



2008

Chalice

Tessa McMillan

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McKinley, Robin. *Chalice*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2008. ISBN 9780399246760. \$18.99. 263 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Significant shortcomings

Genre: Adventure stories; Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Fantasy--Juvenile fiction; Bees--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

After the unexpected deaths of the Master and Chalice, Mirasol—a common beekeeper—is thrown into the role of Chalice by taking care of the magical needs of her demesne, Willowlands. But she is not the only new face in the Circle. The new Master is a recently released priest of Fire, who has lost many of his human characteristics. He, like Mirasol, is learning to play his proper part in managing the demesne. However, others in the Circle are unsure of these two new arrivals and make plans to supersede them with announcing an outblood Heir to the Master. It is only when Mirasol and the new Master work together that they can rebuild the Circle and bring harmony to Willowlands.

Chalice is a difficult book to read because the story is stagnant in many places and the characters are not well developed. McKinley does a good job at creating a three-dimensional character in Mirasol, but her other characters are ignored in their development. McKinley spends too much time explaining Mirasol's world and not enough time on actual scenes with important characters. But even in her explanations of the fantasy world, McKinley's passages are often confusing and repetitive. This book is intended for young adults, but the characters and issues seem to be directed towards adults.

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