

A WISHING SHELF BOOK REVIEW

3rd August 2020

TITLE: Emeline, The Journey

AUTHOR: Kathy J. Perry

Star Rating: 5

CATCHY QUOTE

'A gripping plot populated with memorable, larger-than-life characters. Highly recommended for 12-16 year olds.' The Wishing Shelf

REVIEW

Writing successful historical novels for teenagers can be very difficult. Overwhelm the young reader with too much 'history' can kill the story for them. It's all in the balance. A strong plot, interesting characters to follow and root for; the historical element almost needs to be secondary. Thankfully, Kathy J. Perry, the author of Emeline, seems to understand this. She's written a very accessible historical adventure story in which, yes, the historical element is important, but it's the twisting, unpredictable plot and the mesmerizing characters which are very much center stage.

Emeline is set in 1890 and follows a thirteen year old girl (Emeline) as she travels across country to Boston. It is very much an adventure story with the hero encountering many hazards and unsavory characters along the way. It is also inspiring, thought-provoking in parts and, above all, wonderfully gripping.

Written in a very literary way, the writing style reflects the time of the story. It is very accessible with plenty of descriptive prose which is well-written and imaginative. In fact, the author is adept at many aspects of writing, from character development to plot development, from helping the reader envisage the historical setting, to helping the reader understand the problems of the day (of which there were many). For me, the writing style was probably the strongest part of the book.

There is a lot of self-discovery going on in this story, particularly for Emeline. It's insightful and very much helps the reader to not only understand the character, but also start to care about what happens to her. The author also understands how important 'speech' is to not only develop the characters, but also the plot.

So, would I recommend this book? Totally. In that case, who's it for? This is very much a YA novel in terms of subject matter and writing style. I would happily recommend it to any 12 - 16 year old who enjoys fast-paced adventure, well-constructed characters and lots of suspense. And, of course, anybody interested in late 1800s America will find it a fascinating read.

Enjoy!

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