



The Moorchild

By Eloise McGraw



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Half moorfolk and half human, and unable to shape-shift or disappear at will, Moql threatens the safety of the Band. So the Folk banish her and send her to live among humans as a changeling. Named Saaski by the couple for whose real baby she was swapped, she grows up taunted and feared by the villagers for being different, and is comfortable only on the moor, playing strange music on her bagpipes.

As Saaski grows up, memories from her forgotten past with the Folks slowly emerge. But so do emotions from her human side, and she begins to realize the terrible wrong the Folk have done to the humans she calls Da and Mumma. She is determined to restore their child to them, even if it means a dangerous return to the world that has already rejected her once.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Incorporating some classic fantasy motifs and icons, McGraw (*A Really Weird Summer*) conjures up an appreciably familiar world that, as evidence of her storytelling power, still strikes an original chord. Elves, an invented vocabulary with Anglo-Nordic roots, medieval folk elements, herbalism, gypsies—all contribute to the atmosphere of mysticism and magic that suffuses the story of the changeling Saaski. The misbegotten offspring of a moorfolk (small, elf-like beings) and a human, Saaski is secretly switched with a human baby when the moorfolk discover she lacks certain powers. But she is not an ordinary mortal, either; her eyes, for example, change color with her mood, and, as she gets older, the local villagers view her as an outsider. Rather than a typical fantasy adventure, this is a saga of self-discovery as Saaski learns to cope with the pain, often physical, of not fitting in and as she learns her true heritage. Transcending genre, these themes will likely resonate with a wide audience. Ages 9-12.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 4-6?This well-written novel incorporates elements of folklore into an examination of society's response to those who are perceived as different. The plot centers on the experiences of Saaski, a changeling who was cast out by the "Folk" because of her human father. While she does not initially recall her past life, persecution by the villagers eventually rekindles her memories and fires her resolve to rescue the human child for whom she was exchanged. Aided in her quest by Tam, an orphan who accepts her oddness and cherishes her friendship, Saaski is ultimately successful and thus repays the kindness of her "foster" family by returning their daughter to them. Some readers may find Saaski's cruel treatment by the villagers upsetting and her future with Tam unsettlingly vague, but both are consistent with McGraw's clear intention of using her novel to expose peoples' prejudices and emphasize the importance of being true to oneself. While this unusual blend of fantasy and contemporary concerns may not find a wide audience, the quality of McGraw's writing ensures that for those, like Tam, who can appreciate the unusual, *The Moorchild* will truly be a magical find. ?Lisa Dennis, The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 4[^]-6. Half-fairy and half-human, Moql grew up with the fairy folk and learned their ways until they discovered that she couldn't "wink out" (disappear at will), making her a danger to the folk. Changing her into a baby, they switched her with a human infant. Now named Saaski, she grows up again, a changeling who endures the taunts and teasing and eventually the danger of being different in a village that hates and fears her strangeness. Detailing Saaski's struggles with her nature, her memories, and the ties that bind her to both worlds, McGraw creates an unusual and absorbing story. Rooted in legend, the story features fantasy elements that are convincing, partly because nothing here is solved by magic, but by hard-won understanding of uncomfortable truths, understanding that leads to courageous action. With its convincing medieval setting and characters, this engrossing novel will be an excellent choice to read aloud, beginning with its dedication: "To all children who have ever felt *different*." *Carolyn Phelan*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Walton:

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David Thompson:

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