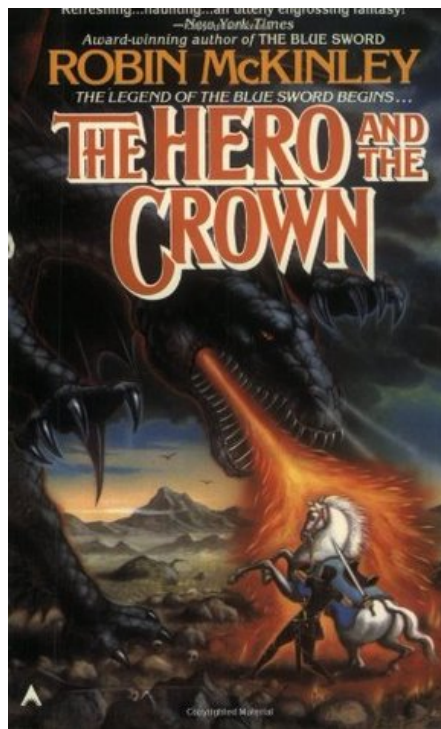




The Hero and the Crown

Robin McKinley

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Aerin could not remember a time when she had not known the story; she had grown up knowing it.

It was the story of her mother, the witchwoman who enspelled the king into marrying her, to get an heir that would rule Damar; and it was told that she turned her face to the wall and died of despair when she found she had borne a daughter instead of a son.

Aerin was that daughter.

But there was more of the story yet to be told; Aerin's destiny was greater than even she had dreamed--for she was to be the true hero who would wield the power of the Blue Sword...

The Hero and the Crown Details

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Author : Robin McKinley

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From Reader Review The Hero and the Crown for online ebook

Nikki says

Wow, I don't know why I didn't really like *The Hero and the Crown* very much on the first go round. It's full of all the kinds of things I love: love stories that aren't *just* simple love-at-first-sight or we-grew-up-together-and-now-we're-in-love, but something more complicated than that; a world with a history and a future, outside of what we've got; a heroine who works through flaws and barriers to become a hero. And the last sentences -- ach! Lovely.

It's not some straightforward children's story in which a heroine goes forth and slays a dragon. That happens, but it happens as part of a longer journey: the dragon isn't the end, but only really the beginning of Aerin's journey. It doesn't solve all her issues and let her go home unscathed, unchanged, to a court that's suddenly ready to accept her. Aerin's story is harder than that.

Looking at my old review/notes on this, I was disappointed by the worldbuilding -- which I think is funny, because though it's subtle, there's plenty here. The surka, the crown, old heroes, Luthe's background, why the animals follow Aerin: there's so much that doesn't get elucidated, but remains there for you to turn over and wonder at. McKinley doesn't give you all the answers about her world in one go, and I doubt that *The Blue Sword* will answer all of it either. Maybe you have to do a little more work to really appreciate the history of the world, because McKinley does nothing so clumsy as sit you in a history lesson with Aerin to learn about it.

Overall, given the subtlety of parts of this and the wistfulness of the love stories, I'm not entirely sure how I'd have taken this as a child. It may be a prime example of a story that works on two levels: Aerin waving her sword around for younger readers, winning the day with her prowess, while the older readers might taste more of the bittersweetness of her immortality and her twin-nature.

Wealththeow says

I read this when I was young and disgruntled, reading two or three books a day to avoid talking to my classmates. It was basically the perfect time to read this story, which tells the tale of a young woman who is not understood by her people and is deeply unhappy about it. And when I read this, it was one of very few books that spoke to me in a voice I could actually empathize with. All the other fantasy I was reading featured boys tramping across pseudo-English countryside before being crowned as kings--and instead, here was an awkward, stubborn, hard-working girl who wanted to be able to value herself and prove her worth.

