

Title: *A Thousand Steps Into Night*
Author: Traci Chee
Genre: Fantasy, Young Adult, Mythology

Reviewer Name and Grade: Allie H., ninth grade

Date Reviewed: July 25, 2023

The book *A Thousand Steps Into Night* by Traci Chee is a great novel that tells the story of a girl named Miuko, who is living in the land of Awara. In Awara, women are terribly oppressed, for even doing something as simple as leaving the house without being accompanied by a male relative, entering a library, or riding a horse is not only frowned upon, but in some instances, against the law. In Awara, there are also many different kinds of spirits that abound—some with good intentions, others full of maliciousness, and still others who are somewhere in between—they might help, but only for a price. One day, Miuko is kissed by a demon, and he is cursed to slowly transform into one herself. First, it begins to merely affect her appearance, spreading up from her feet to the rest of her body, and coming with only a few side effects. However, after some time has passed she comes to realize that is not all—the curse is corrupting her mind, and she is becoming a demon on the inside, too. Forced to leave the village she has called home her entire life, Miuko embarks on a journey to break the curse, with the help of Geiki, a charming bird that can shapeshift into a human, and others that assist them along the way. Unfortunately, things begin to get more complicated when a demon disguised as a prince gets involved, attempting to persuade Miuko to abandon her endeavors to join him in his own demonic schemes. Not only must Miuko break the curse before the time runs out, but she must save Awara from catastrophe. And, she may even be forced to choose between the two, deciding the fate of herself and the rest of Awara. Is her humanity worth the price to gain it back?

Did the plot keep you interested?

Yes, the plot was very interesting. The conflict had several layers, so there was always something exciting happening in the story.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

The pace of the book was just right. There were parts that were more fast or slow than others, but overall, it was fairly fast-paced, making it an enjoyable read.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

This book is appropriate for ninth graders. There was nothing that might be deemed inappropriate in it, and I, going into ninth grade, think it would be good for someone my age or possibly slightly older.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this book to anyone who loves fantasy. It takes place in a fictional world with spirits and demons, and magic is involved as well.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

I think it would be helpful for teens to know that in the beginning, there are many footnotes explaining the places, types of spirits, and pronunciation of various things, which made it slightly confusing, and I almost abandoned the book. However, I was glad I decided to give it a chance, because it quickly got better and I found it to be a wonderful book!

4 stars: I enjoyed this book and found it worthwhile reading.

I give this book a four star rating because while it was a good read for the most part, the beginning was not promising, and I nearly stopped reading because of it. There was an overload of information about places and fantastical beings that was hard to keep track of.

However, the book soon became better, and I ended up enjoying it very much, which is why I give it four stars

Reviewer Name and Grade: Vincent H., 8th Grade

Date Reviewed: 2/24/2024

A thousand steps into the night is about a girl, in her current time, The story takes place in Japan, seemingly in the age of samurai. She is supposed to be quiet and obedient to men. However, the main character Miuko is the opposite of that. Her father sends her to get cups for their house, but in the middle of the journey, she meets a magpie spirit being bullied by little boys. She saves the magpie and goes on her way. However, she sees a demon, and she is kissed by it. She becomes a demon. She is later run over by another demon on a horse. When she goes home, everybody is disgusted by her and she leaves. She meets the magpie spirit again and she works with him to travel to the house of december so she can be uncursed and she hopes to go home. Later, the curse spreads through her body and soon, she feels a violent voice inside of her. She slowly starts to agree with the voice. A bit later, she meets Tujiyazai, the demon that ran her over, who is very powerful and he told her that the magpie was only following her out of obligation for saving his life. This makes Miuko sad and mad, as she started liking the magpie spirit. They verbally fight and the magpie leaves. A bit later, she hears a crowd who is mad at her because she is a demon and she yells at them to come to her instead of the magpie. She is scared and knows she cannot beat a mad crowd but Tujiyazai, helps her and takes her to his castle. Later, she realizes that the demon only wants her for the power inside of her. She escapes along with the magpie's help, who reveals that he got caught in a trap set by Tujiyazai. She finally reaches the house of december. However, Tujiyazai finds her and tries to massacre the house of december. Tujiyazai captures the magpie spirit, Geiki and tries to save him but realizes that she is too far away. She then remembers what Tujiyazai once said that demons like her could be summoned by writing the name of them. In the end, she tries to teleport to Tujiyazai to kill him but teleports to him 2 weeks prior, the day that she was kissed by the demon. She realizes that she has to try to save everybody.

The plot was detailed and it was definitely a good story to read. It kept me interested throughout the whole story. The pace of the book was just a bit fast for me because it included Japanese myths that I couldn't keep track of in my mind. I later would forget what Japanese mythical creatures were important because I tried to remember the useless ones. I'm in 8th grade and I believe that the story is good for middle schoolers. I recommend this to fantasy readers like me who cannot find books that are about dragons and knights. Even though it doesn't feature medieval fantasy, it does a good job of giving lots of mythical creatures that make up for it in my opinion. Be aware though, as there are a lot of Japanese creatures that are hard to remember, and it is the reason why my review is not 5 stars.

4 stars: This book was really good as it just felt well written to me. I love reading fantasy as it is my favorite genre. This book kept me interested and invested throughout the story. It had an unpredictable storyline and the Japanese myths just added a sort of cherry on top. However, that cherry on top was also the reason I didn't give the book 5 stars. Because there are a lot of Japanese creatures in the book, I could not remember every single small creature. In the end, there would be a lot of creatures that I don't know what it is, yet don't care to look for because I probably won't see the creature in the book ever again. In the end, I like this book a lot but I believe the author could have cut down on some creatures that wouldn't be very important like the fox spirits who appear only once but then never resurface in the book again.