ForeWord Reviews

GENERAL

Her Immortal Soul
Julien Longo
Lost Coast Press
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This books goes beyond the boundaries of its genre and creates a genre unto itself. The author blends spiritual awakening with fantasy and historical fiction, and in doing so creates something difficult to categorize.

Justine, a young girl of wealthy parents, does not want to engage in the conformity of other girls her age. She is a tomboy who adores her older brother and prefers to play his games than act like a lady. Justine's world begins to fall apart when her brother goes off to fight a war and dies in battle. A Catholic priest, convinced that her brother wanted him to build a church on the family's land, comes and changes the life of Justine and her mother. The priest accuses Justine's mother of being a witch; when her mother is tried and killed, Justine must become the ward and mistress for a powerful prince. But this is only where the novel begins.

The story is broken into three parts. Part One is set in medieval Europe. The second part breaks from the historical novel genre, and sets itself apart as a fantasy that travels through different periods of history. A prince explains to Justine that she has the power to "change the way you look to people. You may appear old or young as you wish, simply by projecting the image you desire like a blanket around yourself." From this point on, Justine begins a series of adventures with the prince, traversing different historical eras. Part Three is a New-Age novel about finding new life through spiritual resurrection; the narrator explains, at times poetically, who the prince really is, and how he has changed her life. What makes each of these parts unique is the way the prose is crafted. The style of writing varies so much that the first chapter almost seems to belong to a completely different novel than the final chapter.

Longo is a new novelist, but her prose is quite poetic. She holds an MA in Humanities and Leadership with an emphasis in Creative Spirituality, which contributes to the spiritual force in the work. A master of the art of storytelling, she pulls readers into the story and keeps them reading by making them curious about where the novel is going to take them.

The title implies that this is a religious novel; it is not, at least in any traditional sense. The book, while promoting spiritualism, attacks the church and its believers by portraying them

as heartless and greedy. There are also sex scenes that, while not graphic, might offend some readers.

Readers who enjoy spirituality without the boundaries of religion will enjoy this book. It eloquently shows how spiritual awakening is an ageless journey that goes beyond time and space, and creates a reality that can best be understood by those who have been through similar journeys.

Scott La Counte