ForeWord Reviews

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

The Wild Women of Lake Anna
Linda Salisbury
Tabby House
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This stimulating mystery contains a novel historical twist that plays into the main characters dramatic need for acceptance as she draws upon her inner strength in some unexpected ways. Fifth-grader Bailey Fish is transplanted from her Florida home to her grandmothers care in the far-away state of Virginia while her mother surfs the world in search of herself. Bailey must wade through the aftermath of emotional abandonment and physical displacement to develop a truer perception of who she is and where she belongs. Only when she closes the door to the longing ache for home does she turn to face the challenges before her.

After the heroine discovers that her family tree is laden with adventuresome women, she opens her mind to the possibilities of life in the here and now with the careful guidance of her proactive, civic-minded grandmother. Bailey begins to understand how decisions can play a powerful role in shaping the dynamics of her future. Her metamorphosis from an existence she terms boring into a fearless, determined participant unfolds vividly, as she develops a passion for life on the edge. Armed with the courageous example of an ancestor who served as a spy in WWI, Bailey must overcome the taunts of a neighborhood bully, prove herself worthy of her grandmothers open arms, and declare her place in the world.

In keeping with the latest trend in fiction books, the author seeks to educate as well as entertain. Salisbury is the author of *Good-bye Tomato, Hello Florida* and *Read My Lips: No New Pets!*, and the co-author of two non-fiction titles for adults. In *The Wild Women of Lake Anna*, she tells a contemporary mystery story that explores a tough environmental issuechemical pollution in a Virginia communitys water sourceand at the same time, delves into the countys mining history, the workings of a nuclear power plant, and the scientific collecting of water samples. The authors careful weaving of these topics into her plot line earns her significant honors. In and of itself, the story of the communitys history and current dilemma might not be of particular interest to the young reader who only wants to share in Baileys character growth, but as Salisbury skillfully narrows the psychic distance, the heroines quest becomes a personal quest for the reader.

This well-crafted, fast-paced novel, written for ages eight through twelve, will resonate with every reader who has ever longed for acceptance or struggled for survival in the throes of fear and uncertainty. Maps, postcards, and photos, as well as an extensive bibliography, webography, and a set of questions for further discussion, serve as supplemental materials for the novels true-life setting.

Charisse Floyd