



Heart on a String

Susan Soares

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What happens when running from your past, you crash straight into your future?

Running is the only way Marissa knows how to escape. With each beat of her sneakers on the pavement, Marissa runs from the pain of the death of her mother. Runs from the abandonment of her older brother. Runs from the look of pity in people's eyes. Marissa is always running.

By chance, Marissa is sidetracked by Brandon, who has suffered the loss of a younger brother. But unlike Marissa, he chooses to face his grief head-on. As their relationship deepens, Marissa realizes the value of letting someone in and not letting her grief destroy her. But when her denial-filled past catches up with her, Marissa is forced to tell Brandon her darkest secrets, or lose him forever. Can she realize the value of letting someone in before it's too late? Could Brandon be the one to stop her in her tracks?

What's the only thing scarier than running from your life? Facing it.

Heart on a String Details

Date : Published June 6th 2014 by Astrea Press (first published June 2nd 2014)

ISBN :

Author : Susan Soares

Format : Paperback 247 pages

Genre :



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From Reader Review Heart on a String for online ebook

Dana says

I am rating this book on behalf of my daughter, who rarely reads anything that isn't horse related. One of her praises for this book was that she felt it was fairly clean, especially compared to what's offered to high school students these days. As a mother, I applaud authors who are willing to write things that I can recommend to my kids.

InD'tale Magazine says

Marissa and Brandon are complex characters. They each have demons they're running from, and traumas they have to struggle through.

Read full review in the 2015 March issue of InD'tale Magazine.

Pete Tarsi says

In the opening chapter, Marissa is running. Though she's no longer part of her school track team, she still spends time running. Perhaps for good exercise or because she simply enjoys it, she's not running to anywhere in particular. Metaphorically, she's running away from the combined grief and pain of her mother dying from breast cancer and her brother leaving home unable to deal with it.

She dreads running past the cemetery. Holding her breath while she passes, she sees a family standing at a gravestone. A small boy is holding a heart-shaped balloon, and Marissa is instantly reminded of a similar balloon she brought to her mother's grave and then let go to bring a letter to her. On her return run past the cemetery, she sees that the family has left, but the balloon is now caught in the branches of a tree.

She climbs the tree with the intent of freeing the balloon so the boy's letter can float upward, but on her way down and out of the cemetery away from the tree, the balloon has deflated. A lesser person would probably have tossed the envelope aside because the family would never know, but because of Marissa's feelings about her own loss, she wants to do what's right. With only the name on the gravestone to go by, and at the encouragement and assistance of her best friend Zoe, Marissa seeks out the family.

That's when she meets Brandon. The boy with the balloon is Brandon's youngest brother, and they were mourning the death of their middle brother who was killed when a car hit him on his dirt bike. She becomes interested in Brandon, and not just because he's kind and attractive, but because he represents something that she's missing: the ability to deal openly with grief.

They start a relationship, but Marissa keeps him at a distance. She doesn't want to let him inside, not out of any malicious intent, but because she's afraid. But she's also afraid that she'll lose him completely if she keeps pushing him out of her life.

I won't reveal any spoilers, but the ending contains an act of selflessness and support that's completely

believable for the character. Also, I opened this review with a mention of the symbolism of Marissa running alone and away from something at the start of the story. Keep that in mind when she's running for something at the end.

This story is a tearjerker with hope. Everyone experiences pain, sadness, and grief, and everyone deserves a strong support system. I would put this in the same genre of books as John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* but obviously with a reverse slant since *Heart on a String* deals with how those left living deal with death instead of how those that are dying deal with their lives. Just as I would give *Fault* a high star rating, I give *Heart on a String* 4.5 out of 5 stars.

Victoria says

To say this was an excellent book would be an understatement. I expected no less of Susan Soares, who's first book I read in less than two days. Writing of this caliber is to be shelved among the greats of YA fiction because of the well-written characters who are unexpectedly witty, and believably human. These characters demonstrate very "real" human traits (debilitating sadness, fear, courage, love...) that, more often than not, are over-looked in the YA genre because they are considered too heavy for young adults and also in order to create a "perfect" teen character that readers look up to rather than relate to. The leading lady in *Heart on a String* is very emotionally-guarded and grieves very privately. She is somewhat ashamed of her tragedy, as is her moody older brother, who abandons home in hopes of leaving behind the sadness surrounding his family. As stated before, I would certainly place this book among the best of the best YA novels I've read, and recommend it to anyone looking for an emotionally-realistic, laugh-inducing, nod-your-head-in-agreement book that has you staying up late to finish it.
