



Journey to Rainbow Island

Christie Hsiao

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***New York Times* Bestseller**

Yu-ning thinks her perfect life on Rainbow Island will never end—until a nasty dragon called the Obsidigon returns from beyond the grave. Now her beloved island is in flames, her best friend has been kidnapped, and the island's Sacred Crystals have been stolen. To make matters worse, she must venture into the dark corners of the world to uncover secrets best ignored, find a weapon thought long destroyed, and recapture seven sacred stones—without being burned to a crisp by a very angry dragon.

With the help of her master teacher, Metatron, Yu-ning embarks on a dangerous journey to overcome not only the darkness attacking her home, but also the scars of sadness that mark her own heart. And while most people just see a normal kid, Metatron—and a few other unlikely allies—pledge their lives to the dark-eyed little girl with a magic bow and a crooked grin.

Journey to Rainbow Island Details

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From Reader Review Journey to Rainbow Island for online ebook

Tasia says

This is a tough one. On one hand, it feels too... innocent, I suppose, to appeal to the older end of the YA spectrum. But, it has a timeless kind of innocence that could appeal to the right reader. And that's what it comes down to, I suppose-- you have to be open to this kind of story.

We could talk about how names seem very cliché in places, or too fantastical in others. The environments are also fantasy ideals that we've seen before, with characters that don't really strike me as unique. But, this isn't to say it's a *bad* story. Just very... easy. And easy isn't always something to ignore. Sometimes that's all a reader wants is to be entertained and assured that there will always be goodness in the world. So, when I look at all the things that I wasn't impressed by, the larger picture just tells me they don't really matter. That's not the point. This book doesn't exist to compete with other media or invite critical review.

The best way for me to describe the story is to compare it to other media: a mix of Japanese Roleplaying Games, sugary manga, and other eastern media where characters. I'm thinking of stories where characters, especially females, are so incredibly pure and wise that you can't help but feel... empowered by them? Inspired? It's a kind of goodness that people aspire to and celebrate. Yu-ning is blessed with ability, courage, and a sacred duty, which should sound very familiar to those who do delve into the worlds of J-RPG and manga/anime. So really, if you love those types of stories and that style of storytelling, you might very well like this.

The important thing to remember, too, is that this book is trying to instill you with feelings of love, kindness, and a desire to reflect those elements of light onto the world around you. It's a story that offers itself, but isn't trying to aggressively assert itself as a competitor to other books. Envision, if you will, a butterfly being offered to the sky. It's that kind of gentle being.

Also, on another note, New York Times Bestseller? I don't remember this at all, and never saw this in a bookstore before. Not entirely sure where that came from. And with only 30 reviews on Goodreads, this couldn't have gotten too much attention.

But anyhow, that's what it comes down to. If you want a lighthearted story of hope, love, and adventure, then maybe you'll like this. But again, I strongly recommend this for someone who's acquainted with and drawn to JRPG and similar media.

Elaine says

If you like a book that over describes everything and everything is rainbows and love is the best weapon than this is the book for you. I think this could be a nice story for a little kid.

Ian Wood says

This is the complete review as it appears on my blog. There may be links in the blog reviews which are not reproduced here, nor will changes and modifications to the blog review be replicated here.

I rated this novel warty!

(review contains some spoilers)

I had the weirdest feeling when I started this that this novel wasn't written for a lone reader, but for someone to read to children. I don't know if Hsaio intended that, but that's how it felt to me, which wouldn't have been so bad if the writing wasn't so flowery that it's actually hard to read (and I don't mean technically hard, either). There's far too much hyperbole, and too many redundant phrases like "obsidian black". While I think I see what she intended by that, it seemed about as meaningful to me as saying "dark black". Later, she uses the awful phrase, "jaundiced shade of pale yellow" which is so redundant as to be absurd. Hsaio does present to me as if she has some good street cred and she seems to have her head screwed on right, so I wanted to like this, but I just could not like it no matter how hard I tried.

I'm a sucker for Asians and their mythology, but I'm definitely not the intended age range for this novel (which is 8 - 12 years old), but I do have two sons within that age range, and I can assure you that they would not touch a novel like this with a ten-foot pole. And rest assured that if I had a daughter, she would not like it either because it's simply not an engaging story, nor is it intelligently written. The story should appeal to the My Little Pony crowd, but if that's too immature for you or your kids, you won't like this novel at all. I do however, have a suggestion as to how that could be fixed at the end of this review.

