



Land Of Mountains

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A ten-year-old's new home on an exotic Caribbean island proves so fascinating she quickly forgets she didn't want to leave Texas. After all, where better than a jungle world teeming with voodoo, mystery, and a really pesky zombie, to indulge her favorite pastime: snooping.

In this humorous mystery, award-winning author Jinx Schwartz transports the reader to another time and place where rivers, and little girls, ran wild and free.

Land Of Mountains Details

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Author : Jinx Schwartz

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From Reader Review Land Of Mountains for online ebook

Pat Bretheim says

I just loved this book! After it was done I kept wanting more. Do you remember what it was like to be young and the world seemed magical? Go back to your childhood and read Lizbuthann's adventures when her family moved to Haiti in 1953. Her father was involved in building a dam. Our protagonist had a lot of time on her hands to explore this new and delightful world, with all of its charms. She was given a horse to get around with (every little girl's dream) and a bird that she was able to teach to talk. Along the way she made friends with a zombie, Francois. She repeatedly got into trouble, but was able to solve some mysteries along the way.

Bee says

Land of Mountains by Jinx Schwartz is a young adult novel that chronicles the adventures of Texas born ten-year old Lizbuthann (i.e. Elizabeth Anne) after she and her family move to Haiti. She's a rough and tumble sort of child, always interested in snooping and getting into mischief. The story follows her as she struggles with disease, political unrest, and the occasional zombie.

Unfortunately, the first thing that stands out about this book are the formatting mistakes. Perhaps it is only the Kindle edition but there were copious editing errors--sentences cut off in the middle and starting in the next paragraph, dialogue sometimes having a new paragraph for each speaker and sometimes not, missing quotation marks, and sentences lacking periods. Every time that I as a reader encountered one of these mistakes it took me out of the magic of the story.

I like the main protagonist. She's smart, she's sassy and funny, she's a little too curious for her own good, and she loves adventure. Young adult novels could use more Lizbuthann-style main characters. While this story is billed as a mystery, I feel that it falls more into the historical adventure genre.

Unfortunately, the episodic nature of Lizbuthann's adventures slows the story down. Lizbuthann gets polio-- and we hear about it for three pages, and it never really comes up again. There are several interesting elements like that I would have loved to hear more about but are merely mentioned once and dropped.

While I enjoyed the idea of the setting as the lush forests of Haiti, the story was sadly lacking in locale description or setting description in general. While we are treated to step-by-step descriptions of what the heroine actually does, it lacks any sort grounding in the wider surroundings. It makes for a much weaker action scene when Lizbuthann is, for example, fording the river in small dam-building machinery, when I can't picture what the dam looks like, what the machinery looks like or even have a clear idea of what the machinery does.

Robert Boswell says

Just downloaded to my kindle for .99c Great book. Found out it is a finalist for the 2012 epic ebook award

for best young adult.

About a young girl growing up in Haiti. Lots of humor.

Robin Wicker says

Perfect for ages 12 to 100!

This wonderful book is an entertaining and exciting read. This is based on Schwartz life as a child in Haiti. Now perhaps the real Jinx did not save the dam, but I have chosen to believe every word. Read you will not regret it. I am 76 and fall into the appropriate age group for the book. Don't miss her mystery series.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Theresa L. Stowell for TeensReadToo.com

It's 1953, and Elizabeth Ann's family is moving to Haiti, but she's young enough that she doesn't really understand where they are going. She excitedly tells her school class, "My Daddy's a dam builder, he's going to Hell, and he's taking us with him."

Later, Grandma Hetta has to explain the difference between Haiti and Hades (which relieves Lizbuthann, who had worried about inadvertently sending her father to Hell after an argument), but this quick one-liner provides a good example of the tone of this amusing first-person narrative about a young girl's life in a new culture.