Aerin grows up knowing that unlike her royal family, she's ugly, has no magic, and is distrusted by the people they rule. She inherited her low-born mother's looks but not her rumored witching power: the worst of both worlds. When we first meet her, she recently cut off a spiteful cousin's luxurious eyelashes. She tricks another cousin into teaching her swordplay, then spends hours upon hours practicing, knowing that she has no natural talent for it but refusing to give up. She spends three years experimenting with potions until she finds one that protects against flame. And then she goes out into the world to kill dragons. But in this kingdom, dragons aren't monstrous beasts--they're vermin. Killing dragons is considered a bit like catching rats. When she's called Dragon-Killer, it's as much a taunt as a title. Needless to say, tween-me adored Aerin.

Reading it now, after an extra decade of socializing and reading other fantasy books, Aerin and her lifelong quest to be a good and useful person is still wonderful, but less of a revelation. I love how much of her

success is due to sheer hard work and determination, an indomitable drive to prove herself that overcomes her innate flaws. But although her early victories are her own stubborn will, her final victory (view spoiler) seems like she lucked into it. She literally wins by accident. It's frustrating! That said, I can see where McKinley subverts fantasy tropes more clearly now. It's Aerin's perseverance and hard work, not what she's born with, that make her a hero. The most beautiful girl in the kingdom has dark hair and skin. The heroine loves two people at once, and no one thinks it weird or wrong. There's infrastructure to rebuild after the climactic battle. Instead of showing how foppish and out of touch the court is, their council meetings about provisions and treaties are actually important. etc.

And the writing is, at times, truly fantastic. The descriptions of Maur, so huge he is indistinguishable from his mountain, so malevolent that even keeping his skull as a trophy brings despair to the kingdom, stuck with me all this time. Aerin's relationship with her nurse/maid, Teka, always feels real. The battles with the dragons kept my eyes glued to the page.

I only wish that McKinley had let herself write more of this book. Time and time again, summaries of what Aerin learns or does are provided in place of the action. Aerin's education and love affair with Luthe seem to take place in 10 pages, when they could be 100. This book is only 227 pages long; if it were twice as long, it would only be better.

Eh?Eh! says

young princess who feels like a misfit, teaches herself to fight dragons, befriends animals left&right, finds love twice, overcomes a villain from her family's past, follows her known duty rather than pursue unknown emotion...it's really not as dry as I'm summarizing.

beautifully and dreamily written. I remember reading this and wanting to fight dragons. a big surprise when I re-read years later and still enjoyed it, still found the heroine a sympathetic character. good messages about not taking anyone's crap and actively working to make things happen for yourself instead of waiting around.

i just finished reading Twilight and what a contrast - weak, whiny, undone by selfishness portrayed as strength - HatC is better by far.

Emily Michelle says

This is the third Robin McKinley book I've read, and I've come to the conclusion that I just don't like her. I feel like this makes me a bad person--I mean, *nobody* doesn't like Robin McKinley--but although she writes beautifully about richly imagined worlds, I never like her characters.

The Hero and the Crown was no exception. Actually I loved the first half of this book, with the story of the princess Aerin who has never felt like she fit in with the royal court. She's determined to find her place, though, and despite having little inborn talent or natural brilliance, she buckles down and applies herself to learning swordplay, horseback riding and herb lore, eventually becoming a famous dragon-killer, all with the support of her best friend Tor, the future king, who's secretly in love with her. Good story, right?

It's the second half where it falls apart for me, taking the story in a new and (in my opinion) less interesting direction. Our heroine becomes immortal and is trained as a mage by a mysterious man who has a thing for her, in the same way he had a thing for her mother. It's in the second half that lack of good characterization

really kills the book for me. Luthe, our mysterious man, is never really given much character or color, other than being a bit of a creeper, and then suddenly he becomes the romantic interest, and it's meant to be tragic that he and Aerin can't be together yet. But if I'm never given enough characterization to understand Luthe, how am I supposed to care about him? The second half says less and less about Aerin's mind and character as well, until at the end I can't figure out why she does anything she does and why I should care. In the end, I only finished because I wondered what would happen with Tor, the only character that I cared about. And even he doesn't get a fabulous ending, because Aerin is waiting for him to die so she can get back to Luthe. I suppose McKinley was trying to pull away from the fantasy cliché of finding your one true love and riding off into the sunset together, but if I'm reading a fantasy book, it's probably safe to say that I'm comfortable with fantasy clichés.