Much as I wanted to enjoy this, Hsaio seemed determined to irritate me with every fresh chapter. She's yet another of these shamefully ignorant writers I've encountered this year who think the upper arm muscles (biceps and triceps) come in a singular form! Indeed she refers with an authoritative tone to the upper tricep! Honestly? A simple spell-checker would have caught this gaff. I may not deserve better than this, but my sons do, as do others of their age group. I decided yesterday to give this novel a stay of execution for one more day, because life is too short, and novels too plentiful to put up with anything as sub-standard as this story insisted upon showing itself to be, but even that was a day too many, I'm sorry to say.

Yu-ning, the female protagonist, is a Darq Render recognizable by the crescent-shaped birthmark on the inside of the upper left arm, yet the brilliant magician Metatron failed to see the significance of this! He failed to protect the community from the rogue Obsidigon (evil dragon), and he's unable to cure himself, let alone others, which is why they inexplicably have a hospital in the reputedly perfect community in which Yu-ning lives. It's really too tiresome to continue to discover in how many of these fantasy stories we find the magician/wizard/witch is so useless as to be, well, useless, and so it's all on a poor kid to save everyone! But there's neither rationale nor justification to support the proposition that this kid is so special. Anyone can fire the arrows into the Obsidigon and "render" it into butterflies! This takes no special person or great skill.

The biggest problem with this story which is supposed to be about love and understanding is that in order to save everyone, Yu-ning has to render the dark! She has to be a warrior to fight and slay (not kill, mind you but slay!) the dragons. Where is the love there? That magician can't render the dragons into butterflies by using magic? And what's up with these beings of light living in dark caves? That just registered as truly odd with me, as indeed did their eating of eggs for breakfast when they supposedly love and respect animals so much that Yu-ning at one point grows angry with a hunter for killing them! What's that about taking the plank from your own eye, Yu-ning? I guess that proverb didn't travel very far in an easterly direction.

These people seem to have no problem with killing (no, that's cruel, I meant rendering....) when it suits them. The real irony of this exchange with the hunter is that without the knowledge and skill of such people, Yu-ning would never have a hunting weapon (her bow) to go after the Obsidigons to begin with! Indeed, at one point, a giant owl named Suparna, declares proudly "...in order for the light to shine...we must rend - or tear - the light from the dark." Why the violent language?

Yu-ning fixes the water wheel in the tower at the center of the Grey City (the population of which is treated in a condescending, almost racist fashion) and claims she did it with faith when she did no such thing. It was simple hydraulic engineering which fixed the lift mechanism's lack of water (for turning the wheel). Faith

had nothing to do with it - unless it was faith in her hydraulic engineering skills! Anyone with modicum of grey matter could have figured out why the wheel wasn't turning, traced the problem to the blockage, and unblocked it. And faith isn't going to save them if the ropes on the poorly-maintained lift are rotten! Simple proclamations of faith will not change Grey City, especially when those proclamations are dishonest. Yu-ning would have "rendered" the city a greater service if she had explained to them what the problem was and shown them how to fix it rather than fixing it and then essentially lying that "faith did it"! Maybe 'Faith' is Yu-ning's English name?

There are unintentional moments of hilarity: Yu-ning's arms started to tire from the power of the light? Light has no mass, so how is it tiring, exactly? If you want to enlighten children, don't keep them in the dark about light! Explain the science without vague allusions and obfuscations regarding faith and inner light - especially when you really don't understand light! This level of hilarity was somewhat unleavened with unexplained events such as Julian's claim that Yu-ning cured him? Of what? Hunger? She gave him an apple and that's it!

I expected a lot more from this novel and was sorry that such a promising premise failed to deliver on all levels but art. The illustrations were charming, and quite well done, but they were sadly let down by the writing. Perhaps this volume should have come out as a graphic novel? I rated it warty.

Lindsey Silvestrini says

While this is not the type of book that I typically read, Journey to Rainbow Island was full of magic and light and lifted my spirits every time I opened it.

