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# The Princess and the Hound

Cassandra Fugal

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Harrison, Mette Ivie. *The Princess and the Hound*. HarperCollins, 2007. ISBN 9780061131882.  
\$18.89. 410 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: fairy tales; fantasy;

Subject: Princes--Juvenile fiction; Human-animal communication--Juvenile fiction; Magic--  
Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

At first glance *The Princess and the Hound* appears to be a modern retelling of a fairy tale with enchantments, magic, and of course, romance. Although Harrison uses fairy tale motifs to weave her story, the tale is wholly original and a delightful departure from typically fairy tales. The story is narrated not by the Princess, indeed she is not even the main character, but by Prince George, the heir to a neighboring kingdom and the Princess's betrothed. Since Prince George's mother died, he has lived in fear of discovery; he possesses animal magic (the ability to speak with animals) that is reviled and feared by his subjects. Because of this gift he holds himself apart from everyone, afraid that they will discover his secret. Alone and alienated, the prince fears his power and his ability to rule the kingdom. When Prince George betroths himself to Princess Beatrice, the only child of the king of the neighboring kingdom, he finds someone who sees him for whom he truly is without fear of rejection. While Beatrice does not have animal magic she has long been over looked and harshly rejected by her father who desired a son; she too is alone and alienated except for her hound, Marit. As Prince George comes to know the princess and Marit, he discovers that she is under a curse that only his animal magic can reverse.

Harrison skillfully does not climax the story with the removal of the curse but allows the Prince and Princess to continue developing as they learn to step out of the shadows and force others to truly see them. Although the story is slow at points Harrison keeps the readers' interest; the overall story is compelling, and the intricate details weave a delightful tale.