Sarah says

Like most of Robin McKinley's work, *The Hero and the Crown* is very hard to classify. Its surface is high fantasy—cliché high fantasy, even—but it's written like psychologically-driven realistic fiction.

Our setting is the rather desolate kingdom of Damar, about which we know little except:

- 1). The heirs to the throne are called sola (male) or sol (female). It should really be the other way around, or at least that would make it easier to follow for those of us who speak Latin.
- 2). The Damarians have occasionally suffered dragon infestation. Dragons in this world are unreasoning beasts. Forget about bonding with one and riding it.
- 3). They don't like witches in this land, or people from the North, and people from the North are often suspected of witchcraft without cause.

One suspected witch was the dead second wife of King Arlbeth, who gave up on life after being delivered of a daughter, Aerin.

Princess Aerin's parentage is not the only strike against her. She also is the only young member of the royal family whose magical Gift has never manifest. Everyone in Damar is bronzed and black-haired except our tall, awkward, fair-skinned, redheaded heroine. She feels terribly alienated at court, with no friends save her cousin Tor, the heir to the throne (girls cannot inherit in this kingdom). Tor is in love with her, but she's too immature to figure it out.

Aerin took a dare from a mean female cousin to consume a plant that would supposedly kill anyone but a member of the royal family, and this made her sick for months. While laid up, she discovered a book on dragon-slaying that included a recipe for a balm that warded against dragon-fire.

Once she recovers, Aerin spends most of her time training, and bonding with, an old lamed war horse named Talat, who becomes her loyal steed when she finally tests out the dragon-proof balm against a minor worm in a small village.

Word of their first victory spreads, in spite of dragon-slaying not being a proper occupation for a princess, and soon every village wants Aerin to deal with their scaly pests.

Meanwhile, their Northern neighbors declare war on Damar, and just when the whole army has marched out, a great dragon, the dread Maur, reawakes from a hundred year slumber or sulk. Only Aerin is left to deal

with him...but he proves almost beyond her nascent skill...and she only kills the Worm at great cost to herself.

While recovering from great injury, a mysterious man begins to contact her in dreams. She realizes that something has changed for good inside her, and seeks him, as he is probably the only person who knows what that is.

Content Advisory

Violence: Lots of dragons burning people. People get hurt, but there is little graphic description of killing or wounding.

Sex: The book makes it clear that Aerin gave her virginity to Luthe, without ever stating as much. There is no love scene. We only see them kiss, and it's not written in a racy way. There is no innuendo outside of a line about not getting enough sleep, which may or may not go over a kid's head—but the cover said "Ages 10 and up" and it won the Newbery, which are usually G-rated.

This plot development is even weirder because she (view spoiler)

Language: Nothing but "hells" which is always plural.

Substance Abuse: The surka leaves gave Aerin scary hallucinations, but no one uses them for recreation.

Anything Else: It's implied that an evil spirit lingers in the skull of the dragon Maur, and that this demon contaminated the city when the army insisted on bringing the skull back as a trophy.

Conclusion

Robin McKinley has two great strengths as a writer. The first is the consistent magnificence of her prose. The second is her character development.

Her heroines tend to blend together—they're all self-sufficient and a bit misanthropic, with a strong sense of justice and racing, random thoughts. This is a trait they all share with the author herself—I have never seen so many parentheses and brackets and ellipses and dashes on a blog before—and as someone with ADD I find it very relatable.

The men in her books are wonderful too, always kind and gentle and devoted to the heroine. Unfortunately this brings us to the major flaw of the book.

You can't have a love triangle where both rivals win. That's just cheap.

Love triangles have certainly been overused in YA fiction since *Twilight*, but sometimes—and this is one of those times—there's enough contrast between the suitors, or what those suitors represent, that it's permissible. It's not the mere presence of the love triangle that bothers me, it's that this book resolved it in a way that struck me as cheap. If you disagree, let me know why in the comments (please be nice). For what it's worth, both this and Tamora Pierce's Song of the Lioness series feature love triangles, and they predate *Twilight* by twenty years.

