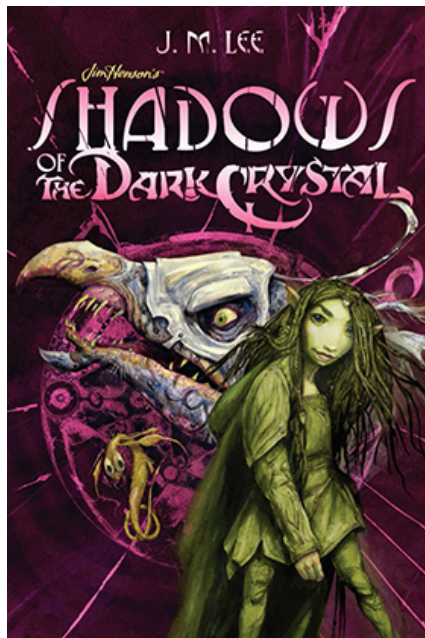


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JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

Children and Young Adult Book Review *Elementary to Middle School* *Shadows of the Dark Crystal #1*

Student Reviewer: Emily Whitney
Educator Reviewer: Sam Tanner, PhD.



Lee, J.M. (2016). Jim Henson's *Shadows of the Dark Crystal*. New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap.

ISBN: 978-0448482897

Pages: 272

Student Review:

The crystal is cracked. The song of Thra (their fantasy world) is out of tune. The Dark Crystal-- the crystal that used to be the heart of Thra-- is now broken. The Skeksis Lords tasted vliyaya, and now they are mad for it. Trying to get all the vliyaya they can, they cracked the crystal, and it started creating shadows, dark shadows that are spreading across the land of Thra. They are shadows that show you the worst of people you love, altering their words. But a young Gelfling girl, Naia, is doing all she can to make things right.

This book is important because it talked about power and the right and wrong ways to use it. Naia thinks that power should be used to help all of Thra, and it is! But the Skeksis lords have other ideas.

This book is based on the movie *The Dark Crystal* by Jim Henson. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who likes fantasy, outrageous plots, and a few monsters here and there. The thing I liked best was how no matter what, she kept on trying to save the world.

Emily Whitney
Park Forest Elementary, State College, PA
4th Grade

Educator Review:

I had never watched Jim Henson's 1982 film *The Dark Crystal*. I finished the first two chapters of J.M. Lee's new book, *Jim Henson's Shadows of the Dark Crystal #1*, and decided to watch the film. I was awed by the ambitious puppetry, but more so by the complex and dark mythology of the story. The film was not an episode of *The Muppets*, to be sure. Henson's universe of the Dark Crystal is worthy of further exploration. J.M. Lee won a contest to write a prequel to the dark film. Grosset & Dunlap published the first book in this new series on June 28th, 2016. This book is best suited for ages 12 and up, or grades 7 and up.

Lee manages to capture the organic sprawl of Thra in a way that avoids simple exploitation of the notoriety of the popular film from the '80s. Instead, Lee's work explores themes of connectivity, empathy, and the pitfalls of privilege. This book should appeal to adolescents in search of a compelling fantasy series. I would also argue that Lee has written a book with broader appeal for those of us concerned about our increasing separation from nature, the damage selfishness has on our environments, and the poisonous potential of power. I would recommend this book to adolescents and adults alike. This is a world that is worthy of our imaginative energies.

The subject matter is not overly dark, and I can think of no other concerns educators might have should they recommend this book to readers.

Sam Tanner, PhD.
The Pennsylvania State University in Altoona
Assistant Professor, Literacy Education

"I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who likes fantasy, outrageous plots, and a few monsters here and there"
-Emily