Yu-ning has a beautiful spirit and while I don't envy her lone status without a family, her attitude and heart are those that many long to possess. Rainbow Island is a magical, mystical place full of light.

Hsiao's imagination is unreal and I can't even comprehend the mind one would have to possess to create such extraordinary visual art with mere words. I felt like I was on Rainbow Island right alongside Yu-ning fighting alongside her and cheering her on.

I liked that the heroine in this story was a young girl because most of these types of books are about boys. Little girls should dare to dream and live in this type of world as well. There's no rules that only boys can carry a bow and arrow! I'm going to save this book for my little girl for when she's older and can appreciate the story.

This was a great story of darkness and light and good and evil and intriguing characters and imagery that made my mind spin. Journey to Rainbow Island made me indeed feel that I had taken a journey to another world.

Amy says

I won an advanced reader copy of this book through Goodreads. It's not my normal cup of tea but I entered to win a copy with my niece in mind. Based on the intended age group and reading level for this book I was really hoping it would be something we could both read and discuss later. I have to say I am disappointed that this will not be happening.

Let me just say that the reason I gave this book 2 stars instead of 1 is for the mere fact that I DID finish

reading it... although, at times... it was painful.

According to Amazon.com, the reading level for this book is age 8-12 years. I cannot imagine an 8 year old being able to comfortably read this book. In my opinion this book is written with a dialect meant for adults with perhaps an 8-12 year old mindset!

Many of the phrases in this book are redundant and while the author does a good job of describing scenes and characters, its overly wordy. I feel like I can sum up all 400 pages in a matter of a few paragraphs. There is just no way an 8 year old is going to read this book. I would say it would be a far stretch for a 12 year old to read it on their own too.

I get the impression that this book is meant to be shared with an adult, however, the sad truth is many parents today dont have time to spend reading novels with their children and this simply isnt something I feel an 8 year old can tackle on their own.

Furthermore, I think it is a little unsettling and disturbing that the main character of the book is essentially an orphan when she does indeed have a capable family to care for her and are hiding a monumental secret from her. I'll say no more because I dont want to ruin the story, if you dare to read it yourself. I fear there may be a sequel to this book to further explain the child's family situation and it makes me cringe. I for one will not be a reader.

Charlotte says

Actual Rating: **ZERO** stars. WORST BOOK EVER!

This review first appeared on my blog at: Thoughts and Pens.

Words could never describe how I despised Journey to Rainbow Island. I never thought that a middle grade book could rouse such hatred in me. I mean look at that cover. Isn't it one of the gorgeous things ever? But good lord, I was far from feeling gorgeous while reading this book. As a matter of fact, I will only recommend Journey To Rainbow Island f you are under the following situations:

- a. You hate your kids and would like to ruin their childhood forever.
- b. You are poisoned and you want to induce wretching to take out the toxin from your body.
- c. You missed Harry Potter so much and it's alright to read an icky HP wannabe.
- d. You want your kids to hate you forever.
- e. You want your school assignment or house chores done.
- f. You desperately want to take a break from a reading frenzy.

Journey to Rainbow Island is a story of an eleven year old girl named Yu-Ning. She lives in Rainbow Island where everything is literally perfect. Everyone loves one another and the island inhabitants only know one feeling, LOVE. When Rainbow Island and the rest of the surrounding land were threatened by a dark wizard named Hobaling and his conjured obsidigon, Yu-ning—being a Darq Render—must step up and stop him from concealing the land under endless darkness.

I really forced myself to at least enjoy this but alas, every fibre of my being screamed for deliverance from this book. Sure, the premise was really enticing but once I got into it, everything went sour. I don't even know where to start. I might as well enumerate all the things that worked and didn't work for me with this book.

The BAD...

a. Characters- I LOATHE YU-NING WITH A FIRE OF A THOUSAND SUNS and STARS. GRRRRRRRRRRRRRR. There was no development in her character at all. All throughout the story, she spends her time going from one place to another armed with only one saying to solve problems. "You just have to believe that you have light in your heart and darkness will be eradicated."

