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Wise Child



Synopsis

In a remote Scottish village, nine-year-old Wise Child is taken in by Juniper, a healer and sorceress. Then Wise Child's mother, Maeve, a black witch, reappears. In choosing between Maeve and Juniper, Wise Child discovers the extent of her supernatural powers and her true loyalties.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 980L (What's this?)

Mass Market Paperback: 240 pages

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Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 0.6 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (99 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #93,900 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #24 in [Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Arthurian](#) #3184 in [Books > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy & Magic](#)

Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

To begin, I direct you to the original cover. Let's take a gander at the beauty of this cover, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, it's beyond beautiful. It's stunning. Two women, one grown and one small, gaze coolly at the viewer. They are surrounded by the elements of their trade, namely herbs with a pestle & mortar. I salute the cover artist in this case. Both characters are unaccountably and undeniably right. Wise Child lives in an early Scottish community. Her mother left her long ago and her father is a shipman, ever away at sea. When her grandmother dies of old age, Wise Child is nine years old and utterly alone in the world. Taken in by the local witch, Wise Child is initially reluctant to live with someone potentially evil. In time, however, she comes to love her guardian, Juniper, and the two become close. Even as Wise Child's mother, an evil sorceress, lays claim on her child and the villagers grow restless at having a witch in such close proximity the two stick together. This is a story about finding the person who loves you and bearing with them through thick and thin. It's about love. Furlong's an elegant writer, and this was an amazingly well wrought tale.

Juniper is almost without fault, though she is by no means unlikable because of her perfection. Certainly I felt the woman's hands off approach towards raising a willful child was a little bizarre. Juniper is almost never angry with the initially spoiled Wise Child, and one has to wonder what a less well-behaved tyke would have done in her place. Wise Child herself is entirely human and full of the kind of flaws that make her real and interesting. She's rarely in complete control of any situation, but she knows her own mind. The book itself is very appropriate for younger viewers.

One of my favorite books from my childhood and still a joy to reread, *Wise Child* is the story of one magical child's coming of age. Spoiled but abandoned at a young age, Wise Child is taken in by a woman named Juniper. Juniper lives apart from the small, poor Christian village that Wise Child comes from, and she is a fair but tough mentor, making Wise Child work hard and learn much. In her house on a hill, Juniper teaches Wise Child languages, math, and astronomy, how to grow, harvest, and use herbs, and how to heal the sick in the village below. Slowly, Juniper begins to initiate Wise Child into the way of a doran, a class of magical women who live in the rhythm of nature and use their magic to help those around them. Wise Child's powers blossom, but dark shadows hang over her peaceful life with Juniper: her beautiful, powerful, dangerous mother calls to her from afar, and the close-minded town threatens their safety up on the hill. The book is a magical story of the hard work of coming of age and the love and power that can result from it. Wise Child must find confidence in herself, faith in her future and her powers, and love for her others in order to grow, creating a life-affirming, strong, true message. Furlong's writing style is smooth, her characters are easy to identify with and to love, and the magic in her story is both realistic and exciting. I highly recommend this book to readers of all age groups, and I love coming back to it myself. The best thing that a coming of age story can do is show us not only the trials and tribulations of adolescence but also the good things about it and the wonders that we reap from it. This book does exactly that.

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