

7-15-2015

Through the Woods

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Recommended Citation

Mason Smith, Maggie, "Through the Woods" (2015). *Publications*. 97.

https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/lib_pubs/97

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Carroll, Emily. *Through the Woods: Stories*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry, 2014.
PZ7.7.C369Th 2014.

“But three days later my brother came from the woods. (Most strange things do).” – His Face
All Red

Included in YASLA’s Top 10 Great Graphic Novels for Teens list, *Through the Woods* is a collection of five beautifully rendered and incredibly chilling short stories. In “Our Neighbor’s House,” three children must make a decision when left alone. In “A Lady’s Hands are Cold,” a young bride learns a horrible secret. “His Face All Red” is the story of a man whose village is troubled by a beast from the woods, and in “My Friend Janna,” two girls learn a lesson about the paranormal. Finally, in “The Nesting Place,” a girl finds that her brother’s fiancé isn’t at all what she seems. An introduction and conclusion frame the five stories, drawing together the central idea of the anthology: while it may be easy to enter the woods, it may not be so easy to leave.

With simple and sparse yet poetic hand-written text woven through the panels depicting each story, art and design become the true focus of this work. The anthology’s illustrations were created using ink and graphite on Bristol board with digital coloring; the ink and graphite drawings are rough and imprecise, while the digital coloring is used for emphasis. The panels of each tale vary in shape and size – from small rectangles to striking two-page spreads – and are saturated with rich primary colors set against muted grey, glossy black, and stark white backgrounds. The result is a series of unsettling images perfectly combined with eerie text to ensure that these five stories will haunt readers long after *Through the Woods* has been finished.