This fast-paced, clever novel is ripe with quirky characters, assassins, the wild West, and magic.

Set around the premise of a deep-seated family feud, one brother is cursed to sit on the top of the fourth tallest ladder, until he goes missing. When he disappears into thin air (think clouds), his nephew, Gordy, sets off on a journey against all odds to find his uncle. The two girls he meets along the way, one with the most unfortunate name, the other with little more than a reputation, are strong, audacious and full of spirit. I really enjoyed each of the characters in Froelich's Ladder and can honestly say that there was not a weak link. Each character was dynamic and full and added body to the story.

I really enjoyed the magical/ folktale aspect of Froelich's Ladder. It is a pet peeve I have when magic is the solution to every conflict within a story. When a problem arises, the protagonist develops new "powers" or some new form of magic saves it. Froelich's Ladder did a fantastic job of adding magical elements and themes, but creating conflicts that could be solved through wit and fast-thinking.

This novel is fast-paced, clever, and full of personality. The journey the characters undertake and the problems they must overcome connect them to one another. I would most definitely recommend this novel, and I was sad to see it end.

I received an ARC of this book for a review from NetGalley.

To read review on blog: <https://togracethepages.wordpress.com...>

James Boyle says

Not your usual novel. It is part fable, part tall tale, and part love story. This tale takes the mythical land of 19th Century Oregon and weaves a tale as fantastic as it is universal. Interesting read.

Bettie? says

Literary Hub article

Billie says

Froelich's Ladder is a tall tale/fable/*kindermärchen* set in the Oregon Territory and featuring a large cast of

eccentric characters. It's reminiscent of the works of Patrick deWitt, though entirely its own thing. A quirky, funny tale that I was sorry to come to the end of.

Michael Ferro says

One of the most delightfully odd and pleasantly surreal tales I've come across in a while. Jamie Duclos-Yourdon takes the age-old idea of magic and turns it on its head for modern readers. From its vivid descriptions of a lush world, to its personal and tender reflections on isolation, Froelich's Ladder is a novel I won't forget for some time, and I'm truly grateful for that.

Valerie Lawson says

A unique and wonderful, magical romp of a story. Thoroughly enjoyed this tale.

E.P. says

Two brothers fall in love with the same woman. Instead of settling it sensibly, or at least by dueling, one of them climbs up an enormous ladder they've been constructing, and refuses to come down for years. And rather than just letting the ladder fall, the other props it up till he dies and is replaced by his son.

Thus begins the premise to "Froelich's Ladder," which occupies a space somewhere between magic realism and the American tall tale. It's set in 19th-century Oregon, but a 19th-century Oregon in which carnivorous clouds travel in herds and eat unwary creatures. There's plenty of humor of a very certain sort, which is perhaps best described as "Huck Finn meets Blazing Saddles": everything is semi-recognizable, but with at least one foot in the world of the absurd, which is used both for simple humor and for social commentary. Is this a story about pointless stubbornness? The illusory nature of perception? Immigration (most of the characters are immigrants)? The harmful results of attempting to control women's bodies? Or is the author merely spinning a great big fireside yarn?

The voice and prose style of the book are distinctive, and I suspect that readers will either enjoy it, or not. The story is too goofy to be standard literary fiction, too bizarre to be fun-of-the-mill genre fiction, and there's a certain element of spikiness to it that prevents it from being just another silly little humor book. Personally, I found it fascinating, while still finding it difficult to warm up to the characters--they're too complex to be archetypes or cliches, while still too weird to be particularly relatable. In any case, "Froelich's Ladder" is both unusual and thoroughly grounded in myths and literature, and, in spite of and because the main characters are immigrants, a decidedly American work.

My thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for providing a review copy of this book. All opinions are my own.

Joy Clark says

Froelich's Ladder brings to mind the "tall tells" we learned about in grade school - Johnny Appleseed (who gets a quick nod, by the way), Paul Bunyan, etc. The story of two brothers who build the 4th tallest ladder in the world, Froelich's Ladder reads like an 19th century folktale, complete with quirky characters, larger-than-life personalities, and enough realism to keep the fantastical elements from completely taking over. I likely would have rated it higher, but I honestly felt that the ending was a bit too abrupt, with minimal resolution. Not that folktales have to have nice, wrapped-up endings, but I felt the characters deserved a better send-off. Overall, though, this is a fun book that would fit well with traditional Americana folklore, and a quick, entertaining read.

Thank you to the publisher for providing me with a free copy of Froelich's Ladder through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Mareli Thalwitzer says

Froelich's Ladder - Everyone's gotta live someplace

You can find the original review on <http://marelithalkink.blogspot.co.za/...>

One of the similarities between fairy tales and folk tales is that living quarters are never questioned. Whether it's a beanstalk, a tower, a peach or a shoe - we accept it as appropriate living arrangements.

In this delightful tale, Froelich finds himself perch atop the fourth largest ladder in the world, built by himself and his brother, Harald. After a feud between the two brothers regarding the two most fought over issues in recorded history (1. Who's in charge 2. A woman), Froelich jumped on his high horse, or in this case his high ladder, and could not be persuaded to climb down - come rain or shine.

