



2006

Water Shaper

Kate Reynolds

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McCaffrey, Laura Williams. *Water Shaper*. Clarion, 2006. ISBN 0618614893. \$16.00. 192 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Significant Shortcomings

Genre: Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Magic--Juvenile fiction; Selkies--Juvenile fiction; Water--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Deeply dissatisfied with life in her father's kingdom, fifteen year old Princess Margot runs away under the protection of Orrin--king and holy man of one of the western lands--in an effort to find a place where she belongs. However, all is not perfect with Orrin either. She finds herself drawn to the sea and the isles from whence came her mother--whose only legacy to her daughter is a strange and magical book that smells like the ocean.

McCaffrey does an excellent job of creating three distinct kingdoms and peoples. The characters all have strengths and weaknesses that combine to create surprisingly complex relationships. The nebulous demon spirits that threaten the lands seem to be the villains at first, but *Water Shaper* is more a coming-of-age story than anything else. However, the resolution of the book is weak and abrupt. Margot certainly grows and changes in the story, but there is no clear path as to where she will end up, leaving the reader uneasy and unsatisfied.