



Song for a Scarlet Runner

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Peat is on the run — forced to flee for her life when she's blamed for bringing bad luck to her village. She heads for the endless marshes, where she's caught by an old healer-woman who makes Peat her apprentice and teaches her the skill of storytelling.

But a story can be a dangerous thing. It can take you out of one world and leave you stranded in another — and Peat finds herself trapped in an eerie place beyond the Silver River where time stands still. Her only friends are a 900-year-old boy and his ghost hound, plus a small and slippery sleek — a cunning creature that might sink his teeth into your leg one minute, and save your life the next.

Song for a Scarlet Runner Details

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Author : Julie Hunt

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From Reader Review Song for a Scarlet Runner for online ebook

Gillie says

This was an awesome book but I have a question, Why did the sleek send his baby instead of himself? I mean, from what I know, his baby is just as bad as he was. A Song For A Scarlet Runner was a very, very, good book!

?Kimari? says

You might also enjoy:

- ★ The Tales of Beedle the Bard, especially "The Tale of the Three Brothers"
 - ★ Plain Kate
 - ★ The Cats of Tanglewood Forest
 - ★ Seven Wild Sisters: A Modern Fairy Tale
 - ★ The Mysterious Woods of Whistle Root
 - ★ The Wolf Wilder
-

Emma Parker says

I enjoyed the adventure and wonders of the different world. It was quite fascinating.

Rebecca McNutt says

A middle grade fantasy novel with elements from some of the world's oldest fairy tales, *Song for a Scarlet Runner* is a fantastic story that no reader will ever forget.

Claire says

What a marvellous book!!! These are great characters and a compelling story. I loved Siltboy and Shadow. Siltboy is amazing! I love the way he talks and behaves and when he asked Mother Moss to be his mother, I had a little cry.

The Scarlet Runner (or sleek as Peat calls him) is an unpredictable character and is totally wonderful. The Siltman was strange and creepy and so well written.

Just an amazing story. There are no words!

I'll try though...

The book is really well written and the characters are diverse and interesting. The art of storytelling is a hard one and not only is story well told but the stories within are beautifully told as well.

The important thing to remember is to open and close your story.

I am really looking forward to see what else she writes for this age group.

Abby says

A bit simple, but enjoyable overall!

Catherine Heloise says

I received this book as part of the Australia Day Book Giveaway Blog Hop. Once again, it's a book I probably wouldn't have found on my own, but it really was a delight.

Peat and her sister have grown up alone, after their mother was cast out from the nearest vision. When a stranger, after visiting them, brings a deadly disease to the village, Peat has to flee again, this time alone - at least at first.

This story is very much in the vein of fairy-tale, from the dark beginnings to the archetypal plots and characters who run through it. We have the sleek, her first companion on the journey, a capricious animal who might steal food or provide it, who might seriously injure Peat or act as her guide. We have the inevitable journey into the wilderness, and the encounter with magic, embodied in both mists and in elderly women. We have the power of story - more myth-like, this time - and the myth-like resolution. I am not at all surprised to learn that Julie Hunt is also a poet - the vividness of the language and the dreamlike landscape speak of her love of words.

While the story is episodic in some ways, it seems to me that Peat's journey takes her through a very rich landscape of story and archetype, and it's gorgeous. I enjoy this story very much now - I would have absolutely loved it when I was twelve or so.

For readers who enjoyed Diana Wynne Jones' 'Power of Three', or who enjoy fairy-tale retellings - this isn't one, precisely, but it does feel as though it ought to be.

Angela Sunde says

A racing and pleasurable read, I finished this enchanting book far faster than I normally do. I did love Song for a Scarlet Runner and highly recommend it; the characters are strongly formed and there is plenty of heart and humour, however, the denouement between Peat and Eadie was a little quick for me.

