

A Book Review of *Need* by Carrie Jones

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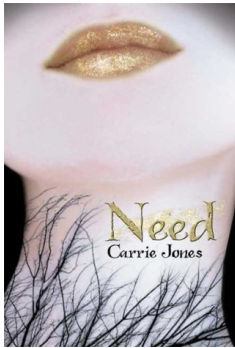


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Carrie Jones' novel *Need* is an eerie, spellbinding adventure that will take the reader through a small, sleepy Maine town. The protagonist Zara struggles with the grief over the untimely death of her stepfather and must come to terms with the fact that her mother just can't seem to deal with her, and therefore, she must move to Maine in order to live with her quirky and eccentric grandmother. Jones explores the aftermath of loss with clarity, love, and truth. She is able to make the reader feel Zara's loss, and as readers, we have access firsthand to Zara's emotions and inner dialogue. Despite the fantasy aspect and tone of the novel, Jones depicts Zara's struggles with reality and care, and therefore, readers feel Zara's anguish, her frustration, and her joy.

Zara struggles with her grief and in doing so she has begun to collect phobias like some would collect stamps or model trains. In doing so, she sometimes is unsure of what is reality and what is simply all in her head. So, when she believes that there is a guy semi-stalking her, she's unsure if he's real or a figment of her overreactive imagination. The fact that all he leaves behind is gold dust leads her to believe that it's all in her head, right? Wrong. Zara discovers that this mysterious stranger is indeed following her, and he is more insidious than she could ever have imagined. Through this supernatural encounter Zara must go on a journey to not only find out more about herself, her identity, and family history, she must also come to terms with grief. Through the mysterious disappearances of local teenage boys, Zara must confront her grief and mounting phobias head on.

Despite its fantastic and supernatural tones, *Need* creates a world that is familiar to anyone who has experienced loss- especially at a young age. The difficulty in navigating a world that no longer makes sense can be challenging and heartbreaking and Jones captures this beautifully and with care. Zara's experiences are relatable even though the world she lives in is fantastical and not quite like reality. I found that I was able to escape into her world because the characters are well developed and believable. I felt as if I were a part of Zara's world, and for a moment I put on her shoes and walked around for a while trying to overcome our phobias.

Reference

Jones, C. (2008). *Need*. Bloomsbury.