

REVIEWS

LUD-IN-THE-MIST by HOPE MIRLEES

Ever since reading Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings", it has been disappointing for me to read Fantasy, because in doing so I inadvertently compare the book read to Tolkien's, with the outcome usually in favour of Tolkien. But every once in a while I have found a book which is up to par with LotR in most respects. Such a book is "Lud-in-the-Mist" by Hope Mirlees. The background is not so tediously worked out in detail, but the charm and atmosphere of this book more than readily makes up for it.

Lud-in-the-Mist is the capital of the free state of Dorimare, a small country akin to the Shire in many ways. The people are very much like Hobbits in that they have deep misgivings about anything adventurous or poetic. The reason for these misgivings was an unfortunate incident which had separated the burghers from any relationship with Fairyland years before. Fairyland lay to the west of Lud-in-the-Mist, causing uneasiness in the townspeople, who were against the "mad" inhabitants of Fairyland. Resentment was so deep that the worst thing that you could call a person was "son of a fairy". (note : even today the word "fairy" has taken on a contemptuous meaning, which could give Fantasy a bad name. Alas!) The people totally deny the existence of Fairyland and everything connected with it, but this condition could not last long because they are constantly being exposed to Fairyland through the medium of "Fairyfruit", which floats down the river Dapple from its source in Fairyland. Anyone partaking of this fruit displays a form of "madness" in which he dances around singing poetry, and makes a quick dash to Fairyland, never to be seen again.

The plot of the story centres on the town's Mayor, Master Nathaniel Chanticleer (who reminds me for all the world of Bilbo Baggins) and his attempts to stop the increasing plague of fairyfruit. But when his own son eats of the fruit, he (Chanticleer) is forced to re-examine the customs of his day, and their validity. This eventually leads him to follow his exiled son to Fairyland itself in search of the answers to his questions.

It is impossible to describe in a few words the freshness and charm of this novel, along with its humour and moral point, so I advise every Tolkien and Fantasy fan to run out and get this book, and by all means read it.

Hal (Mithrandir) Broome, of the Istari.

DERYNI RISING by KATHERINE KURTZ

This is the first book in a trilogy published by Ballantine in their Adult Fantasy Series, under the editorial aegis of Lin Carter. It is Katherine Kurtz's first published novel and judged by it she is a talent emerged full blown upon the scene.

The story is set in an alternate world to Wales and Britain at the time of the ninth or eleventh century. St. Camber is an invisible mover behind the scenes, and far from being a long dead heretic saint opposed to the Bishops of the organised Church he seems very much alive-oh. His fine hand intervenes on the side