



## The Song of Mavin Manyshaped

*Sheri S. Tepper*

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For Mavin, coming of age as a shape-shifter is both exhilarating and terrifying. Recklessly headstrong, she is to become notorious in the lands of the True Game. With her brother, she leaves their home - a place of slavery and fear - only to have the boy's powers of beguilement lead them into danger. Rescued by the Wizard Himagery, the shape-shift and man of magic make a vow. When twenty years have come and gone, they will meet again. But Himmagery has vanished, leaving only a letter of love behind for Mavin to find. If he were dead, she would know it: sorcerers could trace the scent of his trail, necromancers raise his bones from the dust. But he has disappeared - beyond the power of wizardy. And so the search of Mavin Manyshaped begins This is the first volume of Sheri S. Tepper's acclaimed The Chronicles of Mavin Manyshaped

## **The Song of Mavin Manyshaped Details**

Date : Published March 1st 1985 by Ace (first published February 1st 1985)

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Author : Sheri S. Tepper

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## **From Reader Review The Song of Mavin Manyshaped for online ebook**

### **Ann Marsh says**

This is an excellent book -- great world-building and character building. The only downside is it can move a little fast and be somewhat difficult to understand.

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### **Eden Celeste says**

I originally read this book in high school and it made a large impact on me. I've re-read it since, but it's still probably been 15 years since I've picked it up so my memory is now rather sketchy on the actual story. However, this was probably the best book I've read about a shape shifter (not of the werewolf variety, but more like Otto from Deep Space Nine). I also think that this was written early in Tepper's career as it does not contain the social commentary that her later-written books do.

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### **Lowez says**

Some good concepts, but too contrived. I was extremely aware of the author's voice the whole time, so I wasn't able to get lost in the story. Which is basically the whole point of the fantasy genre.

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### **Marie says**

I had a feeling I'd like Mavin more than her kid. :)

Favorite of the books in the "True Game Universe" so far and by a lot. Tepper has matured a mite for this one. We are shown a narrower slice of the world, allowing Tepper to go into great and interesting detail on talent clans - the shapeshifters primarily. Attitudes toward shapeshifting while pregnant! Shapeshifting competitions! Great fun.

There's also a certain appeal in returning to a world again and again. I had my maps!

Lots of nods to the earlier books - very prequel. I was just a wee bit annoyed when young Huld showed up - did we need him? really? and already an evil little brat?

Looking forward to devouring the rest of the series.

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### **O.M. Grey says**

I've been wanting to read a Sheri S. Tepper book for some time. Unfortunately, this wasn't a great one for me

to start with. It's the first in a series of books I won't be reading, but it's part of the True Game series, consisting of a few trilogies and short stories. Although, I might give King's Blood Four a go.

So, The Song of Mavin Manyshaped, like most high fantasy books I try to read, had far too many strange words and creatures and names to keep them all straight.

I got about halfway through before deciding that it was too confusing and too much work. I'll stick with urban fantasy.

That said, what I did read and understand was superbly written. I love Tepper's writing style, and I simply adore her social commentary on abused and exploited women, as well as the justified punishment Mavin dishes out to the disgusting rapists. Love. It.

This was my favorite passage, a perfect metaphor for rape:

When she had done, he whispered, "You know, the boys ... they say ... the ones like Leggy and Janjiver ... they say the girls like it. That's what they say. They say that the girls may say no, but they really like it."

Mavin thought a time. "Mertyn child, you like sweet cakes, don't you?"

He nodded, cocking his head at this change of subject.

"Let us suppose I put a basket of sweet cakes here, a big one, and I held your mouth open and I crumbled a cake into your mouth and pushed it down your throat with a piece of wood, the way the crones push corn down the goose's neck to fatten it, so that your throat bled and you choked and gasped, but I went on pushing the crumbled cakes down your throat until they were gone. You could not chew them, or taste them. When I was done and your throat was full of blood and you half dead from it all, I would take the stick away and laugh at you and tell you I would be back on the morrow to do it all again. Then, suppose you came crying to someone and that someone said, 'But Mertyn, you like sweet cakes, you really like sweet cakes...'

Since Tepper is known for her "ecofeminism" & my husband adores her work, I'll likely try another at one point. One of the dystopian ones.

Basically, the problem with this book is not the book or the author, not by any means. It's just a genre I don't particularly enjoy except on very rare occasions.

I give it stars because I couldn't finish it, but I recognize the quality of the writing and my own issues with this genre. I have no doubt fans of high fantasy will devour this book.

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**carol. says**

Song of Mavin contains the kernels of everything I love about Tepper's work. There's the character herself; a little dreamy but becoming determined and practical, coming into her strength by developing self-reliance and thinking far outside tradition. The threads of horror running through it, and the struggles of sexism, of being assigned by birth to baby-making with only limited freedoms. The convoluted and slow punishment of wanton destruction--very few authors could develop a wicker basket into an instrument of torture. It has her focus on chosen family, empowerment, greed and harmony, but so subtly done compared to her later work.

Where it really differs from later Tepper is the love of words and playfulness in the writing--I felt in the first few pages like I was reading "The Jabberwocky" put into prose form--lots of alliteration and wordplay. "Through the p'natti the shifters of all the Xhindi clans came each year at Assembly time, processions of them, stiff selves marching into the outer avenues only to melt into liquid serpentines which poured through the holes in the slything walls; into tall wands of flesh sliding through the narrowing doors; into pneumatic billows bounding over the platforms and up onto the heights all in a flurry of wings, feathers, hides, scales, conceits and frenzies which dazzled the eyes and the senses so that the children became hysterical with it..." By the time I was finished, I started imagining how it would sound aloud, deciding that it would make a lovely bedtime story read.

