



Young Adult Fiction

The Grundilini: From the Chronicles of Audelae

Benjamin R. Doolittle

Carrie Kabak, illustrator

New Canaan Publishing

978-1-889658-24-7

(April 30, 2002)

“Slaves! Your majesty! Slaves!” he pleaded. “With your permission, I welcome the privilege to attack the village and supply slaves for your mines.” When a banished knight steals the treasure of a humble village to gain favor in the wicked Grundilini stronghold, the balance of good and evil tumbles into a spiral of grave uncertainty.

Within a divided community barely thriving in the desert of Gore, thirteen-year-old Audelae arms herself with a treasured flower and resolves to lead her people to freedom with mighty giants on their heels. As the innocents flee the wrath of the impending force, a raging flood miraculously devours and destroys all life in its wake. Audelae gives credit for the successful exodus to the beautiful flower that led the way. “Our flower’s nectar satisfies every hunger and thirst, and gives life where there is death, hope where there is trouble.” So honored is this botanical glory in its etched, earthenware pot that the people place it in the center of their new meadow village as a point of focus and remembrance.

After a mysterious visit from the cunning Riker, the beloved flower disappears without a trace. Lacking its presence, the villagers fear the return of the perilous prejudices of the past. In despair, Audelae assembles a team of trusted companions to reclaim their righteous symbol of hope. As the Grundilini capture slaves for the mining of their Threndor gems (explosive stones traded as weapons of war), the intensity of Audelae’s journey increases.

The author, previously a pediatric physician at Yale-New Haven Hospital and a medical missionary in India, brandishes the power of mythic structure with the ease of an accomplished storyteller, every element brilliantly illustrated. His heroine skillfully chooses her comrades for their hidden talents, crosses into a dark and ominous forest, seeks priceless wisdom and gifts of strength, and courageously storms the abominable fortress where evil reigns. In the later chapters, a theme involving the heroine’s inner conflict daringly emerges into the forefront;

however, by this time the reader is prepared to face it. Every subtle and explosive plot twist reverberates with the spontaneity of choice and the heartfelt reality of bitter consequence, a valuable ingredient for today's teen market.