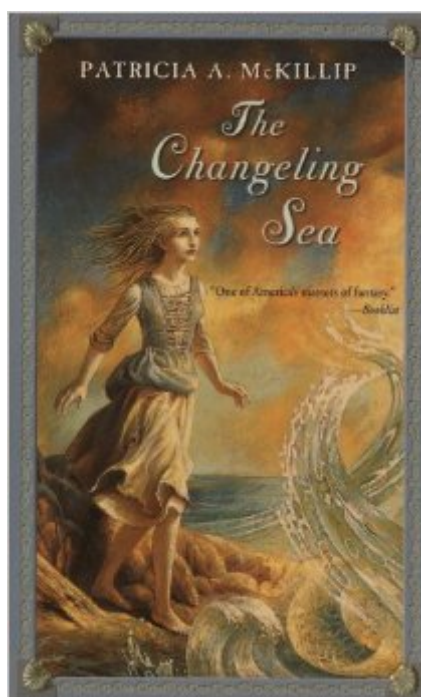


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# The Changeling Sea (Firebird Fantasy)



## Synopsis

World Fantasy Award winner Patricia A. McKillip tells "an enchanting fantasy that is tinged with realism and romance." (School Library Journal) Since the day her father's fishing boat returned without him, Peri and her mother have mourned his loss. Her mother sinks into a deep depression and spends her days gazing out at the sea. Unable to control her anger and sadness any longer, Peri uses the small magic she knows to hex the sea. And suddenly into her drab life come the King's sons "changelings with strange ties to the underwater kingdom" a young magician, and, finally, love. "McKillip is a master storyteller; her tale rings true as if it were being told from memory." Kirkus Reviews, pointer review

## Book Information

Series: Firebird Fantasy

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Product Dimensions: 4.3 x 0.4 x 6.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (66 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #240,518 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #281 in Books > Teens >

Romance > Historical #909 in Books > Teens > Romance > Paranormal #988 in Books >

Teens > Romance > Science Fiction & Dystopian

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

One of Patricia McKillip's lesser-known works, "Changeling Sea" is reminiscent of her rare short novel "Something Rich and Strange," as both deal with the sea and its pull on human beings.

Thankfully this book will soon be reprinted by the excellent imprint Firebird books; it's an enchanting short novel full of vivid images and characters. Peri's father was drowned, and her mother lives half in a dream world. Peri herself scrubs floors for a living, and remains embittered against the sea that stole her parents both in body and in mind. One night as she is weaving hexes to cast into the sea, she encounters Kir, a young prince with an obsessive longing for the sea. He asks her to put a

mysterious message in with her hexes, and she agrees. A sea-dragon with a gold chain around its neck surfaces not long after she tosses the hexes into the ocean, and a passing mage named Lyo tries to take the chain for the fishermen -- except he accidentally turns it into hundreds of tiny flowers. Soon strange things begin to surface from the sea, just after Kir and his father leave for a distant island. Peri encounters the sea dragon pulling itself onto the land, and sees it transform into a naked young man who strongly resembles Kir. A years-old web of magic, love, revenge, and sea-longing must be unraveled before Kir can find peace, and Peri can find love. One of the enchanting things about Patricia McKillip's novels is their simplicity. Though we have some of the essential trappings of typical fantasy -- wizards, dragons, mermaids, kings and princes and plenty of magic -- they are used in a very different manner than most readers will be used to. The plotline is deceptively simple, and has the feeling of being far more complex than it is. Several plot elements can be guessed ahead of time, but this does not detract from the storyline. As always, her prose is full of magic; the descriptions are lush and beautiful, even the descriptions of the sea-dragon. In such cases as the description of the sea-lady, they are exceptional, even for McKillip. At the same time, this dreaminess is balanced out by the homey atmosphere of the inn where Peri works. The dialogue ranges from poetic, almost songlike, to chummy and amusing. Peri is an unusual heroine: she isn't pretty, sweet-natured, powerful, or anything unusual but kind and angsty. McKillip repeatedly emphasizes that, unlike Cinderella, Snow White or similar floor-scrubbing protagonists, Peri has calloused knees, perpetually messy hair, and a nose that she perceives as being too big. Yet she is entrancing to some of the male characters, and respected by all of them. Lyo is reminiscent of the "Riddlemaster" character Rood, with his offputting wit and uncanny clear sight. Kir drips angst and unhappiness, especially since he seems unable to love anything or anyone on the land. The unnamed sea-dragon/youth is almost babylike in his trust and eagerness to learn. "Changeling Sea" is an exceptional story, full of magic, romance, and a small cast of exceptionally-developed characters. One of the finest fantasies out there, and one that should be read the moment it is reprinted.