Since few other reviews have a synopsis, let me just say briefly that there is a young shape-shifter girl named Mavin who comes into her shape-shifting Talent, and discovers it includes obligations that anyone would fear. She encourages her older sister, Handbright, to follow her dream, and then flees the keep with her brother, five year-old Mertyn. They travel, meet the entourage of a Seer and a Wizard, and journey to their first city. Mertyn becomes deathly ill and Mavin sets off seeking a cure, meeting the legendary Shadowpeople and encountering a Ghoul.

Alas that it feels so short, and the development of their new selves so truncated; the pacing is a tad uneven, and perhaps not enough on how Mavin's inner journey progresses once outside the keep she grew up in. Alas as well for the short acid-dream passage near the end. But for that, it would be a five star book for me. It's also notable for being a young adult book with a very strong message on sexual inequality and dysfunction, unfortunately just as pertinent now as thirty years ago.

And kudos for the most innovative characterization of a sloth ever.

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Cross posted at: <http://clsiewert.wordpress.com/2013/0...>

### **Arlene Allen says**

An outstanding, well developed, brilliantly characterized, clearly imagined and original - this is my favorite of all Tepper's series.

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You know, I do understand about messages and causes (especially those I support) but it saddens me to no end to see such a brilliant talent limited in the way Tepper's has become.

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### **Princessjay says**

[Her younger brother turned out to have strong Beguilement (not surprising, since he was King Mertyn in True Game) who kept their eldest sister stuck in their abusive keep, raped and beaten bc she was the only mature female shifter. Mavin set her free and precociously revenged herself upon the 3 rapists. (hide spoiler)]

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### **Victoria says**

3.5 actually.

I really enjoyed the creativity of this world and the system of magic and rule here. I also loved how strong and independent the main character was and I loved the way she solved the problem of the predicament that started her journey. The cast of characters was interesting and fun.

I found myself losing interest in the story about 3/4th of the way through though and it seemed to lose a bit of steam and immediacy at that point which is the reason for me taking 1.5 stars off.

None the less I say this is a great piece of high fantasy and I would recommend it

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### **Barb says**

Finished this book so easily! I can just step right into Sheri's worlds and trust that I won't get out until I am ready. Usually that means that I take my time with her books and enjoy the stay, but this was a quick read and I got to the end before I realized! Mavin is a wonderful character, so wise at such a young age. I just love how she goes against the grain of traditional teaching to figure out her own way of being, which causes her to become so much more.

I just love Sheri S. Tepper. Plain and simple. This book is linked with the King's Blood Four series but more of a prequel. It explains how Mavin Manyshaped comes to be and I just love the character. She is definitely a strong female lead! I'm about a quarter of the way in....

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### **Christine Rose says**

Like most high fantasy books I try to read, there are far too many strange words and creatures and names to keep them all straight.

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### **Shane says**

This was a pretty original fantasy tale that got into some dark territory early on and then swayed away from it. I feel like there's probably a very complicated world behind this story, but we only get a glimpse of it. The "Gamesman" part of it didn't seem very fleshed out, as if she got too distracted with the action and just went with it.

I did like the fact that there are 3 books, but the first book has closure on almost all the issues. Since they're so short I will probably get to the other 2 at some point, but I don't feel like I HAVE to read them right away.

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### **Althea Ann says**

Early Tepper!

This has been kicking around under my ownership for a while, and I decided to read it now because the title character was mentioned, in passing, in the last Patricia McKillip book I read (Od Magic). This made me go, "Huh, is Mavin a mythological character, not just a fictional character?" No. It's just an homage.

Still, it deserves an homage.

I really liked this book. It does show that it's an early work (1985, her 4th or 5th novel, I believe). This is both good and bad. The prose is less masterful and some elements of the plot are more 'typical' than in her later works. However, while the strong feminist elements that Tepper is known for are indubitably here, the tone is less didactic than in her more recent books.

Mavin is a young woman who has grown up in an isolated community of rather inbred shapeshifters. This generation, the group is experiencing a severe lack of women. When the rather naive Mavin finally realizes what this situation will mean she is expected to do when she comes of age, she decides to break with tradition and set off on her own to gain her independence and discover her abilities. Unexpectedly, she is soon caught up in an adventure involving plots, politics, plague, and a legendary race of beings called 'shadowpeople.'

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### **Ashley Franks says**

I have waited many years to read this book. Having been out of print, my attempts to purchase it were faced with outrageous prices. Fifteen years later and I was able to purchase this and the final book for a reasonable price (the 2nd book being in my collection all this time, waiting to be read).

I was kind of afraid that I might have outgrown the True Game series, but am delighted to see the world is as interesting as I've long thought it to have been. I will have to reread the Necromancer and Jinian books because it's all forgotten. Mavin Manyshaped must have been an interesting character from them, because I named my cat after her before reading her actual stories.

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## **Andy Bird says**

Very good. In fact I found this better on this re-read than I had remembered it. It is the first of a prequel trilogy to the first True Game trilogy, which I have just finished, and it expands on the world and the characters in it. It's typical Tepper, great characters, great story and quirky. the character this trilogy focuses on is excellent, you really want to follow her journey. You could read this book without reading the first trilogy, particularly as it is the first book historically in the story, although the first trilogy would introduce the world a bit more smoothly. I would recommend this.

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