

[PDF] Lavinia

Ursula K. Le Guin - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Lavinia
Author: Ursula K. Le Guin
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Starred Review. In the *Aeneid*, the only notable lines Virgil devotes to Aeneas' second wife, Lavinia, concern an omen: the day before Aeneas lands in Latinum, Lavinia's hair is veiled by a ghost fire, presaging war. Le Guin's masterful novel gives a voice to Lavinia, the daughter of King Latinus and Queen Amata, who rule Latinum in the era before the founding of Rome. Amata lost her sons to a childhood sickness and has since become slightly mad. She is fixated on marrying Lavinia to Amata's nephew, Turnus, the king of neighboring Rutuli. It's a good match, and Turnus is handsome, but Lavinia is reluctant. Following the words of an oracle, King Latinus announces that Lavinia will marry Aeneas, a newly landed stranger from Troy; the news provokes Amata, the farmers of Latinum, and Turnus, who starts a civil war. Le Guin is famous for creating alternative worlds (as in *Left Hand of Darkness*), and she approaches Lavinia's world, from which Western civilization took its course, as unique and strange as any fantasy. It's a novel that deserves to be ranked with Robert Graves's *I, Claudius*. (Apr.)

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From School Library Journal Adult/High School—This novel takes a minor character from Vergil's *Aeneid* and creates a thoughtful, moving tale of prophecy, myth, and self-fulfillment. Lavinia is the teen princess of Latium, a small but important kingdom in pre-Roman Italy. As she moves into womanhood, she feels pressure from her parents to choose one of her many suitors as both her husband and the future ruler of the kingdom. But the oracles of the sacred springs say she will marry an unknown foreigner. This stranger is none other than Vergil's Aeneas, proud hero, king without a country, and the man who will lay down the foundations of the Roman Empire. Their marriage sparks a war to control the region; while readers don't see the glorious battles, they do get the surprisingly moving perspective of the home front through Lavinia's eyes. Best known for her works of fantasy, Le Guin takes a more historical approach here by toning down the magical elements; gods and prophecies have a vital role in the protagonist's life, but they are presented as concepts and rituals, not as deities playing petty games with the lives of mortals. This shifts the focus of Vergil's plot from action to character, allowing Le Guin to breathe life into a character who never utters a word in the original story. Lavinia is quite compelling as she transforms from a spirited princess into a queen full of wisdom who makes a profound impact on her people. The author's language and style are complex, making this a title for sophisticated teens.—*Matthew L. Moffett, Pohick Regional Library, Burke, VA*

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