Aerin has two suitors: Tor, her cousin and childhood friend, who is kind and understanding but a different manner of creature from her; and Luthe, the mage of the mountains, who comes from the same Gifted stock as Aerin's dead mother and is, like Aerin herself, semi-immortal and ageless.

During Aerin's long illness at the castle, (view spoiler), Tor tends anxiously to his beloved cousin, but Luthe appears in her mirrors, her cups of water, her dreams, whispering to her. Gosh, what does this remind me of?

Nor is Luthe the only handsome, blond magician-hero to appear during this era:

And yes, they are all riffs on Hades and Persephone, and Luthe, being a McKinley male lead, is the nicest and least creepy of the four.

Unfortunately there is no mention of him for the first half of the book. Tor is a major presence during those chapters, and there is no hint of any rival, so when Luthe first appeared I was startled—even though I knew from the imagery and tropes used that he would be Aerin's suitor, and (view spoiler)

The book does have some excellent qualities, the best of which is probably Aerin's relationship with Talat the horse. And as I said earlier, I enjoy McKinley's prose and the internal monologues of her awkward, brilliant, frustrated heroines.

Unlike many people here, though, I actually think she got better with age. This book was good overall—even though the solution to the love triangle was utterly stupid and the sexual subplot, while discreet, was unnecessary. But *Beauty: A Retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast* and *Chalice* are much better. I still want to read *The Blue Sword* .

Sean says

When I was a kid, I frequented two areas of the library: the children's section and the adult fiction section. The young adult shelves and the nonfiction shelves might as well have been made of glass for all I noticed them.

One year when I was in my early teens, the family was getting ready to go on the dreaded yearly camping trip. "Dreaded" because it meant a week in the outdoors, with no books. Well, almost no books: Mom's rule was that we each could take two—only two??—so we spent hours dawdling at the library making our choices. It was important to pick the perfect books, ones that could stand up to repeated readings, since we would almost certainly finish them for the first time on the ride up the canyon.

I looked all over the library for mine, or at least the part of the library I knew, and I couldn't find anything that had that coveted mix of exciting newness and safe, comfortable familiarity. In desperation, I finally

walked over to the young adult section. And there it was: Robin McKinley's *The Hero and the Crown*, screaming, "Read me! Take me! Pick me!" And I did pick it, and I fell in love with it, and have loved it ever since.

Now, as anyone who has read Robin McKinley knows, this is actually the prequel to *The Blue Sword*, but when I finally read that book a few years later I was so disappointed that it wasn't *The Hero and the Crown* all over again that it took me a long while to really warm up to it. But it's good, too, though in a different way.

Althea Ann says

I got this book when it was first published, in hardcover.

At the time, 'The Blue Sword' (to which this is a prequel) was one of my most-beloved books - and, I have to admit, that at the time, I didn't feel the 'The Hero and the Crown' quite measured up. I liked it - but just not quite as much. (It's not like I didn't read it several times, though.)

Re-reading, years later, I understand why I felt the way I did - but I also kind of disagree with my youthful opinion. This is a wonderful book.

It's a classic quest/hero's journey tale, but it also incorporates some unusual elements very effectively.

In 'The Blue Sword,' Aerin is a legend of history, a dragon slayer and wielder of a sword of magical powers. In 'The Hero and the Crown' we meet Aerin and discover how she became a hero.

The first half of the book is very self-contained. It introduces the half-foreign, distrusted and ill-used (but still quite privileged and royal) Aerin, a tomboy who insists on practicing swordplay. I very much enjoyed how, in her country, dragons are small creatures, certainly pestilent, but just vermin to be exterminated. Killing them brings no prestige - it's just something that has to be done. Aerin's doggedness and use of the scientific method in figuring out how to eliminate them more efficiently is a rare and appreciated example of the value of methodical persistence in order to accomplish anything. I also very much liked how, for all her efforts, she is consistently underappreciated - but the value of her accomplishments stands on its own. The big showdown with the dragon Maur is at once utterly realistic in detail and gloriously emotional - it brought me to tears.