Once in Haiti, Lizbuthann meets Doux Doux Boudreau, another young girl from Texas, and the two set off on adventures that readers of all ages will enjoy. Schwartz throws in voodoo, a zombie, a bit of a mystery, and more hilarious misconceptions to keep readers laughing throughout the novel.

Jinx Schwartz, the author, also lived in Haiti as a child during the fifties, so the book contains a good amount of a child's natural misunderstandings, since she tells the story from Lizbuthann's point of view. These misunderstandings encompass not only the Haitian culture but also sneak into family, social, and political arenas. The result is a fun lesson on life from a child's perspective.

LAND OF MOUNTAINS would be a good read-aloud (or at least along) book for parents or teachers who can help today's children to understand some of the situations Lizbuthann gets herself into. The story would also help to provide some of the historical perspectives on issues and language that Lizbuthann experiences differently than a child today might.

Marty Beaudet says

This was a pleasant, rewarding read. It was a coming of age story set in the exotic environment of an impoverished Haiti, making it more interesting than if the setting had been more familiar. The narrator, an adolescent girl, reminded me of Scout, the narrator of "To Kill a Mockingbird": precocious, curious,

rebellious but circumspect. I looked forward to opening it each night for a brief escape to her world.

Loretta says

Elizabeth Ann an 11 year old living in Texas and moved to Haiti with her family. Her father has a job building a dam there in the mountains. Lizbuthann as they call her is so funny the way she interprets words and what they mean. She is always getting into mischief along with her new friend Doux Doux. Jinx picks up the Texas language and carries it through the book along with a wonderful description of Haiti!

Bronwyn says

Oh, I did love the characters and story in this. I haven't been to Haiti, yet but if it is really anything like this, I want to go – and I'm not even a Zombie fan! (You'll have to read the book to make sense of that.) The humour is great and the writing is a treat.

Kristen says

I read this book in one sitting, a smile on my face for hours. When Lizbuthann, a 10-year-old Texan, arrives in Haiti with her mother and little sister, her troubles start almost immediately: she faints into the lap of the huge lady in brilliantly colored scarves selling voodoo dolls on the tarmac. Might have had something to do with the two frozen daiquiris Lizbuthann drank on the plane...

Elizabeth Ann, with her mop of red hair, has the fearlessness of youth, certain that she can survive anything - just like her heroine, comics hero Brenda Starr. The results are nonstop fun and suspense, as Lizbuthann manages to get herself into and out of situations that are every mother's nightmare.

Her family is in Haiti because her father is in charge of pouring the concrete for a new dam that will protect villagers from flooding and provide energy that will fuel development. This is 1953, and these are the glory years for can-do Texan-Americans. It was also a time when Haiti still had forests -- imagine that! The can-do Americans in *Land of Mountains* were obviously part of the end of Haiti's forests. They live in "Camp," which sits atop a leveled-off mountain, giving the title a certain irony. The author discusses the sad fate of the silted-up (from deforestation) dam and "Baby Doc" Duvallier in an afterward. Schwartz also provides a nice little glossary of Creole.

Between coming down with malaria and polio; investigating a voodoo ceremony, witch, and a zombie; and dealing with her exacting Japanese school teacher, a rabid dog, her suspicious mother, a kidnapping and rebels attempting to blow up her father's dam, Lizbuthann's spirit, misunderstandings, and insights are page-turningly entertaining.

I can imagine this being a read-aloud book between parent and young middle-schooler. It's in the old-fashioned mode of telling a story, rather than the relentless emphasis on showing; and Schwartz's voice is so strong that I found myself thinking in a Texas twang after reading.

* This book came to me through a firstreads giveaway.

Rachel says

Great kids book!