Gaby says

Chose to read this one as it made the CBCA Book of the Year shortlist. I bought my own copy because I really liked the cover! It is a good adventure story and is fast-paced, well written and well-planned. It contains themes of friendship and belonging. Yet it also draws on historical events and myths and weaves them into the tale, the quick spread of the 'catching disease' for example.

Our protagonist, Peat, is forced to leave her home and she travels far. meets new and interesting characters and faces many difficulties before she is safe. If you liked following Alice's (Alice in Wonderland) or Dorothy's (The Wonderful Wizard of Oz) adventures then this is a good story to try. Song For a Scarlet Runner also reminded me a little of The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making.

I would probably recommend this to older readers as the book is written well, and Peat's companion, Siltboy, speaks in a stilted old-fashioned way. Children who are not motivated readers probably would find him difficult to understand and may skip through it. A great choice, however, to read to a grade five or six class... We just may need to read slowly. :D

Alex Fairhill says

This is a cracking adventure story for youngsters. Peat, after being blamed for a sickness in a nearby village, is chased away; followed by a 'sleek', which helps her find the right path by nipping and scratching; and stumbles into the marshes, where she's taken on as apprentice to a storyteller.

The storyteller's tale is linked more closely to Peat than she realises, and the threads tie together as Peat befriends a 900-year-old boy and his ghost dog.

This is a story set in a world recognisable enough to be familiar, and fantastical enough to bridge the gap between fairytale and realism.

Clare Cannon says

I'm not a fan of bleak books for kids. Bleak is even worse than scary, imho. This one isn't totally bleak, but the poor girl takes so many knocks I just felt like putting the book down. I've probably made it sound worse than it is; it does have its moments of (faint) rejoicing, and the sheer determination of this little character is indeed inspiring.

This is the story of a little girl who must fight her way through adversity from the day she was born. So many things weigh upon Peat and stand between her and happiness. Illegitimate and banished from her (non-) father's house, she lives with her mother (who soon dies) and sister in a lone house outside the village, herding cattle. But after giving directions to a disease-carrying stranger who passed through, she is forced to flee her furious non-father and begins her life on the run.

Peat has been either harmed or at best let-down by almost all of the adults in her life: her mother's cruel husband who chased her away; her mother who was too weak to look after her daughters; an auntie who means well but urges the child to run away; a colony of women who vie with each other to take Peat on as an apprentice, one of whom steals Peat away under the pretence of caring for her, but who actually betrays Peat as part of a bargain she made with a wizard to give up 'her child' in exchange for longevity; the wizard who

keeps Peat prisoner; and many others who could have warned or helped Peat but were too weak or lacking in concern to do so.

The only characters who really help Peat are a capricious sleek (a small furry creature who alternatively steals Peat's food and yet scavenges on her behalf, scratches her and yet guides her to safety) and a fellow prisoner of the wizard who has been stuck outside of time for 900 years after he was betrayed in a similar way by his own father.

Is this an allegory for a child's life? Some children do seem to have it this way; your heart goes out to them and this story reminds you that you can't let it be that way. Perhaps it's not something you would give to all children to consider, at least not without discussing what else these people could have done to help Peat. That she comes out ok in the end seems more thanks to chance and her own determination than to the help of anyone else.

Themes for discussion:

- Peat is accused of being a bastard at birth because she doesn't look like her father but more like people from a neighbouring village. Nothing further is said about it.
- Peat is abandoned by many people, but somehow she keeps going.
- Even those adults who do want to help are overruled by others who don't (and who are stronger). Does this make you wonder whether it is not worth asking for help?
- The only character who seems to truly understand Peat's suffering is one who has experienced the same himself (the boy captive of the Wizard). Is it possible for someone who hasn't experienced it to understand?
- An older woman had bargained away Peat's life in order that she could live forever herself. Peat fights for her own freedom and is told that she is right to do so, but she's also told that her freedom will lead to the older woman's death, a consequence which makes the choice harder, though it is still right.
- Peat has a final discussion with the older woman who is now prepared to die. She asks Peat to send her off in a skiff, and when it returns to the shore, she is gone. While the woman dies naturally (we presume), this episode would need further discussion, as it could imply that the woman is choosing the way and time of her own death.

