



Wings: Passage of Time

G.G. Houston

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Fairies flit through this cozy, satisfying middle-grade fantasy tale, a work both intricately detailed and engaging.

Glemce is bored. The tiny house-fairy longs to see the world outside of the castle in which he lives. When a chance meeting provides him with an opportunity to explore, his actions launch a chain of events affecting the lives of every fairy and human who live in his particular patch of woodland countryside. *Wings: Passage of Time* by G. G. Houston serves up a charming assortment of heroes and villains engaged in a constantly shifting battle between the forces of good and evil.

Most of the characters, like Glemce, are part of a “winged civilization of tiny Faeries.” A brief and helpful introduction explains their history, and how human construction and development forced them to evolve into three separate species who rarely interact. There are the Unseens like Glemce, who can move invisibly throughout houses; glowing Lights, who live in forest treetops; and the “nasty hole-dwelling Trolls,” who prey upon the other two species. All three types of fairies are tied to the home and property of a human named Thomas. This land, where “rolling hills poked their flowery heads through the mist while the forest beyond stood sentinel over all,” is integral to the story. Houston’s attention to detail evokes a place as alive and vital as any of the story’s characters. Careful description of the minutiae of the fairy lives—mushroom caps used as serving bowls, willow-branch hairbrushes, tiny grass-reed flutes, toys made of snail shells and feather—further flesh out the setting and add appeal for aficionados of fairy lore.

This piece of fifteenth-century Britain is a land worth fighting for. A series of escalating conflicts featuring more and more dangerous foes is laid out episodically. The chapters are organized into three distinct parts, each of which is a self-contained story about the adventures and adversity of a core group of fairies who eventually change the fate of their civilization, and Thomas’s life as well. Each chapter’s title provides foreshadowing for subsequent events: “Plotting the Kill,” “Faze is Missing,” “Battling the Trolls.” Inclusion of a table of contents would both highlight the clever chapter titles and provide a helpful tool for readers who wish to revisit a particular scene in the book.

Wings reads like an extended fairy tale, making for a satisfying, cozy experience for middle graders. The straightforward plot, clear writing, and uncomplicated characters position this as an excellent transitional fantasy book for young readers ready to move beyond the traditional early childhood fairy tales. Each chapter, and each of the three parts, are complete adventures unto themselves, making *Wings* an ideal title for home or classroom read-alouds.

CAROLYN BAILEY (February 1, 2016)

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