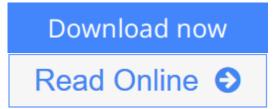


Tree of Hope

By Amy Littlesugar



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Florrie's Daddy was once an actor, and still remembers the Lafayette Theatre when it "shone out over the streets of Harlem like a star." But now it is the Great Depression, buildings are boarded up...the only reminder of the Lafayette's glory days is a single tree. The Tree of Hope, people call it. Florrie and her Daddy wish on it for times to be the way they were. When the director Orson Welles decides to stage *Macbeth* at the Lafayette--a play about white people, written by a white man--it doesn't seem they'll ever get that wish. And then they discover this *Macbeth* is going to be all Harlem's and a play no one will ever forget!

Illustrated with Floyd Cooper's rich oilwash paintings, Amy Littlesugar's story about a real event in the Harlem Renaissance serves as a tribute to the people who, in the face of the Great Depression, refused to let hope die.



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Tree of Hope By Amy Littlesugar Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

As they did in Shakerag, a tale of Elvis Presley's Southern childhood, Littlesugar and Cooper join forces to vividly evoke the past. This time the subject is the rebirth of African-American theater in Harlem during the Great Depression. Young Florrie has often heard the stories of how her father found joy as an actor at the Lafayette Theatre in the 1920s, the heyday of the Harlem Renaissance. He even met Florrie's mother there. But with hard times, the theater has closed, and now its only sign of life is the twisted tree that grows beside it. Every day Florrie and her father wish on the "Tree of Hope" for the return of the Lafayette. The wish finally comes true when, sponsored by the Federal Theater Project, director Orson Welles mounts an African-American production of Macbeth. In her ambitious text, Littlesugar unobtrusively uses history to anchor the experiences of a particular fictional family. After a somewhat slow denouement, the elements of her story neatly come full circle. Cooper's luminous oil paintings, fine as ever, breathe life into both the gritty period cityscapes and the memorable characters, whose faces are alternately shaded by despair and lit by hope. Ages 4-8. (Oct.)

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From Library Journal

Kindergarten-Grade 3-A pivotal moment for the arts in America, and for one African-American family, is warmly re-created here. Florrie's father is acting bit parts at the Lafayette Theatre in Harlem when the Great Depression hits, closing the theatres down. Then the child's parents are lucky to have work at all: cleaning work for Mama and frying donuts for Daddy, though he never stops dreaming of going back on the stage. He and lots of other out-of-work theatre people make wishes on the stubborn, twisted little "tree of hope" growing outside the Lafayette. When President Roosevelt orders the doors reopened, their wishes come true. The plays of Countee Cullen and Zora Neale Hurston are to be produced and Florrie's father is cast in Orson Welles's all-black production of Shakespeare's Macbeth. Cooper's oil-wash paintings evoke sepia-toned photographs and capture the emotions that make Littlesugar's characters vivid.

Miriam Lang Budin, Chappaqua Public Library, NY

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From Kirkus Reviews

Through Florrie's eyes readers experience the despair and hopelessness of talented actors who were forced to leave the stage to find other work when the Lafayette Theatre closed its doors; the golden days of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s have disappeared into the Great Depression of the 1930s, and Florrie's father, once an actor, toils at the Allnight Bakery. Florrie's greatest dream is for her father to be able to leave his job and return to the stage, and so she makes a wish on a tree that grows next to the Lafayette Theatre; it has become a symbol of endurance for black actors, a tree of hope. A director, Mr. Welles, arrives when President Roosevelt orders that the doors of the theatre be opened; there is to be a staging of Macbeth, and Florrie's father gets a part. An author's note attests to the veracity of events in the story, when Orson Welles directed African-Americans in roles from which they were once excluded. Cooper's lavish oil-wash, full-page paintings pay mute tribute to the loss of luster and its regeneration in Harlem, in scenes in which the footlights cast a glow, and in which the faces tell a story that hardly needs words. (bibliography) (Picture book. 4-8) -- Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Roxanne Pineda:

The knowledge that you get from Tree of Hope is the more deep you searching the information that hide inside the words the more you get considering reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to know but Tree of Hope giving you buzz feeling of reading. The writer conveys their point in a number of way that can be understood simply by anyone who read it because the author of this publication is well-known enough. This kind of book also makes your vocabulary increase well. It is therefore easy to understand then can go to you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We recommend you for having this kind of Tree of Hope instantly.

Catherine Ng:

Reading a book to get new life style in this season; every people loves to learn a book. When you learn a book you can get a great deal of benefit. When you read books, you can improve your knowledge, mainly because book has a lot of information upon it. The information that you will get depend on what forms of book that you have read. If you want to get information about your research, you can read education books, but if you act like you want to entertain yourself read a fiction books, such us novel, comics, and soon. The Tree of Hope will give you new experience in studying a book.

Corey Mullen:

In this particular era which is the greater individual or who has ability to do something more are more treasured than other. Do you want to become one among it? It is just simple strategy to have that. What you must do is just spending your time not much but quite enough to enjoy a look at some books. One of several books in the top list in your reading list is actually Tree of Hope. This book and that is qualified as The Hungry Hills can get you closer in growing to be precious person. By looking right up and review this guide you can get many advantages.

Michael Becker:

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