'Eadie, I don't want you to die.'

'I can't live well anymore,' she said. 'Besides, there are worse things than death...'

Reviewed for www.GoodReadingGuide.com

Isabelle Jones says

This book was my favourite book for a very very long time. The characters, the setting and the fantasy aspect of the story was just so perfect. I think I read this book about 6 times and I'm sure if I picked it up today I would probably read it another 6 times or maybe even more!!!!.

If you like fantasy you will fly through this book and this story will stick with you forever!.

Lisa Fleetwood says

Short synopsis:

Song for a Scarlet Runner tells the story of Peat, a girl born with flame red hair in a settlement of brown-

haired people. She is declared unlucky by her father and exiled from the village with her mother and sister, Marlie. They move into the caves of the Overhang tending to a herd of cattle and making cheese for the village. After their mother dies, life goes on normally for Peat and her sister Marlie, until the day a stranger shows up. They direct the stranger to the village, but when it is revealed that the stranger carried a dying sickness that has passed onto the village, they believe that Peat has caused this bad luck and she is chased from the Overhang into the endless marshes where she meets a red-tailed twittering sleek, a Scarlet Runner, a pernickety animal that from one moment to the next will either bite her, bring her food or guide her.

In the marshes she is captured by Eadie, a mind reading swamp hag and healer-woman, who takes her as an apprentice. Eadie begins to teach Peat the craft of storytelling before taking her to the Hub, where the worlds meet, to perform the telling a great story. Peat finds out that storytelling is a powerful thing, and when Eadie betrays her Peat finds herself trapped in a timeless world beyond the Silver River with an ancient warrior boy and his great hound.

My Review:

I really enjoyed this book from the moment I picked it up. For middle-grade readers and adults who love a good tale, Julie Hunt has woven an easy to read, fast paced and well written fantasy adventure story about a brave girl in a suspicious world, who will do anything to find her way back to her sister. Peat is a well crafted character – a strong, independent heroine who pulls you along on a journey full of adventure. On her quest she finds there is a world beyond the Overhang that is full of wonder and magic where she learns about bravery, love and friendship and the power of words.

The cast of side characters in *Song for a Scarlet Runner* were wonderful, from the naughty, yet helpful sleek, to the hilarious squabbling Marsh Aunties who competed to make Peat their apprentice, to Mother Moss, an old healer woman Peat meets along the way to the Hub, and my favourite side characters of all – the lonely warrior boy and his loyal hound.

Overall, this was a great read! Congratulations to Julie Hunt for making the shortlist of Aurealis Awards, Readings Prize and the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year for Younger Readers.

<http://illuminationsbylisafleetwood.w...>

Miffy says

Oh, oh, oh. Peat is wonderful! Strong, yet cautious; brave, but fearful; selfish but also full of compassion for the lost, the old and the imprisoned. She is feisty, free and faithful. And she is totally up for the adventure that unfolds in the page of *Song for a Scarlet Runner*.

The supporting cast is well written, too, even the cows that Peat cares for at the start of the story have personality - especially the young and naughty calf, Bright. From Peat's sister and aunt, through to the stranger, the sleek, the swamp auntie, Mother Moss, the Siltman and his dogs, and finally Siltboy and Shadow, each of the characters has a part to play, and they play it well.

This is a quest novel with a difference. There are no treasures to be found, no dire enemies to defeat, no thrones to reclaim - other than the treasure of love kept strong in a heart; the defeat of death; and the kingdom of family to reclaim.

Song for a Scarlet Runner is a celebration and warning of the power of words. What they can give, and what

they can take away. Magical.

Andrew McDonald says

A really wonderful fantasy-journey-adventure novel for middle-grade readers. So inventive and beautifully executed.