The saying is paraphrased of course but the idea is the same. I don't know but she gave me this feeling that she desperately wanted to be the next Harry Potter or Albus Dumbledore spewing endless declaration of love for one another. That the best weapon is love. The way she conquered all the obstacles thrown her way were inconceivable. She acquired her POWERS with little to no transition at all. I was like, REALLY? REALLY? Not to mention that my eyes are on the verge of popping out from their sockets. Grrrrr.

Imagine an eleven year old girl going from one place to another, solving problems here and there just by speaking the cheesy saying and its derivatives. You've gotta be kidding me. And honestly speaking, Yu-Ning is much better off becoming a Social Worker apprentice rather than being a Darq Render. Every time she solved a problem with her cheesy sayings of love and light, she would then offer the persons involve a home in Rainbow Island. I never thought that I could feel this kind of hatred for a character.

The others are not even worth mentioning because they're just useless decorations meant to provide a temporary break from Yu-ning's cheesiness. Even the villain seemed like a warm up act.

b. Plot- Jumpy. Saturated with sub plots that are nonsensical. Very linear. Dismal. Boring. In other words, Rainbow to Journey Island greatly embodies all the ugly adjectives I could think of.

c. Interactions and Dialogue- Puke inducer. Icky. Ewwwww. Too much melodrama that it will put soap operas into shame.

The GOOD

a. World Building- Very vibrant. And the maps were awesome. Christie ensured that Rainbow Island is a tempting place to live in.

b. The illustrations- Lovely. As a matter of fact, it was the cover that made me consider requesting this book. It's just frustrating that I got deceived.
And so...

Journey to Rainbow Island was a traumatizing ordeal for me. Middle Grade books are supposed to be one of my comfort reads but after this, I don't think so. And I truly wished that this wasn't an ARC so I could spoil you with all the things I hated about this book. Grrrr!

Verdict: Kill this book with fire. And oh look, it even pushed me to create a page solely dedicated for horror roll.

[image error]

Note: A free ARC was provided by the Publisher through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Ionia says

In the beginning I was on the fence a bit about this book. There are some truly beautiful passages, even within the first couple of chapters, but I didn't feel that I got to know much about the main character immediately. This prevented me from being able to care about her early on in the story.

As things went on, I found I was surprised by how lighthearted this story is. There is darkness to be fought, but the overall sense of love and peace and equality does not ever fully leave the reader. I thought this was a nice change, especially in fantasy.

This book is a difficult one to place in an age appropriate category. It seems too young and not complicated enough for many adult readers, but a bit longer and deals with deeper subjects than one would expect for a very young audience. I think it will depend on the maturity of the reader and their dedication to the act of reading to decide how they will feel about this work.

Here's what I really liked:

This author has a strong talent for world building. Her land is filled with magic and wonderful description that puts the reader right there in the scene. She is also very creative and I liked the way she passed from subject to subject with a smooth flow of words and actions.

The book is never boring and the dialogue keeps the reader engaged and understanding the thought processes of the various characters.

There is a lot of emotion in this work and the views of the author on serenity, human relationships and peace are clear in her writing. I enjoyed the interaction between the characters and appreciated the time she spent in creating them. I would have liked to have seen more personal thoughts and history on the main character.

Would I recommend this book? Yes--to certain audiences as mentioned above. I would encourage parents to give this book a read with their children. There will be a lot to provoke discussion as you read.

Overall I thought this was a well-written work with many interesting factors. I like this author's writing-style and look forward to more of her works.

This review is based on a complimentary copy. All opinions are my own and no other compensation was received.

Ramona says

Enjoyed the story. Will have to reread, as I was reading several books at the same time and this got lost in the shuffle.

Amélie says

ARC received from netgalley

Unfortunately, I was unable to read more than a few pages of this book despite several tries. Indeed, it is too

overwritten, with lots of redundant sentences and my attention kept drifting away from the book. I doubt that a child within the attended age group would manage to do much better.

Cathy Vincevic says

This is a great book for followers of New Age religious belief.

Chock-a-block full of cliches--of every new age belief I've ever run into--it could be a primer for anyone interested in the mythology of New Age Belief.

Therefore I found it very annoying.

In fact, I couldn't read it all the way through. Just to be honest about the whole thing. I was getting nauseous from all the treacle.

Rainbow Children (throw in some Indigo ones and we'd be all set), the "fight" between forces of darkness and light (all rainbowy rainbow light), a battle, admittedly, not limited to new age warriors, but somehow here, well...

