

Cheryl Ntuny, *Entwined*

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Entwined, by Cheryl Ntuny, a Gaborone based author, is the first book of an exciting new series featuring the protagonist Conyza Bennet published by Carina UK which is a digital imprint of Harlequin UK. Conyza ‘Connie’ Bennet is an average 16 year old girl growing up in Gaborone. She hangs out at Riverwalk mall. She likes going to the cinema. She has her best friends Lebz and Wiki and has a crush on the cute bad boy –Thuli. She is your average teenage girl except that she can predict what is going to happen in the future. And then things change even more. One day she gets a horrible headache and the strange boy with a lizard tattoo and a scar down his face, Rakwena, tells her to go home and rest. Who is he to tell her anything? she thinks. But then the next day when she realises she has developed a new talent –reading people’s minds– Rakwena is the one she goes looking for because she suspects he knows more about her powers than she does.

From there the plot thickens when Connie’s grandfather, a man with his own supernatural powers, tells her to keep away from Rakwena. When she asks for a reason Ntatemogolo (grandfather) is not keen to give any. Though Connie respects her grandfather, he does not know how it feels to be the weird one, how hard it is for her as a teenager. But Rakwena does because he is just like her. He can move things with his mind. Instead of moving away from this mysterious boy, Connie is drawn closer and closer to him.

Connie stumbles across evil when she realises she is unable to read the minds of the five 12 year old girls that wander around Riverwalk in skimpy clothing trying to attract older men. The group called Ma-Fourteens, are involved in some scary things and Connie feels compelled to save them from the man controlling it all –The Puppetmaster. He controls them through the necklaces they wear. If she could only get the necklaces, the girls would be free.

Ntuny has become adept at maintaining tension in her stories. From nearly the first page the reader is drawn in. Everywhere you look there are questions that build suspense. What is Ntatemogolo keeping from her? Why is Rakwena, an 18 year old boy, living alone in a fancy house in Gaborone? What has happened to his parents and other family members? How did he get that scar? And what about the Ma-Fourteens? Who is controlling them? What are they doing that leaves them drained and unwell after a weekend?

Running through the story is the romantic tension between Rakwena and Connie. Though she tries to deny it, her best friends can see it clearly. Meanwhile, Connie’s white, British father (the only parent she has since her mother died) does not accept any of it. He does not believe in her powers and just wants her to come home before curfew. He does not like her spending time with her grandfather who is helping her understand her powers, and is training her to use them effectively. He also does not want her hanging out with Rakwena. Connie keeps her work of trying to save the Ma-Fourteens to herself. She knows her father will never understand.

This book is part of a series that I predict will be a hit with readers. Although in this first book many questions are answered by the end, a fair number are not. This is an adept way to get the readers coming back for more. I, for one, cannot wait to read the next installment. The book is marketed as young adult but I loved it. It is a hybrid with elements of mystery, romance, and science fiction which I really enjoyed. I also liked how aspects unique to Botswana were integrated into a book which is marketed for a worldwide audience.

The only down side is that it is only available as an ebook. People will need an e-reader, a tablet, smart phone or a computer to read it. But it is well worth the expense, especially that once you have

an e-reader you can now have a much wider array of books to choose from than are currently available in Botswana and ebooks are cheaper. The added bonus you will be ready for the next Conyza Bennett book.

Reviewed by Lauri Kubuitsile

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