Laurie Hanan says

Like other readers, I originally bought this book with the hope my 11-year-old would be interested in it. I decided to read a few pages, just to see if I thought it would hold the attention of a middle schooler. Well, it grabbed me from the opening sentence and I couldn't put it down till I was done. I could fully relate to the premise, because I was whisked off to a strange and primitive South Sea island at age 11 for my father's work. But that's pretty much where the similarity ends. With her wild antics and red hair, the precocious Lizbuthann is as endearing and entertaining as Pippi Longstocking. The mystery surrounding a seven-foot zombie and a voodoo witch kept my curiosity piqued. It would make a wonderful movie that children would want to see over and over, and adults would love at least as much. If I were a filmmaker I'd be running to buy the rights to this one.

Laurie Hanan, author of the Louise Golden Hawaiian mysteries

Dava Stewart says

I generally really like YA. I read at least a few books meant for young adults every year. As many other reviewers have said, this is a good story - it's funny, attention getting, and interesting. I wished there had been some sort of epilogue telling me that Lizbuthann went back to Haiti to see all of her friends as an adult...but there wasn't so I will just have to imagine it was so.

At the beginning of the book, I kept thinking of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and waiting for something awful to happen. In retrospect, that is quite the compliment, isn't it?

I will definitely be looking for other Jinx Schwartz stories.

Martha Cheves says

Land of Mountains – Review by Martha A. Cheves, Author of *Stir, Laugh, Repeat*

‘Yep, that first year in Haiti was a ring-tailed tooter. I’d learned a new language, met a zombie, survived polio and malaria, and nearly started a revolution. I couldn’t wait for 1954.’

Elizabeth Ann, called Lizbuthann by most, is originally from Texas, but will soon find herself in what will become her “beloved” Haiti. Hopefully for her parents, she will stay out of trouble. But even at the tender age of 10, Lizbuthann has learned that she has always been and will always be in some sort of trouble. And moving to Haiti while her father helps build a dam isn’t going to stop trouble from finding her or better yet, her from finding it.

So, her troubles start with the plane ride over. She was served some of the best snow cones she had ever

eaten or should I say drank. But they didn't call them snow cones on the plane. They called them frozen daiquiris and after gulping down two of them, Lizbuthann was feeling just fine. That is until the plane landed and she noticed 4 heads on stakes rotting in the heat. And this all happens on her first day there with much, much more to come.

Land of Mountains was a total surprise for me. When I saw the story took place in Haiti and zombies were involved, I expected a supernatural story. I was big time wrong. It's actually the story of a young girl, her best friend and the antics they get into while trying to keep themselves amused in a foreign country. Lizbuthann goes from slipping out at night to observe a voodoo ritual to falling almost on top of an honest to goodness "zombie." And it just gets better from there.

Once in a while I run across a book that I really sing praises to and Land of Mountains is one of them. I've laughed, come very close to crying and have really enjoyed this book. Author Jinx Schwartz not only entertains us with Land of Mountains, she also slips in a little Haitian history... the building of the dam, the revolutions and the dictators that rule and ruled the country. You can't help but love Land of Mountains.

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Review Stir, Laugh, Repeat at Amazon.com Stir, Laugh, Repeat

Wanda Porter says

A ten year old girl has wild adventures when her family move to Haiti in 1954. This story made me laugh. I'm not sure kids would get the humor, but might like reading about zombies and a culture that practices voodoo. This book isn't scary, but it is funny.

Sheryl says

What a delightfully fun book! I didn't realize when I first downloaded it that it was a young adult book, but I'm glad I did. The heroine, Lizbuthann, reminded me very much of a slightly older Junie B. Jones. In the early 1950s, Lizbuthann's father and uncle take jobs building a dam in Haiti. Lizbuthann and her BFF Doux Doux Boudreux, armed with horses, an unhealthy sense of curiosity, and an alarming lack of regard for the rules, take Haiti by storm. Hilarity -- and a darn good yarn -- ensues. Some of the scrapes Lizbuthann gets into stretch thin your suspension of disbelief, but it is so much fun, you don't care. The author does a great job setting up some of the more fantastic parts of the story so it's almost plausible. There is lots of action and adventure for boys and girls alike. I highly recommend it!
