

Forbidden

Eve Bunting

Reviewed by: Chi Mai, 16

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Set in 1807 Scotland, *Forbidden* combines mystery, suspense, and a dash of the paranormal to tell the story of sixteen-year-old Josie Ferguson and her stay at a small town called Brindle. After her parents die from influenza, Josie journeys from Edinburgh to Brindle, where she will live with her uncle Caleb, a fisherman, and aunt Minnie. Josie's first day at Brindle ends poorly, what with Caleb and Minnie's lukewarm reception and her getting bitten by Minnie's dog, Lamb. The next day, Josie ventures out to the nearby beach and cleans her wound in the water. There, she meets a young man named Eli Stuart, who would take her to his grandmother to treat her wound. Later, Josie rides to the town village to purchase some clothing. While at the shop Jackdaws, she learns that there's more to Eli and Brindle than meets the eye. That night, Caleb and Minnie announce that they have fishing business to attend to with their associates. They order Josie to stay in her room, but knowing that they were lying, Josie sneaks out through her window and heads to the beach. The scene that greets Josie reveals a shocking truth about Brindle and throws her into a new reality that challenges everything she'd once known.

Forbidden was a short novel, both in terms of page number and time frame (Josie's stay at Brindle spans across all of two days). Because of this, some aspects of the story just didn't work for me. For instance, the relationship between Eli and Josie didn't seem realistic. They only knew each other for two days and spent a handful of moments together during that time, yet near the end, Josie was saying that she hated and loved him and Eli called her his love. There was virtually no build-up for the romance, so it felt a little bit unnecessary. Additionally, there wasn't much character development. Everyone was two-dimensional and unchanging.

The pacing and unfolding of events, however, wasn't affected by the short length that much. Everything happened pretty rapidly, but I wasn't bothered by it. The resolution, in particular, was great. I didn't expect it at all, and it fit well with the rest of the story. I wished there would've been a little more details in the epilogue. Regardless, I still liked what the author included; it made me hopeful about Josie's future. Anyone between 12 and 14 would be the most appropriate audience for *Forbidden*. Among that age group, this book would best fit those who enjoy a quick, captivating read.

Recommended Titles

Bridles Lane by Johanna Craven

The Pirate Captain's Daughter by Eve Bunting

The Presence by Eve Bunting