Seeing that he was normally a bit under the weather, he maintained a large herb garden between the rungs for all his ailments. As the forest grew between the two brothers, they ended up relying on the only means of communication between them, TAP. Borrowing from Morse code, they used thumps and vibrations to form combinations of words. Until one day Froelich literally disappears into thin air (aka the clouds).

An element you find in folk tales, but not in fairy tales is that you can't always rely on magic to solve your problems. Sometimes you have to rely on the little grey cells. Enter Harald's two sons. When Binx one morning informs his brother Gordy that the weight of the world on his shoulders seems to be lighter, Gordy decides to embark on a quest to bring his uncle home.

Gordy's clever mind and wit gets him through a number of difficult situations. His journey interlaces with two spunky young women. One with a terribly unfortunate name who dresses like a boy pretending to be a girl at a later stage again and a girl who escaped from a locked tower who's reputation was the only currency she had left, except for her I.O.U.

In this nineteenth century Pacific Northwest landscape they encounter Confederate assassins (meet Dumb and Dumber), European expatriates and a store magnet who believes in the one-tenth men.

In a Wild West populated with immigrants, skittish Civil War veterans, a circus menagerie and a couple of

murderers, will they be able to find their "happily ever after" in this tale of the American dream?

More importantly, will Froelich manage to escape the hungry clouds and finally get to bury the hatchet and lay the ladder down?

This was a fast-paced, clever witted novel that I enjoyed immensely. The underlying theme of alienation was played out well throughout the novel. It reminds the reader that we will always need to reach out to one another through whatever means and in whatever language.

Trish says

Okkaaaayyyy...weird.

Lynn says

From the description Froelich's ladder sounds like it'll be a funny and heartwarming story about family. In a way, it was, just not as much as I hoped.

Straight away the writing style was more tell than show and I wasn't particularly fond of it. The setting was hard to visualize and it was difficult to get a feel for the characters' personalities. It was similar to Forrest Gump in the way that the story felt very detached. This did make it hard for me to get into the story, but once I did it was easier to get a better a picture of what was happening.

After a feud with his brother Harald, Froelich climbs up the ladder he made with his brother and refuses to come down. Harald—and later his children, Binx and Gordy— take it upon themselves to keep the ladder upright, even if it means they practically live hunched over the base of it to support their uncle's tantrum. When a cloud whisks away Froelich, Gordy searches for him while Binx stays behind.

This is the kind of book that doesn't take itself seriously (which was a nice change from the books I've been reading for school). Moments that should be serious have a little humor added in to lighten the mood. Despite this, I didn't like this as much as I thought I would. The characters felt very flat and I would have liked to see more development in them.

Gordy had a strong personality and seemed to be favored more than Binx, who was more than a little lost and dependent. Given Froelich's fight with his brother, I wanted Binx and Gordy's relationship to be explored more. There was some development, but it leaned toward Binx becoming more independent. It was really nice to see Binx grow and gain the confidence he was lacking.

Gak and Josie were the best characters in my opinion. They got up and did something if they didn't like a current situation, which was a stark contrast from Gordy and Binx, who seemed to go along with anything. They had a lot of spirit, but at the same time were vulnerable enough to be believable. Gak dressed as a boy, partly for safety, and when it was discovered that she was a girl you could see the fear she emitted. Josie's lack of control over her life was also handled well and made her a more believable character. My only complaint about them is that we didn't get to see a lot of their friendship. I live for strong female friendships

and the beginning of one at the end was such a tease!

While I still think Froelich's tantrum was dumb, I liked seeing his development over the course of the book. I have to admit the letter at the end was heartwarming!

Overall Froelich's ladder was a strong book, albeit somewhat fluffy. The situations the characters find themselves in are weird and enjoyable. Check it out if you want something quick and entertaining to read.

Thank you, Forest Avenue, for providing me with a copy of this book for review!

Angie says

A charming fable, much sweeter and less crazy than I expected from the blurb and other reviews. It makes no sense, of course, and the narrator's voice is like that of a children's story, but this is no children's story. The array of characters is unexpected, and I found myself rooting for them (the good guys). It's a story of alienation and connection, of stubborn silence and sudden realizations. It's quite beautiful in a homespun kind of way.

I got a free copy to review from Net Galley.

to'c says

A fun little tale of the early days of the Oregon wilderness. Who says it couldn't have happened exactly like this?

Rachel says

This was super weird. The guy lives for 20 year up a possibly kilometer long ladder and possibly gets taken away by a hungry cloud, all while his brother and then nephew holds the ladder because of a generations long fight.

Also some other folks get involved. I'm not sure what I think about this yet. Definitely strange, possibly I'd want a bit more about the other folks, but I'm not sure.

Susan DeFreitas says

Can a tall tale achieve real literary depth? Duclos-Yourdon proves that it can, and of all the marvels of this book, this is perhaps the most impressive of all: he makes it look easy.