The second half of the book is where, when I was younger, it lost my attention a bit. It addresses: what happens after one's most heroic act. It takes someone completely outside Aerin's social circle to recognize her true value. The mage Luthe calls her, and thus begins the classic 'magical studies' part of the plot. Aerin grows and matures, but at the same time begins to feel a little bit more elevated and less accessible to the reader.

However, the ending was rich and deeply satisfying. It's rare that a story so successfully depicts how one person can love different people in different ways, with each love enhancing one's life in a deep and meaningful way.

Many thanks to NetGalley and Open Road Media for the opportunity to read the ebook version of this title.

H. says

A reader might well leave this Damar prequel feeling dazed and uncertain of what to make of the jumble of rises and falls and meandering sidestories and climaxes, but a vigorous shake of the head will allow the book to be seen as two distinct halves: Part 1) The fantastic set-up. Part 2) The frustratingly sloppy, nonsensical, disappointing end/end? Until the story's first climax, McKinley gives us everything: a relatable, charismatic, admirable heroine who's so scrappy and determined we can't help but root for her all the way; a mystery; adversity; a worthy love interest; looming doom; etc. And then she throws it all away and in our faces. Our heroine trades scrappy for serene, mystery and adversity find their basis in random coincidence and are explained away as "it's magic!", the love interest is forsaken in favor of some Mary Sue new guy who we're supposed accept suddenly as her soul mate, and there's a thrown-together magical solution for every evil force for which there was utterly no planning or foreshadowing. It's so disappointing! The messages I left with were 1) Gee it's nice that the heroine was so gung-ho and hard-working even though she was just a vessel for Fate and the Force of Good and 2) The nice thing about being immortal is you can wait for your mortal husband to die and then go enjoy your immortal one. I was not swept off my feet by this one.

Cait says

I loved this book as a kid and I love it still as an adult. It's one of those books that's so much a part of my life that it's hard for me to believe that not everyone has read it. Maur still creeps me out, Talat still makes me teary, and Aerin's surka rash as she climbs the tower remains the best thing ever.

Jessica says

The book that made me say, I want to do that, I want to be her (both Aerin, the Hero, and Robin, the Author). This is the book that made me love fantasy, dragons, everything.

Melanie says

This one isn't rated for a reason...

I don't really know what to rate it overall, and wish I could rate it in parts. I suppose I could average it out and give it three stars, but that doesn't seem to fit.

So I'll rate it in my review, which is very long and rambling.

The First Half: *****

I really liked it. The characters were likeable (or unlikeable if that's what they were meant to be) and everything flowed nicely. I really liked the main character, Aerin. She had spunk, for lack of a better way to describe her. She was different from everyone else, and it bothered her, but she didn't let it mess up her life. She took pride in herself. She had a short temper that got her in some minor trouble, and that made her more interesting as far as princesses go.

She handled the incident with the magic plant (can't remember the name of it) well. Drawing on her stubborn nature and desire to prove she was more than people thought she was, she recovered completely. I love how she identified with her father's injured war horse during this and helped him recover too. (Talat was a pretty cool horse too.)

She also took on a job that was far from glamorous because she knew she could do it better than anyone else, and she worked hard to get to that point.

She was cool, and the story was nicely building around her ability to make the best of what she had to work with.

Then came her battle with the Maur...

The battle itself was fine, and the immediate aftermath was too. It's when she gets home that I draw the line between the first half of the book and the second half, even though it might not be right in the middle of the book.

The Second Half *

Perhaps the reason the rest of this book made me so mad, is because the first part was really good. I felt cheated.

