Star Dancer

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New Talent Choice:
Editors Choice

Media type:
Book
BfK Rating:
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?Most people, when they are told a story, only hear the pattern of the comings and goings of the characters. A bard learns how to discover and celebrate the deeper layers within the tale... if you close your eyes and see and sing, you will understand what the stories mean.? So Gilda, the village wise woman, instructs 15-year-old Tegen, her protégée and the child chosen to be the ?Star Dancer?, the one who will save the druids and her community from a terrible fate.

Set in the Mendips at the time of the Iron Age, this debut novel has its own bardic qualities. Webb is a performance storyteller and tells her well paced tale with assurance, drawing the reader into Tegen?s world of stone houses with hard earth floors, mead and honey cakes, torcs and rams? horns. Details such as the storage of grain in clay pits and the sealing of jars with wax place the story convincingly without becoming digressions from the mounting drama.

Consternation that the Star Dancer is a girl instead of the expected boy weakens Tegen?s position and there are plots against her. Initially rejected by the old druid Witton, Tegen must then leave her family abruptly to learn her trade before the old man dies. When Gilda dies too, Tegen has only her foster brother Griff, a ?halfhead? to help her maintain her position against the wily witch, Derowen, and the scheming druid, Gorgans, who seeks to replace her. And what form will the impending disaster take?

This first volume of what is to be a quartet is a many layered and satisfying read. RS

Running Order:
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