



Of Giants and Ice

Shelby Bach , Cory Loftis (Illustrations)

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Rory Landon has spent her whole life being known as the daughter of a famous movie star mom and director dad. So when she begins a new after-school program and no one knows who her family is, Rory realizes something is different. After she ends up fighting a fire-breathing dragon on her first day, she realizes the situation is more unusual than she could have imagined. It turns out the only fame that matters at Ever After School is the kind of fame earned from stories Rory thought were fictional. But as Rory soon learns, fairy tales are very real—and she is destined to star in one of her own.

This first installment of The Ever Afters series reimagines classic fairy tale characters in a modern context, merging familiar fantasy with the everyday realities of middle-grade existence.

Of Giants and Ice Details

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From Reader Review Of Giants and Ice for online ebook

Amanda Thompson says

Original BookTube review [HERE](#)

Oh my gumdrops, it's awesome! This is a middle grade fantasy and, you know what, I've got to be honest with you guys. Middle grade fantasy is my favorite genre. It's fun, it's quirky, it's innocent, it's full of magic, and still manages to retain that beautiful wonder of childhood. I don't know about you, but that's a feeling I want to hold onto for a long time.

The reason I picked this book up was the cover. I know we're not supposed to judge books by their covers, but look at this thing! It's an explosion of beautiful artwork –there's even a dragon– and I couldn't help myself.

Re-told fairy tales are running wild in books and film today –which I absolutely love– so there's a lot of competition in this genre. There's the Sisters Grimm series by Michael Buckley, The Hero's Guide series by Christopher Healy, and so many more. But Bach has become my hero in the retold fairy tale department because she has not only employed the beloved classics, like Snow White and Rapunzal, but also incorporated several lesser-known fairy tales and actual fairy 'mythology' into her world. This is an especially great treat to any of us who have read the original tales or, say, studied up on fairy tale mythology for a book or something. Because of this, I feel that Bach has managed to develop a new niche to dominate. The Ever Afters is a deliciously unpredictable take of a brilliant concept. I finished this book in two days, which I haven't done in a while.

It was a relief to note that the three predominant characters, and not just the protagonist, experience character development in this book. About halfway through I was getting a little impatient for some development, but the fact that it did grow more slowly and through specific experiences was realistic.

I loved that this book used the fantasy adventure aspects to help the characters grow, not only as adventurers, but as kids dealing with normal issues of growing up and family hardships.

The writing is smooth and easy to read, the main character has attitude, but in a fun voice, and Ms. Bach certainly knows how to capture your imagination. I was hanging on her every word. The story itself has a high adventure feel that could appeal to older readers, even though it is a middle grade novel, and her hidden fairy civilization a nice sophistication to and a darker tone appropriate for the original stories.

Of Giants and Ice gets 5 stars, and anyone who loves fairy tales or fantasy adventure needs to read this book, so spread the word, and spread it fast!

Maria says

I initially wanted to give this book a four-star rating but I find, on reflection, that there are some things that are really well done in this new series. I also appreciate that my 11 year-old son, who read this book with me, was engaged throughout. He loved the humor, the plot twists, and the intelligence of the (female) protagonist. There was lots of action, swordplay, snappy dialogue, and pranks to keep him engaged!

The book takes a "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" approach to fairy tales: Fairy tales are not static, they repeat themselves every so often, and the Ever After School was established so that Characters (children with the potential to take the lead in a fairy tale) can be identified and trained for whichever story they will be called to play a role in. The school also ensures that fatalities are kept to an absolute minimum. There are still major injuries, and the students understand that undertaking a quest is a serious matter with risks, but the school prepares them as best as possible for whatever they might have to face.

