

Evie of the Deepthorn

André Babin

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Fantasy is an outlet for grief, fear, and transformation in the pop culture-inflected novel *Evie of the Deepthorn* from André Babin. A single story becomes the emotional outlet for three very different people who are drawn together in Durham, a small town outside of Toronto.

Kent, Sarah, and Reza are bound by a single story: *Evie of the Deepthorn*, which is a poem, a fantasy novel, and a cult classic film. Kent struggles with his brother's death; Sarah copes with the ways that her dysfunctional childhood impacts her as an adult; and Reza embarks on a harrowing pilgrimage. Symbols and characters from the Evie mythology manifest for Kent, Sarah, and Reza in different ways, offering courage and insight and binding the three together.

At a higher level, the novel explores how stories enable survival. The book's essential plot lines are realistic, but the shared, prevalent themes from *Evie*, and the deeper longing that each person feels to be seen and known, elevate the characters' day-to-day struggles, making them seem heroic. The book's villain is not a person, but Durham itself, a backwater where dreams go to die, which a character describes as "functionally as small as the coffee cups we drank out of."

The text focuses on moments and scenes that are life-sized in contrast to the fantasy of *Evie of the Deepthorn*. The text builds in a slow but steady way, layering backstories with detailed descriptions of homes, objects, landscapes, and people. The final act is the book's most incisive, bringing Kent, Sarah, and Reza together with finesse.

Evie of the Deepthorn finds magic in the details of everyday life and creates meaningful connections that vanish as fast as they are drawn.

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