

Avaland by Amy Croucher Rose

5 stars

"Beautiful and captivating."

An abandoned baby in a forest with unknown magic power and a magical artefact. If this plot sounds familiar it's because it is. The fantasy genre is so saturated these days most books will follow a well-trodden, predictable (yet comfortable) path.

Fortunately, this is where the predictable ends and the magic begins. Amy Croucher Rose really has managed to do a fantastic job of using the familiar themes and characters (gargoyles, goblins etc.) that accompany most fantasy books and marry them seamlessly with the weird and wacky in a novel and exciting way.

The book starts grandly with a prologue describing the crazy lives of a dodderly old man shouting at kids who move his cabbages and his wife who cooks bizarre and gross sounding food. This not only sets the scene but brings the main protagonist close to the reader's heart as, admit it, we all know that old man down the road. This more than some books can manage from front cover to back.

The world of Avaland is a story -rich fantasy world that is as familiar as it is novel and unknown, making this book a joy to read. Simply kick back and relax as this beautiful world unfolds with plenty of mystery and more than a few comedic moments that had me giggling to myself.

No book is perfect. However, some can come very close though, and this is one shining example of such a story. My little niggle with this is that perhaps the climax could have been a little more expanded and longer as while the build-up and climax were satisfying it just felt a little too quick.

This minute thought aside, Avaland is a truly wonderful piece of fantasy storytelling which has just enough pace to keep you turning the page while leaving you at complete ease as you marvel at the world that unfolds.

A must read for any lovers of fantasy.

Alex

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review