Despite the age recommendations on this book (9 to 12), McKillip's story is a wonderful fairy tale for any reader, as are all of her other works. The Changeling Sea is an excellent combination of fantasy and reality - the balance of hard working villagers and magical beings from another world make this story not only enchanting, but lovely in its realism. Fans of McKillip will of course love this story. For children and adults who have never read her: this is a great place to start.

No matter the age of the reader, Patricia McKillip has always astounded with her power to draw us into her intricately crafted worlds seemingly without conscious effort. Her prose, always beautiful, paints such gorgeous pictures in our heads that it is impossible not to be engaged as soon as we pick up the page. *The Changeling Sea* follows the life of a small young woman named Periwinkle (but everyone just calls her Peri) as she deals with the realities of a father taken by the sea and a mother who does nothing but grieve for him. From the very start, introduced to this unlikely heroine as she scrubs floors at a local Inn, we cannot help but be charmed by her. Even better, as the tale goes on, despite her lack of concern for what others think, this woman not only catches two princes but also becomes the focal point in a web of intrigue, mystery, enchantment, and power. That she ends up finding new resources of power within herself intrigues and delights us; for a change, and unlike most fairytale characters, this girl is neither beautiful nor classically sweet, and yet she still ends up with a happy ending. Despite its age, this classic will never grow old. I recommend it to anyone, as a great intro to fantasy and as an evocative fairy tale that bends the definitions in enchanting new ways.

*The Changeling Sea* is a truly beautiful book to read. It is only 160 or so pages and can be read in about 2 hours, but the story will stay with you for a long time afterwards. It is told from the point of view of Periwinkle, or Peri, a poor fisher's daughter. Her father was lost one day in his boat and her mother sits by the window all day, looking out at the sea. Peri works at the inn and lives in the house of an old woman who taught her spells and hexes and then vanished one day. Peri's life is fairly boring until one day she sees a dark horseman down by the sea at night. The next day, she meets the prince, Kir, at the old woman's cottage. She realizes that he was the horseman and he tells her that he used to talk to the old woman too. She tells him that she wants to hex the sea for stealing both of her parents and he asks her to deliver a message for him when she does. The message is a ring with the king's initials in it and several locks of hair. Peri is curious, but she does tie the message to one of her hexes when she throws them into the sea with a curse. Suddenly, she sees a great golden dragon rise out of the sea in front of her with a gigantic golden chain around its neck. She is naturally frightened and tries to get away. The next day all of the fisher folk are talking about the dragon; they want the gold chain. That much gold would be enough to make them all rich, they say. Soon strange things begin to happen to the fishermen though. They are caught in strange fogs, and see mermaids where others see only fish or sharks. Confused and scared, they decide to get a magician to take the gold chain off for them. Some phony magicians come and go, and then one day, Peri meets Lyo. He slips on her newly sponged floor and washes to a halt right under her nose.

She can see the magic in his strange color-shifting eyes, and becomes convinced when he dries himself off with a wave of his hand. When Lyo understands what they want him to do, he asks Peri to row him out in her father's boat. They reach the dragon and Lyo sings him children's songs until he can get close enough. Then he takes the chain off. But before anything else happens, the chain turns into periwinkles and Lyo vanishes. Meanwhile, Kir has told his secret to Peri as they become closer. He thinks his mother lives in the land under the sea. He wants to go back, but the sea won't let him in. One night, Peri stands at the shore and wishes aloud that Kir were "a little more human." The next thing she knows, the sea dragon comes ashore and turns into a man at her feet. He doesn't know many words, so Peri begins to teach him. Meanwhile, Lyo has somehow found out what is really behind Kir and the sea dragon and the gold chain, at least partially, and is trying to help them all. Eventually, Lyo tells the king what his son really is, and brings him to Peri's cottage where he meets his other son. As it turns out, the king knew Kir's mother before he married and had a son. Somehow at birth, the two sons were changed. Kir was brought onto land, and the other was taken under the sea and chained. Kir is becoming more and more desperate, so they agree on a final course of action. I won't give the ending away, but Peri discovers an unknown talent, the fishermen get their gold, Kir gets back where he belongs and so does the sea dragon, now called Aidon. The romance in this book is very sweet and, in some cases, unexpected. It was a beautiful, but bittersweet book to read, like many of McKillip's are. I thought the writing was great and the characters were really well developed, even at 160 pages. It had that familiar dream-like quality, but it did have a pretty happy ending. I would recommend this book to everyone. This is one of my favorite books ever; it will bring a tear to your eyes and a smile to your face. Go read it!

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