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The Silver Donkey

Kate Reynolds

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Reviewer: Reynolds, Kate
Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult
Rating: Excellent
Genre: Historical fiction;
Subject: Soldiers--Juvenile fiction; World War--1914-1918--France--Juvenile fiction;
Storytelling--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

During World War I, two young French girls who live near the English Channel stumble upon a blind British soldier in the woods and decide to aid him. As they provide him with food, he in turn tells four stories--all related to a small silver charm in the shape of a donkey. The girls' older brother and his friend become involved when they decide to help the soldier across the Channel so he can find home.

Hartnett's story is gentle and kind, without denying the realities and brutalities of war. It is a sweet story of innocence and charity, even during hard times. The soldier's stories may seem slightly preachy at times, but they communicate solid values of loyalty, sacrifice, humility and dedication. Powers's pencil illustrations are powerful in their simplicity. This is a story that adults and children can share alike.