



**“Daughter of Smoke & Bone” by Laini Taylor, Little, Brown and Company, 2011, \$18.99.**

By Amber Ovsak

Laini Taylor’s “Daughter of Smoke & Bone,” artfully brought together a fantasy-driven story of forbidden love, the battle between good and evil, and the quest for peace.

I won’t lie. I was initially drawn to this novel because of the cover. It is a black and white close up picture of a girl with a bright blue feathered mask over her eyes. The font subtly suggests fantasy and romance. After finding out that the story takes place in Eastern Europe, I was hooked. Taylor did a wonderful job of transporting the reader to the cobblestone streets and gothic cathedrals of Prague.

The story begins with an introduction to the main character, *Karou*, whose life appears like that of a typical teenager. She struggles with loneliness. She deals with a

recent breakup. However, as the story progresses, the details of her life as a part of a different world slowly unfold. No one knows where she disappears to for days on end or what she does when she’s gone. Karou, in fact knows little about what she is doing beyond travelling to black markets to purchase a variety of different teeth, which will be used for a magical purpose in another world.

The other world or *Elsewhere*, as Karou knows it, is populated with a monster species called *Chimaera*. These creatures are part animal and part human and possess magical powers. Karou has only been introduced to this world within the confines of a dark shop, where the only family she has ever known reside. Karou can enter this shop from a doorway in Prague and leave out a doorway in Morocco. While on an errand for the *Chimaera*, she is attacked by a curious angel and this sets off a chain of events, revealing her purpose on earth as well as her mysterious history.

Taylor manages to successfully incorporate many currently popular elements in young adult literature to tell a celestially magical story. While the romance tends to move the story along, the more important themes surrounding war and peace inspire the reader to want more.

I look forward to reading the next installment in this series.