



The Monsters of Templeton (2008)
by Lauren Groff

Reviewed by Jules McLeland – 1/4/2010

This book begins with the appearance of a large 51 foot corpse of a large monster surfacing in Lake Glimmerglass. The town where it all takes place is called Templeton after its founding father whom the main character Willie Upton is related to. She returns home in a distressed state, also pregnant, to get herself together to figure out her life. Her mother welcomes her with open arms.

Willie's mom (Vivienne) a single parent was a hippie, raised her with the belief that her father was one of three different men she had flings with. Her mother was alternative - never let her have sugar - telling her she was allergic to it. Vivienne devoted her life to raising her daughter in her alternative lifestyle. When Willie arrives home she soon discovers how much her mom has changed as she has now found religion in the form of a preacher named Milky.

Willie was living in San Francisco studying at Stanford in California - working on her PHD in archeology. She had an affair that caused all the havoc in her life and made her think she couldn't return to Stanford as she might be headed to jail. She leaves behind her best friend Clarissa who soon needs her. Vivienne soon tells Willie her father was a man who lived in her town. She will not reveal his name. This leads Willie into researching her family tree. She looks at every man as her potential father. She goes to the local historical museum and reconnects with people from her past. She reads documents that lead her to the truth of her past family members. Her mother's home is filled with old family portraits which are interwoven through the novel. She writes her family tree for us to see as she tells us about its members as well as including photos. She discovers things about herself, her mother, her friend, and life along the way. It is an easy read and you feel for all the characters and wonder why the monster is in the lake.

~ Jules McLeland

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