

The Luck Uglies Trilogy

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Luck Uglies. Say this name to any villager in the vast village of Village Drowning and you might get a shoe in the face, or worse. This notorious society finds its future and fate in an unlikely village girl named Rye O'Chanter, who lives in a cottage in Mud Puddle Street. She, along with her best friends Quinn and Folly, explore the secrets of the Luck Uglies in big adventures spanning a trilogy of novels full of vast places to explore, new friends along the way, unlikely allies and heroes, and fierce antagonists. Rye must learn the true ways of the Luck Uglies along with her mysterious father Harmless to save her village from threats like the Bog Noblins, the Earl, and worse. Throughout the trilogy, Rye learns the ways of the Luck Uglies and the hard truth: sometimes it takes villainous deeds to be a hero.

This review is a unique one, as this time I am reviewing a whole entire trilogy of novels. This will be a very long review, so heads up on that, as I will make paragraphs explaining each book and then the trilogy. Let us start!

Book 1: The Luck Uglies

This book is very fun, and a new, unique book I have not seen in a while when reading. This book is a classic loveable fantasy book that I have not read in a long time. This book seemed like a breath of fresh air for fantasy, which is great! There are some glaring problems with this book, but lets just start with the positives, first. The characters are each unique and likeable in their own ways, and the character writing is the strong part of the book. You have Rye, the hot-headed, stubborn, and strong heroine of the franchise, as she lives in a cottage with her equally strong but loving and caring mom Abby. She also has her (very special) cat Shady and her cute little sister Lottie. She is best friends with the active, helpful, and curious Folly, a girl who works and lives in a large vast tavern and is the only girl in a family full of brothers. Finally, she is best friends with Quinn, a smart, caring, and witty person who works with a blacksmith and dreams of being one. Together, they form a fantasy trio not seen since Harry Potter or Percy Jackson, with characters that have unique personalities that still work together for a common goal/cause. There is also Harmless, a mysterious, roguish character who allies with Rye and has a shrouded past (uncovered throughout the trilogy). All these characters bring a huge strength of writing and creativity to the plot of the story and make it differ from other fantasy works. The thrills of his writing skills make the story a definite page turner! However, it lacks substance and emotion throughout the story, unfortunately. The truth is, throughout the book, the story tries to make feint plays to more emotional content and tries to make its story with more emotional substance. Unfortunately, its fun attitude and thrills overshadow its emotion, and the book realizes this too, which it then uses by abandoning the emotional plotline and just acting like it never happened. For example, the book reveals that Harmless is the dad of a character. However, this twist does not land properly and leaves a bad taste in your mouth. This book rushes through any emotion and substance it has that it ruins the atmosphere sometimes, and when it does have "emotional" moments at least, it skips through them suddenly. It, unfortunately, rushes too fast that its pacing is quite off in these moments, and that kind of makes it a bit weird for development (not saying the characters are not developed, they are quite developed throughout the story, it is just that this book should not bite off more than it can chew at some spots). Hopefully, the next one fixes this mistake!

Book 2: The Luck Uglies 2: The Fork-Tongue Charmers

This sequel to the Luck Uglies sees Rye pay the price for her actions as she is sentenced to exile to a mysterious isle named the "Isle of Pest". Rye along with her friends and family are forced to live there, and they happily accept, wanting to stay away from Mud Puddle Lane and start a brand-new life. However, their life they have left behind in their Mud Puddle Home comes back for them, and Isle of Pest might be more connected to the Luck Uglies than they thought... This book was just as thrilling as the first one, but where the first is a thrilling fantasy novel, this one would be a fantasy mystery, as there are countless objectives the gang needs to solve, with twists and turns across the corners of the isle, alongside new characters that join along side returning characters, including the OG Rye, Quinn, and Folly. There is also a new threat, with a mysterious shadow group called The Fork-Tongue Charmers, a force broken away from the Luck Uglies, as a group in it did not agree with the Luck Uglies' motives. This book is just as thrilling as the first one. It also has many new twists and turns that set up the climactic finale, where the Luck Uglies fight the Fork-Tongues. The villain is also a great person too, and a great refresher from the past villain of the first book. This time, it is an unassuming man who reveals himself to be a Fork-Tongue Charmer! The villain is developed way better than the other villain of the last book, and you can feel for him and his brooding, sad past. Though, this book has the same problems as the last book. It must be because of the crazy quick pacing of the book that these books lose their substance and emotion across the story, and that they have no time to calm down for a moment. That is good and all, but seriously hurts development, like for example, the new characters in the story were poorly developed and were forgotten about at the end, and the book tries to play at emotion once again but fails. It should really stop trying to do that if it does not have the proper starting points for emotion. Hopefully, the 3rd book learns!

Book 3: The Luck Uglies 3: Rise of the Ragged Clover

This final book in the series is very climatic and sees the O'Chanters returning to Village Drowning and face the threat of a Bog Noblin invasion! The Earl has been ousted, but in his place took the Fork-Tongue Charmers, who mysteriously allied with the Bog Noblin tribes to invade Village Drowning! Rye must work together with her friends and family and the Luck Uglies, and even the Earl, to save the village. However, when all else fails, she may have to destroy the very place she is protecting... This book is the best because its very action packed and thrilling. This one would be known as an action fantasy rather than the others. The climax is very developed and does not feel out of place like the other books, showing that Paul learned his lesson from the other books. The final battle tests all the characters' emotions and decisions, and how conflicts are not all black and white. The Luck Uglies in this story are as heroic as always, but their actions bring up good points about true heroism, and if they are really all they are cut out to be. Rye falls victim to this too, as she is forced to make a horrific decision to save Village Drowning, by destroying it. The development up to that point feels emotional and substance filled, and the emotional ending sticks right. It became clear that Paul learned his lesson from the other books and properly refined the pacing of the books. Harmless' sacrifices and his journey to be there for his family was a highlight, and the major twist ending where Rye weighs in her decision on being the chief of the Luck Uglies was also a highlight too, as it really reflects her character. The ragged clover storyline was a bit off, however, as it was overshadowed by the other climactic events and did not have time to properly fit in the storyline as if it did it would cause pacing issues across the story. I kind of wish they did not introduce that storyline at all, but it does have some depth for Rye, I guess. Quinn and Folly are also very helpful, but this story is definitely about Rye and Harmless and the Fork-Tongue Charmers ONLY.

All in all, these books were awesome and a fantasy dream. However, the ploys for more emotional content are very off, to the point that Paul should not have put that in there. The pacing is off in the first book, but later on, he learns and fixes these issues. These books are definitely worth a read! Just could have nailed it on some development issues, though. I recommend these books for people ages 10 and up, due to some complex themes that need discussion with kids. These books have fantasy violence, nothing too inappropriate, however, and fantasy language (“Pigshanks!”).

Recommended Titles:

Harry Potter Series by J.K. Rowling

Percy Jackson by Rick Riordan

Eragon by Christopher Paolini