

Principium: The Stone Prophecy Series

Alexandra Lamarre

iUniverse (Apr 27, 2014)

Softcover \$13.95 (180pp)

978-1-4759-9944-0

A punchy sense of humor propels this young adult adventure through a perilous fantasy realm peopled with witches and vampire-demon hybrids.

Alexandra Lamarre reveals a young heroine's struggle to find her true identity in *Principium*, the first book in the Stone Prophecy Series. This somewhat typical tale of persecution and New Age witchcraft crosses into the monster-creature zone.

Fourteen-year-old Kiarra Johnson is gifted. Her magical abilities will come to full fruition as she matures, but she must keep her powers hidden from mortal society. Lurking on the horizon is a species with fangs and demonic facial features, a frightening enemy whose members are intent on decimating anyone in their path. Kiarra and her close friend Kasy have entered the Hollow Institute for Gifted Young Women to learn their trade. The goal is to acquire the skills necessary to save the world from all who would do it wrong.

Infused with descriptions of psychic phenomena, prophetic dreams, and subliminal persuasion, this intriguing novel fortifies the power of every woman, promoting her to goddess status—all in fun, of course. Though written presumably for entertainment only, symbolic imagery and situational statements abound in this playful romp. For example: "The first thing she noticed was the black leather skirt with symbols etched along the lining. She did not understand what they were, but she knew it represented the Stone values." After putting on a cloak, a similar manifestation occurs. "The red seemed to shimmer, and suddenly symbols she had not noticed flared all along the hood's edge, the sleeves and the bottom of the cloak. Each symbol lit a blood red before turning white, and Kiarra closed her eyes from the brightness."

Kiarra and Kasy form a partnership, utilizing their inherent abilities while developing new expertise at the institute. Demonstrative details grace these adolescents—especially Kiarra—with ethereal charm that surpasses mundane description by integrating personality details with action sequences. Character development explores everything from the tragic loss of Kiarra's mother to choices made under tremendous stress. Understandably precocious, this "good" witch makes decisions like a seasoned corporate executive under pressure. A vampire-demon and its lethal tactics would test the level of courage in anyone.

Tight editing and professional packaging give this earnest fiction debut a decided edge over less meticulously groomed competition in the genre. By filling the book with colorful, evocative, and theatrical descriptive passages, Lamarre establishes a vivid setting and a supercharged mood: "Swirls of light filtered down from the night sky and took shape of women from different times. Some were as young as Kiarra, whereas others had an aged look that matched the wisdom in their eyes. All were pale, and their ghostly spirits made the clearing and the temple glow with a pale white light along with the fiery red from the flames."

In the mystical village of Kiamika, a hidden society awaits the inevitable attack on its extraordinary citizens, people with paranormal tools strong enough to change the earth. Kiarra and Kasy will set out as a team to conquer their

enemies in sequels unknown. Fans of young adult fantasy will welcome this creative spin on a familiar formula.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (July 3, 2014)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.