Aurora "Rory" Langdon is the daughter of divorced Hollywood heavyweights: Mom is an actress, dad is a director, they both have Oscars, and our heroine has no identity of her own between them. Although some readers have commented on how repetitive her complaints were about this condition, pre-teens and teens all face the struggle to create an identity separate from their parents, and this is a major theme for this age group. The Langdon's divorce is also an oft-mentioned topic throughout the story and, as with the identity question, it didn't bother me that it came up a lot. Our heroine is only 11, and this is a really big deal in her world. It doesn't help that her mother is coping with the divorce by trying to outrun her emotions; she moves Rory to whatever new location she happens to be working, and Rory is left without much to ground her during a time of tremendous upheaval in her life. When Rory is identified as a candidate for the Ever After School (EAS) she is also presented with an opportunity to create a space of her own, no longer at the mercy of her parents' infighting, their fame, and their sometimes callous decisions.

Through Rory's exploration of this fantastic new world the story also delivers some large themes for pre-teens to sink their teeth into: The importance of courage in the face of adversity; the willingness to put the needs of others before oneself; and the effect of choices.

Although the narrative is not overly complex, this is also the first book in what is intended to be a series. The characters are sixth graders, and I expect that as the series progresses and the characters age, so will the complexity of the story. I would rate this book for ages 9+, and an excellent choice for classroom libraries.

Savannah says

One of the best books I've ever read.

Abby ~Sign Please~ says

claps Bravo! Simply wonderful! This was a book that got me out of a reading slump! Even though it took me a while to finish, I still loved it! Need the next book now!

Hitarthi Pandya says

obviously the rating didnt change...i still love this book soo much i want to buy the entire series
reading count 7 times (pre goodreads days)

if you love harry potter....READ THIS you wont regret it

Jamie says

My daughter loved these books and said I had to read them, so I did, and I love them too. They are a fun twist on fairy tales for our day. Did you magic still exists and you could be a character in your own fairy tale? With famous fairy tales and characters like Rapunzel, Sleeping Beauty, Jack and the Bean stalk, the big Bad Wolf and so much more, if you like fairy tales you will like this book.

Michelle says

My Review:

The idea of this book was something that grabbed my attention right away besides the awesome cover. I loved the idea of Modern Fairytales and I couldn't wait to read this. Months passed and I never picked it up but when my 2016HW challenge came around I figured I need this book on that list. Of course it was the first book I read for it. I wasn't disappointed but I will say that this book is an intro book to the characters, the world build and the up and coming return of evil. So for me it was a tad bit slow and some of the characters got on my nerves, at least in the beginning. The book is a great build of characters and the MC Rory Landon really does a lot of growing in this book, from a guilty (almost always), shy girl to a confident butt kicker. Rory has famous parents so every time she starts a new school (because her mom wants to move a lot and her parents are divorced) she always gets the attention about being the girl with the famous parents. When she gets invited to Ever After School she realizes no one knows her parents and soon she starts to get the attention she always wanted on her and not her parents.

I loved the mix of characters and how each character in the story (the kids) will start their own tale based on tales we all know and love. Each kids must complete their tale to have their story written in the books. If you fail your tale and some have, you get your name on a wall. You don't want your name on the wall. Rory is a special girl but doesn't realize how special she really is. With the help of her new friend Lena and Chase they go on an epic tail to complete a story and find out that the Evil Snow Queen might be returning. This is what I loved most about this story, the evil villain wasn't one that was used a lot in stories and for some reason I am always drawn to the Snow Queen however I was never a fan of that fairytale. Something about how evil she is just seems to never be done the way it should be in remade stories. This one I liked and looking forward to finding out what happens in the next book.

Even with the slow start and the characters getting on my nerves in the beginning, once the action started I was pretty much all in and couldn't wait to find out what Rory's destiny is. I loved how this story was done and I loved the twist on the fairytales. I thought that was very well done. I am looking forward to reading the next one, just hope it doesn't take me as long to get to it as this one did. I totally recommend to kids and adult, as long as you can get passed the characters in the beginning however kids would really enjoy this and probably wouldn't mind that part. This really was a great story. Glad I finally got the chance to read it!

Thank you so much for stopping by to check out my review

Hope you have a great day and Happy Reading!

