ForeWord Reviews

JUVENILE FICTION

**My Own Magic**
Kim Votry
Crow Press
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*My Own Magic* explores a fictional classroom's experience of National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) through the voice of one of its female students, Morgan. Salem Elementary School invites a famous author, Ms. Prosaic, to assist the children as they write their first novel and help them understand the concepts of plot, protagonist, antagonist, conflict, and resolution. But as time goes on, Morgan is certain that Ms. Prosaic is a witch. She conspires with other children who live nearby to protect themselves from their instructor's spells and enchantment, and tries to resist the attraction she feels towards Ms. Prosaic's ideas and suggestions.

Morgan is a compelling protagonist who speaks very frankly in the voice of a twelve-year-old girl. Through her voice we see her wrestle with her own internal conflict as she tries to plan her novel: "If I was the protagonist, and I wanted to plan a novel, but I was my own worst enemy, then what role did Ms. Prosaic play? Holy cow. Maybe she was my supporting character. This was not going the way I expected," she confesses.

Over the course of the novel Morgan begins reading in earnest and thinking about her novel with excitement and enthusiasm. She gets to know her instructor and by the end of the book reaches the conclusion that "books carry a certain kind of magic. Ms Prosaic … certainly helped me find my own magic, and that's a spell I'm happy to be under."

Author Kim Votry keeps *My Own Magic* easy to understand and consistently in the voice of pre-teens throughout the book. By dividing it into many chapters and using illustrations to further her point, she has created a fun, quick read for nine- through twelve-year-old readers who will enjoy the light banter exchanged between the characters, the conflict in their relationship with their teachers, and their thoughts on homework and novel writing. Particularly for those students who are or will be undertaking their own novels during NaNoWriMo, an annual November event, this book will be an easy-to-identify-with source of inspiration and encouragement.

Votry, a Seattle author who previously published books for babies and toddlers, is a writing coach to young writers and a firm believer in the magic of writing. She is donating a

portion of proceeds earned by *My Own Magic* to The Office of Letters and Light, the nonprofit organization behind NaNoWriMo.

*Lauren Kramer*