I'll start where I left off, when Aerin gets home from her battle with the big dragon. Her personality totally changed after that. She became all mooney and whiny and depressed. I think that was supposed to have something to do with the dragon's evil taint or something, but why did it wait for her to recover before it kicked in? She was nearly dead after the battle, but she managed get home, and then she recovered to the point where she could walk around without assistance, and her hair all grew back and she didn't even have any noticeable scars... THEN she started getting all depressed-to-death. And even after Luthe dunked her in his magic pond to cure her of the dragon's taint (or whatever) she was mooney. She even frets about her hair several times during her boss battle.

Then there's Luthe himself. I know he's in some of McKinley's other books, so maybe there's more to him than what you get in this one, but he just came across as such a *jerk* in this book. He'd been watching her all her life, but after he healed her and taught to use he magic he said he should have stepped in sooner but he figured she would have realized her ability to use magic before and used that on Maur... despite the fact that she had *never used magic at all before and didn't know she could*. He constantly bashes her country and her family, especially Tor, who was always kind to her and loved her. He even bashes her horse. He has so much contempt for everyone that he just comes across as the most arrogant guy on the face of the planet. He even sounds condescending when he talks to Aerin, remarking constantly about how simple she is and how he feels terrible about sending her to fight Whatshisbucket when she is but a child, when even *he* doesn't stand a chance.

That brings me to Whatshisbucket. Her evil uncle who is somehow the most evil bad guy in the whole land, yet she's never heard of him. He was never even mentioned earlier in the book, yet suddenly he's the main cause for all the trouble. If you walked up to someone in Middle Earth and asked if they'd heard of Sauron, they'd say the Middle Earth equivalent of "well duh, who hasn't?" and look at you like you were some kind of idiot. Everyone in the wizarding world in Harry Potter had heard of Voldemort. Everyone in Narnia knows about the White Witch. How the heck does Whatshisbucket manage to be the ultimate bad guy anonymously?

And how does she defeat the ultimate bad guy? She accidentally throws a magic rock at him. She wasn't

even *trying* to throw it, and she didn't know it was magic anyway. She had no clue what it was! She was just carrying it around because it was an interesting shiny red rock she found after she killed the dragon. What kind of climax is that? The hero accidentally kills the anonymous ultimate bad guy with a magic rock they just happened to pick up because it was pretty. Hurray for deus ex machina!

Then Luthe shows up and informs her that she's actually taken a few hundred years to battle Whatshisbucket and he's come to take her back to her own time so she can end the war that's raging in her kingdom... but not far enough back to *prevent* the war and stop her father and countless others from being killed. But there's no rush, so they spend a few days strolling along through the woods together, making out, and sleeping under the stars. They whisper sweet nothings to each other and are all kinds of mushy, and it really irritated me. Why the heck did she fall in love with him? Was it his arrogance? The condescending way he talked to her? The way he was constantly dissing her family and homeland and the nice guy back home who had always treated her like the princess she was? Or maybe it was the way he sent her off to battle a super powerful bad guy and then showed up after the battle was over to walk her home? It's hard to choose, they're all such *charming* things.

So she goes home and uses a magic crown (which was lost for centuries) that she got from Whatshisbucket to help win the war. And she marries Tor, even though she loves Luthe and looks forward to the day when she can go back to him.

What do we learn kids?

Don't suddenly introduce a villain nobody has ever heard of and expect him to have an impact on the story. Don't introduce time travel for absolutely no reason other than to show off someone's ability to do it. Don't make your heroine fall in love with a total jerk, especially when there's a perfectly awesome guy back home that she could fall in love with. Deus ex machina is not a good thing.

Tatiana says

The Hero and the Crown is a sort of distant prequel to Robin McKinley's Newberry Honor winner The Blue Sword. For some unknown to me reason, this prequel received more critical recognition, specifically, the book was a 1985 Newberry Medal winner. IMO, this novel is weaker.

Aerin is the only daughter of the king of Damar. The problem is, she is also an offspring of a woman who was accused of being a witch and an enemy of the country. Even more, unlike all members of the royal family, Aerin possesses no special magic powers. This, once again, brands her as an insignificant person unworthy of the status of the heir to the throne in the eyes of the Damarians. Left to her own devices to prove her worth, Aerin dedicates her time to training herself to become a dragon slayer. This occupation takes her on a path of discovering and awakening her dormant powers...