This review was originally posted on Because reading is better than real life

Cheryl says

Maybe I've read too many MG contemporary fairy tales about kids at a magic school, but in my opinion this is too much of the same. There are some interesting attempts at originality and at thoughtfulness, but it goes on far too long with not much happening, not much getting to know the characters beyond their iconographic roles, and an ending that is almost a cliffhanger. And yet, I'm done. I don't really want to know ppl better or know what happens next.

I did get a recommendation to find out what the tale "The Garden of Paradise" is....

Ms. Yingling says

Amusing, I just don't have any students asking for fantasy books involving fairy tale characters, but have a lot of books on that topic!

Sand-Witch says

THIS BOOK IS SO GOOD I LOVE IT SO MUCH.

Annie M says

This tale is about Ever After School's newest arrival, Rory Landon. Rory may not know it, but she is destined to save the world. Throughout the book Rory gains new and unexpected friendship, and several new skills. There is tons of character development, one thing out of many that makes this such a great book. Because of the wonderful descriptions and detail the world seems to pop out of the pages and surround you. You'll feel the same emotions as the characters and live their story through their eyes. In these books, a full page does not exist.

The Ever Afters is one of my top 5 favourite books in the whole world, which trust me, is saying a lot! I've read each book in the series 71 times except for Of Sorcery And Snow. Which I've read 76 times. Even though I've read it so many times, each time it just gets better and better! I can't wait for of enemies and endings!

Melodee says

Once again I was on the prowl for a book my reading-reluctant daughter could enjoy. I think this one is a winner. It's a nice adventure tale with challenges and heroics and friendships. The only item I'm nit-picking

over is the fact that the main character chooses to deliberately lie to her mom about what her school really is, when the school has no rules about keeping it secret. I really don't like books teaching my children that it is ok to lie to their parents. But I'll wait until the next book, perhaps there will be a consequence to her lack of truthfulness. It wasn't such a big plot point that I've already given the book to said daughter, and so far she is enjoying it. Besides, if there's a point I don't agree with, I can still let her read it, and we can discuss it together. Teaching opportunities!

Heidi-Marie says

It took a while for me to get in to this book. There was just SO much exposition at the beginning and I just wanted the book to get to its part where the main characters go on a Tale. Once we were there it was much more entertaining. I think if the other books can get right to the fun, interesting parts of where the story arc is going, I will enjoy the others in the series. Definitely want to try, but we'll see how time allows for me to get to them.

Kira says

Maybe I'm just a sucker for fairy tale adventure stories (no matter what age they're written for) but I really enjoyed this book. The "secret school/camp for kids with special powers/heritage" isn't exactly a new idea, but this was well done. I'll be interested to see how the series progresses.

Brenda says

The first part of Giants and Ice is getting to know Rory and her family and an introduction to the Ever After School (EAS). Rory is in the sixth grade, her parents are divorced and both her parents are movie stars. Being from famous parents, she has always felt like she never really had true friends plus it's hard to get to know anyone when your moving from place to place all the time. The Ever After School (EAS) is an after school program designed to assist the students with their "tales." An interesting concept where everyone is a character in a fairy tale and they are waiting for their tale to begin. This part of the story kinda got bogged down for me. Rory seems to worry a lot, worries about making friends, having her own tale, will she be able to complete it and there is quite a bit of bickering between her and Chase. There's one big action scene at the beginning and even some mysterious dreams that Rory doesn't seem to understand but more alluding to what is to come.

The second part of the story is where things get imaginative and creative, Rory's friend Lena is given a tale. Not just any tale, but Jack and the Beanstalk and she chooses Rory and Chase to be her companions. This is where all the action happens and Rory begins to grow as a character. There are some great scenes between Rory and Chase and I hope they will continue to be prominent in the second book in the series. I really like the balance of Rory who has a strong desire to do well, and Chase who can be infuriating, with the brainy Lena who is very smart but also makes mistakes as well. Most of all, I really enjoyed the twists with the fairy tale characters, the giants were certainly different then what I recall but quite amusing.

Review copy provided by authors agent and won as a giveaway from literaryrambles.com. A big thank you to both.
