"In The Drowning City" And Other Stories

Malyn Matilde Segarra, University of Central Florida

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Abstract
In the Drowning City and Other Stories is a collection of fiction written and revised during Malyn Segarra's graduate studies at the University of Central Florida. Most of the collection examines the transient nature and fragility of identity and shifting roles within the family unit. All focus on a particular span of time, the transition into young adulthood. Each character is faced with an obstacle or event that tests his or her beliefs, integrity and sense of self. As each one struggles to make a unique and permanent impression in the world, he or she must come to terms with the past, in some cases, breaking away from it. Although the characters come from varying backgrounds, the themes that thread the collection are universal. The three stories that serve as the backbone of the collection, "Slashing, Tripping and Other Offensive Plays," "In the Drowning City," and "This Is Just a Modern Love Song" find the protagonists striving to adapt to their newly transformed environments. As the situations they face become more complicated and the resolutions exceedingly compromised, the innocence and certainty associated with childhood is jeopardized.

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Leiby, Jeanne

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Here, in the "drowning city," we meet Mollie and Felix. Felix Orlov has befriended Molly McHugh, and he is the only father she has ever known. Felix considers himself a conjurer, a magician and seer, but he is much more than that. The story has a slow start, and doesn't grip you right away. Little Molly McHugh makes for a good lead children's character--she is smart and resourceful, and not without an edge. She knows about evil. Although it isn't said right out, she spent most of her time growing up in the Drowning City avoiding being raped. She finds sanctuary with Felix Orlov AKA Orlov the Conjuror, an anachronistic spiritualist with can actually speak to the dead. Felix and Molly make an odd couple, with the kind, withered old man carrying for the spritely young girl, and vice versa.