

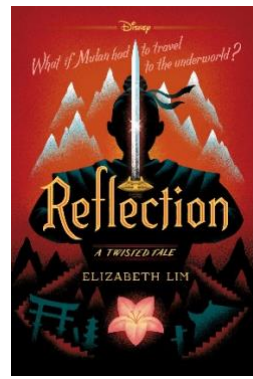
Reflection

By Elizabeth Lim

Reviewed by: Puneet Gill, 17

Star Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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A Disney spin-off of the 1998 animated film *Mulan*, the girl disguising as a soldier attempts to retreat Captain Shang from an avalanche. Unfortunately, he passes and his soul falls into the Diyu underworld. Ping, Mulan’s male pseudonym, travels past the gates with ShiShi, the family’s lion guardian that guides her through the terrifying passageways. King Yama, the ruler, proposes a deal to Mulan: find Shang’s soul before sunrise, or remain in the underworld forever. Mulan, determined to prove the underworld lord wrong, embarks to either procure both her and Shang’s life into the living world...or end in doom for all.

One part of the story lies in the climax. The scene where Mulan faces her internal conflicts against the mirrors dramatize the real situation: identity and accepting one’s self. Her glancing around her appearance challenges to show her duality into her divided character. This push towards a theme meant for older kids may help younger readers understand the dual perspective between what the movie portrays versus the deeper meaning in the book. Its homage to the original *Mulan* (1998) showcase the conflict of whether Mulan wishes to remain as Ping, her male counterpart that bypasses restrictions into joining the war, or convert back into her old, genuine self to stand for who she really is. Although the majority of the novel diverts from the events of the movie, Mulan still reveals her identity to Shang, yet conveys a more vulnerable side that adds emotional clarity to the complex nature of their relationship.

There were not any downsides to the book that can be said overall. Its readaptation of the cultural significance of identity for females in China resemble well within the context of *Reflection*. Disney fans may recognize their beloved character, Mushu, next to their female protagonist, yet his appearance stays temporary to the beginning of the novel. Even though it does not have the entire plot of the movie, the opposing, eerie elements of the “twisted” side entertains readers a lot more without deviating from the original message.

This visit back to the old Disney can realign with the inner childhood of most teens and adults today. The alternate interpretation of our beloved woman warrior is the best gift for those who wish for a slice of female main characters in the spotlight. Fans of Chinese mythology can spot the similarities of demons and ghosts that hide in the shadows, enlightening their tastes into the research put by Lim. Ultimately, readers ages 13 and up may engage with the story due to elements dealing with dark adventures and contexts along with the theme of self-discovery—most common throughout teen years that look at their own reflection.

Recommended Titles:

A Whole New World, by Liz Braswell

Paladin, by Sally Slater

The Magnolia Sword: A Ballad of Mulan, by Sherry Thomas

The Night Ends with Fire, by K. X. Song

The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts, by Maxine Hong Kingston