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# Cuckoo Song

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Triss wakes up confused. She cannot remember her immediate past and even her other memories are patchy. One thing is clear, her younger sister Pen hates her and is trying to destroy her. Why? As Triss struggles to work out what is going on, she discovers that she really is not whom she thought ; that a battle is being waged around her unseen by the adults, a war that will result in tragedy unless she can do something. She must find the Underbelly of the town - and herself.

Hardinge's recent titles have been set in an imagined world. Here we are back in England of the '30's. However, as with **Verdigris Deep**, the world of faerie is never far away, coexisting uncomfortably with the real. This can be difficult to manage, but Hardinge creates a completely believable scenario. Her ?faeries? are not gauzy winged, dewy-eyed creations, they are the strange, beleaguered beings of folk memory trying to exist in a world of unbelief. There is nothing cosy about them. Their existence reflects the situation within Triss's family where nascent adolescence and sibling rivalry clash against a backdrop of sterile domesticity. The characters of the sisters are vivid and immediately recognisable, their relationship to each other and those around them very believable. The setting, a world itself in transition after the Great War, both mirrors and emphasises the changes Triss faces, adding depth to the whole.

As with all the novels by this author, stamina is required, but the narrative is more coherent and less sprawling than recent titles making it much more satisfying. This is an absorbing, exciting novel that successfully marries the fantastic with real-life . Excellent.

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