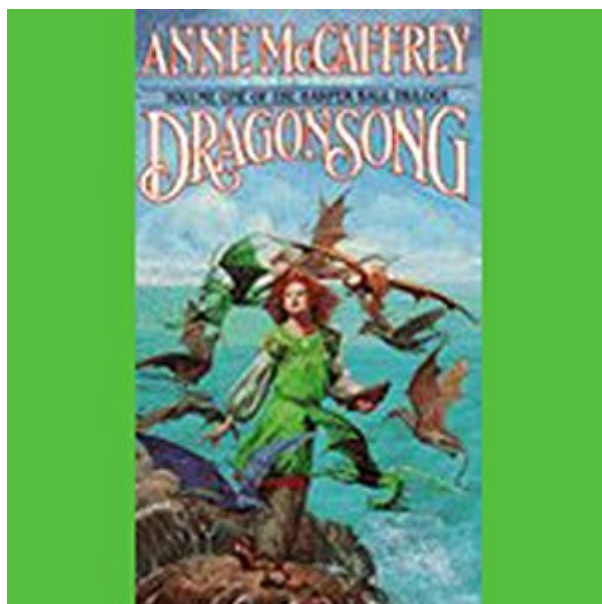


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Dragonsong: Harper Hall Trilogy, Volume 1



Synopsis

Every two hundred years or so, shimmering Threads fall from space, raining death and black ruin on Pern. The great dragons of Pern hurl themselves through the beleaguered skies, flaming tongues of fire to destroy deadly Thread and save the Planet. But it was not Threadfall that made young Menolly unhappy. It was her father who betrayed her ambition to be a Harper, who thwarted her love of music. Menolly had no choice but to run away. When, suddenly, she came upon a group of fire lizards, wild and smaller relatives of the fire-breathing dragons, she let her music swirl around them. She taught nine of them to sing. Suddenly Menolly was no longer alone -- she was Mistress of Music and Ward of the dazzling fire dragons. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 7 hours and 15 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Recorded Books

Audible.com Release Date: July 12, 2007

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B000TMD8CG

Best Sellers Rank: #18 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Children's Books > Fairytales & Folklore #46 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Myths & Legends #78 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Fairy Tales & Folklore

Customer Reviews

"Dragonsong" is the first of Anne McCaffrey's Harper Hall of Pern trilogy which focuses on my favorite Pern character, Menolly. In this first story, Menolly is the youngest child and daughter of Yanus, Sea Holder at Half-Circle Sea Hold in Benden Hold. Although she displays astounding musical talents, Menolly's father will have none of it. After the death of Petiron, the old Harper, Menolly is allowed to sing only to give the children their teaching songs. But when Elgion, the new Harper, arrives at Half-Circle Sea Hold, Menolly is forbidden to play ever again. Literally adding injury to insult, Menolly sustains a grievous wound to her hand while cleaning fish. But just as it looks as if life could not get any worse for Menolly, a wonderful thing happens. She impresses a

clutch of nine fire lizards. In her miniature queen Beauty and the rest of the clutch, Menolly has a chorus of fire lizards who harmonize with her in a most amazing way. Meanwhile, Harper Elgion is having a problem, because he has been ordered by Master Harper Robinton to discover the prodigal talent Petrion has discovered. In his last message the Old Harper had sent two of the loveliest melodies Robinton had ever heard. But clearly none of the young lads at Half-Circle Sea Hold has a whit of musical talent and Yanus makes up some story about a foundling sent back to his own hold. Eventually Robinton himself comes to solve the mystery of the missing musical talent. No hyperbole here, but not since Anne of Green Gables have I come across as enchanting a young girl as Menolly (her name is just perfect too). The similarity is certainly palatable, what with a young woman who is told to deny her talents because she is but a girl.

For the child that loves dragons and stories about dragons, only one book series comes to mind that has successfully created an entire complex world of dragons and the people who love them. Anne McCaffrey's dragonriders of Pern series has existed since the 1970s and it is still as popular as ever. Author McCaffrey has written intricate imaginings about Pern and its inhabitants. At once sci-fi and fantasy, she is an adept writer that fully deserves the popularity she has received. For the child that wants an easy introduction into this world, there are two options. They could begin at the very beginning of the series and slowly work their way through all the Pern books. Or, second option, they could start with a book that is both kid-friendly and a wonderful Intro to McCaffrey 101.

"Dragonsong" was a book that I personally picked up in sixth grade and loved. It is the perfect way to learn more about the dragons of Pern, their riders, and the people of the planet. McCaffrey is smart. She knows that this book series is so complex that there is no way in which to begin any plot without a recap of past events. She includes in this tale a map of Pern, a useful character list, and a Forward that deftly explains the history of the planet and its dragons. Then we meet Menolly. Born in a small fishing village, the girl is the most talented musician in the village, but she yearns to become a professional Harper and create music as well as sing/play it. Unfortunately, no woman has ever been a Harper before and her conservatively minded family is determined to squash this dream of Menolly's before she shames them in some way. When life for Menolly becomes too harsh, she escapes into the wide world and takes shelter in a cave.

Dragonsong is the first novel in the Harper Hall trilogy and the fourth in the Pern series. Harpers are assigned to Holds and Guild Halls to educate the children and to pass on interesting events to the adults. Harpers are much in demand since the return of Thread and Lessa's heroic trip through time

to bring forward another five full Weyrs from the past. In this novel, seven turns have passed since Lessa's trip through time. Half-Circle Sea Hold has lost their aged Harper and no one other than Menolly, the Sea Holder's youngest child, can properly sing the deathsong to honor old Petiron as he is put to rest. Yanus is upset that a mere girl should be given this honor, yet he has no choice but to allow it. Moreover, Menolly is the only one available to instruct the children in the Teaching songs. However, Yanus and his wife, Mavi, try to stop Menolly from "tuning", writing new songs. After repeated warnings, Yanus beats her with his belt when she dreamily strums a new tune in front of the children and Mavi piles works on her. When the new harper arrives, Yanus and Mavi try to keep Menolly from his attention, even though the new Harper has asked about the person who wrote the new songs that Petiron had sent to Harper Hall. When Menolly slashes her hand open while gutting packtails and gets slime into the cut, her mother cleans, stitches and bandages the wound and tells Menolly that she will no longer be able to use that hand to play music. The wound becomes poisoned by the slime as well as infected and Menolly spends a few days in pain and delirium. After she recovers, she spends most of her time out of the Hold gathering greens and fruit.

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