



Tender Morsels

By Margo Lanagan

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Tender Morsels is a dark and vivid story, set in two worlds and worrying at the border between them. Liga lives modestly in her own personal heaven, a world given to her in exchange for her earthly life. Her two daughters grow up in this soft place, protected from the violence that once harmed their mother. But the real world cannot be denied forever—magicked men and wild bears break down the borders of Liga's refuge. Now, having known Heaven, how will these three women survive in a world where beauty and brutality lie side by side?

From the Hardcover edition.

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Tender Morsels By Margo Lanagan Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In her extraordinary and often dark first novel, award-winning story writer Lanagan (*Red Spikes*) creates two worlds: the first a preindustrial village that might have sprung from a Brueghel canvas, a place of victims and victimizers; the second a personal heaven granted to Liga Longfield, who has survived her father's molestations and a gang rape but, with one baby and pregnant again, cannot risk any further pain. As she raises her two daughters, placid Branza and fiery Urddha, she discovers that her universe is permeable: a dwarf or little man, in Lanagan's characteristically knotted parlance, slips in and out of her world in search of treasure; and a good-hearted youth also enters, magically transformed into a bear in the process. A less kind man-bear follows, and then a teenage Urddha, avid for a richer life with the vivid people, figures out how to pass through the border, too. Writing in thick, clotted prose that holds the reader to a slow pace, Lanagan explores the savage and the gentlest sides of human nature, and how they coexist. With suggestions of bestiality and sodomy, the novel demands maturity—but the challenging text will attract only an ambitious audience anyway. Ages 14–up. (*Oct.*)

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From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 9 Up—A traumatized teen mother magically escapes to her own personal heaven in this daring and deeply moving fantasy. The characters, setting, much of the action, and even the very words of the title are taken from the Grimm Brothers' "Snow-White and Rose-Red," a sweet story of contrasting sisters who live deep in the forest and whose innocent hearts are filled with compassion for a lonely bear and an endangered dwarf. In the novel, Liga's daughters—one born of incest, the other of gang rape—first flourish in Liga's safe world. But encounters with magical bears and the crusty dwarf challenge them to see a world beyond their mother's secure dreamscape. Eventually the younger one, Urddha, and subsequently her sister and Liga are drawn back into the real world in which cruelty, hurt, and prejudice abound. But it is also only there that they can experience the range of human emotion, develop deep relationships, and discover who they truly are. The opening chapters vividly portray the emotional experience of a boy's first sexual encounter, mind-numbing abuse by Liga's father, and a violent gang rape. It's heavy fare even for sophisticated readers, but the author hits all the right notes, giving voice to both the joys and terrors that sexual experience can bestow without saying more than readers need to know to be fully with the characters. While the story explores what it means to be human, it is at its heart an incisive exploration of the uses and limitations of dissociation as a coping mechanism. Beautifully written and surprising, this is a novel not to be missed.—Carolyn Lehman, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review After a horrific upbringing, 15-year-old Liga and her two daughters are magicked away into another world, which differs in one crucial aspect: it is utterly safe and free from surprise. In time, though, the old world intrudes upon their quiet heaven, and Liga and her daughters must face a painful reunion with reality. At its essence, this is a story about good and evil, not at all unusual for a fantasy, but there isn't a single usual thing in the way that Lanagan (who won a 2006 Printz Honor for *Black Juice*) goes about it. As in *Red Spikes* (2007), Lanagan touches on nightmarish adult themes, including multiple rape scenarios and borderline human-animal sexual interactions, which reserve this for the most mature readers. She employs a preternatural command of language, twisting it into archaic and convoluted styles that release into passages of absolute, startling clarity. Drawing alternate worlds that blur the line between wonder and horror, and characters who traverse the nature of human and beast, this challenging, unforgettable work

explores the ramifications of denying the most essential and often savage aspects of life. It isn't easy, but this book is nevertheless a marvel to read and will only further solidify Lanagan's place at the very razor's edge of YA speculative fiction. Grades 10-12. --Ian Chipman

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Heather Roberts:

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Yeah, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open or maybe read a book titled *Tender Morsels*? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have various other opinion?

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