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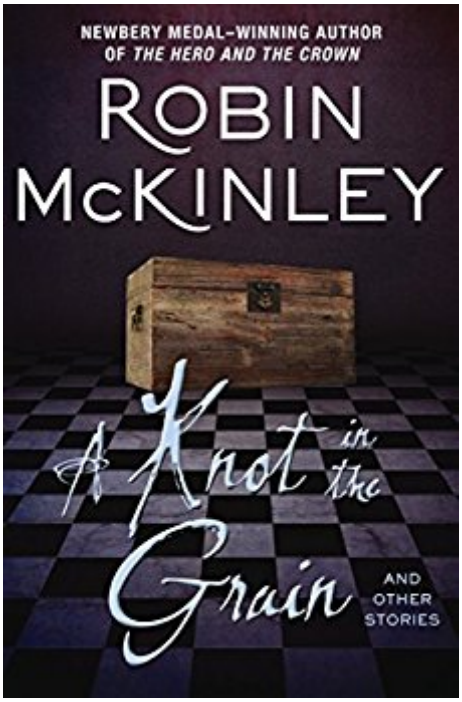
A Knot In The Grain: And Other Stories



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Synopsis

Stories from the world of The Hero and the Crown and other magical places by a New York Timesâ “bestselling Newbery Medal winner. Robin McKinley returns to the mythical setting of The Hero and the Crown and The Blue Sword in this â œthrilling, satisfying, and thought-provoking collectionâ • featuring two stories set in the world of Damar, plus three other fantasy tales featuring adventurous, pragmatic, and heroic young women (Publishers Weekly). Â Thereâ ™s mute Lily, in â œThe Healer,â • who has the power to help others, and receives a startling opportunity to find her voice when a mysterious mage stumbles into town. And Queen Ruen, who is at the mercy of a power-hungry uncle until she encounters a shape-changer in â œThe Stagman.â • In â œToukâ ™s House,â • a maiden who has grown up with a witch and a troll has a chance to become a princess, but she must decide whether she would really live happily ever after. When a curse follows Coral to her new husbandâ ™s farm in â œButtercups,â • the pair has a choice: Succumb to defeat or find a way to turn a disastrous enchantment into a fruitful new venture. Â Finally, travel to upstate New York with Annabelle. In the title story, her family moves shortly after her sixteenth birthday, and just as she starts to adjust to her new life in a small town, a plan to build a superhighway threatens her new home. But a strange box hidden in a secret attic in the new house may be the answer. This is a delightful assortment of tales from an author with â œa remarkable talent for melding the real and the magical into a single, believable wholeâ • (Booklist). Â

Book Information

File Size: 790 KB

Print Length: 195 pages

Publisher: Open Road Media Teen & Tween; Reprint edition (November 18, 2014)

Publication Date: November 18, 2014

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00OGWASDW

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #49,888 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #16 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories #40 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories #41 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Children's eBooks > Science Fiction, Fantasy & Scary Stories > Scary Stories

Customer Reviews

This book is a short story collection of Middle Grade fantasy stories. I enjoyed Robin McKinley's novels set in Damar ("The Blue Sword" and "The Hero and the Crown") so I bought this book hoping to learn more about Damar. Two of the stories were set in Damar, but you won't know it from any other generic fantasy world if Luthe (a character from the novels) didn't briefly appear in them. We don't learn anything new about him, either.Most of the stories follow the plot line of: a character has a problem, magic help comes along, the problem is fixed. The heroine generally doesn't have a difficult obstacle to overcome so much as a decision to make.I felt like needed information was missing in some of the stories. The heroine in "The Stagman" was very passive, and the characters' weren't developed (or their motives really explained). "The Healer" was interesting and had a developed setting and characters, but I felt like too many things were left unresolved at the end. I've never really understood the magic part of "The Knot in the Grain.""Buttercups" started well, but the conflict resolved too quickly and unrealistically easily, in my opinion. "Touk's House" was the best written of the five: it had some conflict as well as a good setting and character development. And it resolved everything at the end.There was a minor amount of explicit bad language. There were no sex scenes. Overall, the stories were a mixed bag. Robin McKinley's fans might enjoy reading these stories, but I wouldn't recommend buying the book.

I've always enjoyed her work, it was awesome to find a collection of short stories :)

Brilliantly written stories that will engage both adults and teens. I am now in my 30's, and haven't read this book since I was in my early teens, but boy, am I glad that I recently purchased it to read again. These stories have lodged in my memory for fifteen-plus years. What talent Ms. McKinley displays as she weaves her gorgeous prose!

This book has rapidly become one of my favorite short story collections of all time. I rate a book by the way I feel when I finish reading it. If I am frustrated or disappointed, there is a good chance that I will trade it in with my next used book store visit. This book left me feeling warm and comfortable

and satisfied. I had a small smile on my face and the afterglow of knowing that for just a few moments, I saw magic. I have gone back to it several times when in need of comfort or escape and it has drawn me in each and every time.Ms. McKinley seems to have a lovely little window through which she can glimpse a wild and magical place. I am only grateful that she also has the skill to show it to us as well. Buy it.

Short stories as carefully faceted and polished as precious jewels, this collection is as priceless as a dragon’s hoard. One only wishes for more.

I liked the stories. I prefer the fantasy in different lands than the one that was considered present day. Good quick read.

great author

McKinley’s "The Blue Sword" is one of my favorite books, and I’ve read almost all her other works, some of which I liked, some of which didn’t excite my interest. On a whim, I decided to give this one a try.The first four short stories in this collection are set in Damar, the same world as "The Hero and the Crown" and "The Blue Sword" -- Luthe even makes an appearance in a couple of the stories. However, they are for the most part nothing special. The best story in this collection is the title story, which is set in modern times. Even though it’s well-written and has the quietly magical feeling that McKinley conveys so well, somehow it doesn’t really quite capture the heart in the way her best work does.Overall, I’d give this book a so-so review. If you’re a fan of Damar and McKinley, borrow it from the library and read it, but it’s not worth purchasing.

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