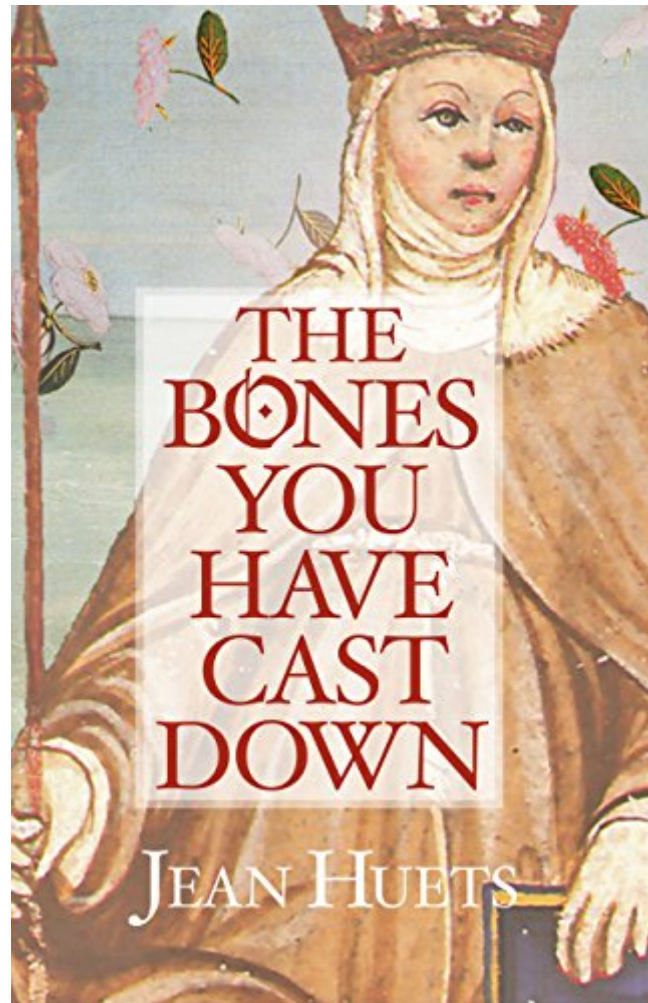




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The Bones You Have Cast Down



Synopsis

Inspired by a true story, *The Bones You Have Cast Down* will transport you to a medieval village and a lush Renaissance court, to long ago times not unlike our own, when the keepers of faith conspired against the faithful, and the rich and powerful embraced war and corruption even while fostering works of artistic brilliance that are revered to this day. In 1447, Taria is swept from a convent orphanage into the glittering retinue of the duchess of Milan. Lowborn in a highborn circle, she has never felt so alone. Then a small, mysterious painting of a female pope carries her back 150 years to the joyous circle of a holy woman, revered in her time, mysteriously obscure in Taria's time. The duchess believes the journey is only a vision, yet she orders Taria to learn more. Reviving the holy woman's fame could bring badly needed prestige to the noble family. But Taria conceals a devastating revelation: the saint and her followers are despised by the Inquisition. As jealousy wrecks her romance and poisons her closest friendship, Taria shuns the present and embraces the holy woman's circle as the family she has always craved. And the Inquisition closes in.

Book Information

File Size: 725 KB

Print Length: 206 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: gertrude m books (November 15, 2016)

Publication Date: November 15, 2016

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B01LWRU4A2

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #235,057 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #11

in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Renaissance #412 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks >

Teen & Young Adult > Historical Fiction #710 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young

Customer Reviews

Incredible story about a young woman swept up in two worlds that are very different from the convent orphanage from which she comes. Mystery, intrigue, and lovely historical details. I enjoyed it from beginning to end!

Transported is the key word for this story of a girl's life in the medieval world of 15th century Italy. Infused with lush attention to detail and a delightful tale of historical significance, *The Bones You Have Cast Down* is one of those books that is so satisfying while reading, and for a bit after, that one feels as though one has enjoyed a delicious banquet of the most humble, yet somehow exotic foods. For historical context, Wikipedia does just fine, and for a plot summary, the author's descriptions will do so no need to repeat what already has been adequately said. Rather, what needs to be conveyed to the prospective reader is the absolute joy and wonder of the transportive experience of the book, which parallels and amplifies the literal transporting which is the basis of Taria's experience and growth as a young woman in troubled times. Her journey is one of secrecy, loyalty, relationship, import, and intrigue. One of the unexpected treats within the tapestry of this story is Taria's use of the *tarocchi* (Visconti-Sforza tarot) cards by the Renaissance artist Bonifacio Bembo. About mid-way into the adventure, pp.137-142, there is a masterful sequence of a card reading engaged in by Taria and her companions, enabling her to access and glean insight regarding the many layers of interplay, doubt, danger, triumph, and strategies increasingly driving her spirit and sense of self. A terrific book!

I loved this story as Huets takes the reader through the process of discovery in an era often written about, but rarely seen from this unusual perspective.. Huets created a perfect character to visualize and live the story while taking the reader with her. Taria is likable yet naive enough to go blindly into something she does not fully understand until the end. Whether the reader understands the history of the Renaissance period and the Inquisition, implications for people of faith or the art they produced because of the times, she feels involved and caught up in the story. That story includes all of the human emotions that have remained unchanged throughout the human existence: youthful anticipation, fear, love, jealousy and the wisdom that comes with maturity. The force of a female pope to drive the story particularly interested me as someone who grew up in the male-dominated

Catholic Church. I highly recommend this book and commend Huets for taking me along on Taria's intriguing journey.

THE BONES YOU HAVE CAST DOWN By Jean Huets
Feminism and Redemption in Renaissance Italy
In this exquisite first novel by Jean Huets, an orphaned seventeen-year-old girl named Taria, leaves the convent on a chill day in 1446 to join the retinue of ma donna Bianca Maria Visconti, daughter of the Duke of Milan. The lowborn and meek Taria becomes the protégée of a married girl with child, Polidora, who entrusts her with a small painting of a woman in nun's robes. The author has embroidered this compelling tale over the sparse bones of the true story of a female pope, whose memory is threatened by the Inquisition. Taria finds love and visits the past or is she dreaming? Perhaps not. Just as the author has drawn from history to enrich her novel, her protagonist visits earlier times to learn about the woman in the small painting and discovers heartening teachings about acceptance of her fellow man.

I enjoyed this book. I found it interesting to read a novel set in a time and place I know little about. I enjoyed the play with the Tarot, and found the underlying theme of the 'oneness of humanity and God' a paean to what might be possible if we all work together. I look forward to reading more from Jean Huets.

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