First of all, I admire McKinley's writing style. There is no doubt she has a great command of English language. Her writing is sophisticated to such a degree that I can hardly imagine young children (and The Hero and the Crown is in fact classified as a children's book) being able to properly comprehend it.

The world of Damar is described in rich detail. I couldn't help myself thinking that McKinley has much more story left to tell about this country.

I am also quite fond of the way the author portrays animals in her books. She definitely has a lot of love for horses and knows them well.

What I do not appreciate about this book, and maybe it's just a personal pet peeve of mine, is the romantic story line. I-love-two-men-at-the-same-time theme just doesn't jive well with me. I guess I am old-fashioned that way, but I do not approve of a heroine who is in love with an immortal guy and has sex (!) with him, then days later marries the second (who she also loves!) with a plan to go back to the first once the second mortal one is dead. I have absolutely no idea why Luthe was even placed as a love interest in this book.

Another thing, I agree with those reviewers who have said that the story loses some ground in Part 2. This is where a lot of magical stuff happens that is not always fully explained. The magic and the heroine's "destiny" take away from her personal development.

Nevertheless, The Hero and the Crown is a worthy contribution to YA fantasy literature and is one of a few books that portray strong heroines whose lives are not directed and defined by their hot brooding boyfriends but motivated by love for their country and loyalty to their people. What a relief!

Priscilla says

I LOVED the first 2/3 of this book. Then, it started to drag and I had a hard time finishing it.

Aerin is a princess in the city of Damar. Her father is a good, righteous king and her mother died shortly after giving birth to Aerin. The people love her father, but they believe her mother was a witch and they don't trust her daughter. As a result, Aerin becomes a bit of a loner, her only real friend is Tor, the boy who will inherit the throne. All members of the royal family should develop magical powers at a young age. As Aerin gets older, she doesn't develop these powers and decides to start hunting dragons in order to make herself useful. This leads to an adventure to find the mystical Hero Crown in order to save her family and kingdom.

I'm not a big fantasy-genre person, which is why I liked the first portion but not the second. The first part of the book (up until she kills her first major dragon) is fun. It's a perfect blend on real life elements (cousins who fight a lot, a girl who feels alone, a bit of romance) with some interesting fantasy twists (look at their magical powers, when will she develop hers, dragons are nearby). But then it becomes too fantasy-genre and suddenly, it's not Earth with a blend of magic. It's some other world where there are multiple moons and weird songs and hybrid creatures and it's not relatable at all. By the end, I just wanted the story to be over.

Chris says

I got a copy of this in 6th or 7th grade. I've read it so many times that it is being held together by a rubber band. I enjoyed it because it was the first real fantasy book I read where the hero is a young woman. She's not just the sidekick, but the hero. She's also flawed and not supergirl or ravishing beautiful. It's a wonderful book because of that. In many ways, it is the perfect book for any quiet girl simply because a loner, an outcast proves herself needed. Perhaps the success of the book among girls is tied to that facet of the story.

mark monday says

First wave feminist novel The Hero and the Crown recognizes the intrinsic right for protagonist Aerin to have a say in the destiny of her country, regardless of her gender.

Second wave feminist novel The Hero and the Crown illustrates how Aerin is the equal of any man in the patriarchal land of Damar - indeed, she is the equal of any man, anywhere.

Third wave feminist novel The Hero and the Crown celebrates Aerin's sexuality, her ability to move beyond prescribed, essentialist notions of gender roles and to make decisions based on her own personal, individual needs and desires.

Standpoint feminist novel The Hero and the Crown understands that many of the issues that confront Aerin are intimately related to Aerin's mixed-race and mixed-class status - and the ways that gender and race and class always intersect.

~~*Post-feminist* novel The Hero and the Crown maintains that Aerin's struggle is not necessarily even a feminist struggle, that she has already achieved her-~~ oh never mind. ugh, post-feminism. the stirring, highly enjoyable novel The Hero and the Crown rejects post-feminism. and hey, so do I.
