

THE WISHING SHELF BOOK AWARDS

1st Feb, 2019

TITLE: *Carmilla*

AUTHOR: *Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. Abridged by Fiza Pathan and Michaelangelo Zane Illustrated by Farzana Cooper*

Star Rating: 5

CATCHY QUOTE

'A dark, often chilling, classic, superbly abridged and illustrated. This is the perfect accompanying novel to the original. Lit. students will love it!'

REVIEW

Carmilla, as most of you probably know, is a classic. Originally written in 1872 – or there about – it is a murky, often frightening story of a young girl who is visited and seduced by a female vampire named Carmilla. Now, although the writing style in the original is truly wonderful, it can be a little overwhelming, particularly to younger readers. It was written 150 years ago, and the writing style reflects that. So, what to do?

Now, I know this novel rather well, so I was a little skeptical when I sat down with this abridgment. But I'm delighted to

report that Fiza Pathan and Michaelangelo Zane did a wonderful job. This is a superb example of an abridgment which not only opens the book up to modern, younger readers, but also keeps so much of the original aspects of the story.

The trick, of course, with any abridgment is to know what to keep and what to throw away. And, in doing so, keep the characters, plot and setting as close as possible to the original. Pathan and Zane excel in this. The characters still jump off the page, the often chilling atmosphere is still there, and the plot has tons of pace. To be honest, like many good abridgments, the pace in this is much better than the original; and this can help with accessibility for young readers.

But, there's even more! This also offers the reader a number of truly excellent black and white drawings by Farzana Cooper. They look amazing; very atmospheric and add so much to the text. I very much enjoyed seeing how the illustrator reflected the intensity of the story in the shadowy settings and characters she drew.

To sum up, this is a shorter, accessible abridgment to the original Carmilla, but the intensity of the characters and plot is still very much there. I would recommend this to anybody who had been put off from enjoying the original by the flowery writing style and is looking for a pace-driven substitute. Also, any younger readers who might wish to study

*this text – or simply enjoy it for what it is; a scary vampire tale
– should try this abridgement.*

A 'Wishing Shelf' Book Review

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