I'm sure there will be kids who will enjoy this book and the romance.

So, before I get smeared as a "lizard person" or a "being of darkness and negativity" let me add things I liked.

I liked the lessons in botany, naming all the flowers and trees with the actual names of real flowers and trees.

In the end, though, I think Godzilla knows what to do:

Rainbow says

DNF @ pg 13

-

Rated 0.5 stars

Ages--

-

I DNFed this book for several reasons:

- The way the characters talk, they sound like five-year-olds
- The book feels (to me) like it was written for smart five-year-olds (Too easy to read, but with quite a few big words and long chapters)
- It didn't really grab my attention after 13 pages.

So yeah, not my cup of tea.

Manuela Mo says

In the story, a girl named Yu-ning lives on Rainbow Island. One day, a dragon steals the Island's seven Sacred Crystals. Yu-ning goes out on a journey to get them back. While Yu-ning is on her journey, she helps people find the light within them. I think this is a very interesting, detailed, and positive book.

Storywraps says

Rainbow Island is the perfect place to live. It is a magical place where everything on the island lives in harmony and LOVE is the fuel that drives it. Yu-ning, a beautifully spirited eleven year old, lives on the island with her peers and they play and romp freely in total happiness.

One day a dragon (Obsidigon), who is conjured up by a dark wizard (Hobaling) appears and nearly destroys the beautiful, tranquil island leaving a wide path of destruction and injuries to those living there. Yu-ning's best friend, Romeo is captured by the beast and taken to some unknown destination which breaks her heart and awakens a seed of obligation and determination deep inside of her to rescue her cherished friend and restore her beloved island back to its original state. The reader finds out that that verdict was pre-ordained and Yu-ning has been chosen to carry out the mission long before this disaster struck. She is a Darq Render by birth and she is called to step up and venture into many snares and dangers but to do so she must recover a magical bow and quiver of supernatural arrows that will completely obliterate that evil dragon. By so doing she will resurrect her island from its ashes into its majestic state once again.

Along the way she has help from her master teacher, Metatron, a magnificent flying bird called Suparana and a bright pink dolphin called Minkaro. Throughout her journey she is able to encounter lost souls along the way that are oppressed and frightened and transports them to Rainbow Island where they will live out their days in the light, love and pure happiness that manifests itself there.

It is a story of good vs evil, despair vs hope, light vs darkness, bondage vs freedom and hatred vs love. It is enlightening and brings a very positive message to the world. I loved the fact that Yu-ning is female and empowered to be the rescuer. Girls need a strong role model that will inspire them and let them know that they too are capable of super-heroine acts of bravery. The language is detailed, descriptive and the word flow beautiful. I really loved the overall spiritual aspect of the book. Love, light, freedom and peace are very powerful words and if these words are put into action more often our world will be a much better place in which to live. If we become more like the islanders of Rainbow Island and emulate their model of community we can turn our world upside down and live in peace and harmony and love all the days of our lives.

Melissa says

I received my complimentary copy of Journey to Rainbow Island by author Christie Hsiao through STRATEGIES & LA Jolla's Writers Conference, in exchange for my honest opinion. This is a very controversial book, as religious topics continuously come into play and/or comparison. While I did rather

enjoy the creativity aspect, I just do not believe this would be an ideal read, especially as it is directed to a much younger audience. I thought the author did a wonderful job with word flow, plot and editing, but could have been much better without the preaching. I just totally did not expect that this would be a religious book. I actually was hoping my son would read this also, who is 13, but I will not put this book in his hands.

Reasoning #1 Religion downfall

#2 Distractingly descriptive at times with too much detail

#3 This book is entirely too long. He took one look at its thickness, and upturned his nose! As a parent, a huge book like this would only deter most readers. I believe if this was shortened up or perhaps even broken down into a series, it would be less daunting and foreboding for the younger crowd, what child honestly has the patience and time for a lengthy read like this, probably would gain more reader interest if divided into reasonable reading sections.

Overall, would I recommend?

I'm on the line.

Would I read more from this author?

Absolutely.

Tasha Turner says

Received eArc from netgalley and publisher in exchange for honest review
