



# The Changeling Sea

*Patricia A. McKillip*

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## **The Changeling Sea** Patricia A. McKillip

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.

## **The Changeling Sea Details**

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# From Reader Review *The Changeling Sea* for online ebook

## Lila says

This is a gem of a book! It's compelling, magical and very unpredictable!

It is the 4th book I've read from Patricia A. McKillip and I love the dreamlike quality of her writing.

I am wavering between 4 and 5 stars and deciding on 4 only because I usually only give 5 stars to book I read and still love.

It is absolutely beautiful and I'd recommend it to everyone who loves fairy tales.

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## Algernon says

**"What have you done?" she asked herself aloud. "What have you done?" She answered herself a few moments later. "I've gone and fallen in love with the sea."**

Flawless!

Patricia McKillip should give lessons in how to write fantasy romance - imaginative, charming, balancing a tear with a smile, loneliness with selflessness, poetry with the prose of day to day living. She is one of the most consistent writers of modern fairytales I have come across, her lyrical style immediately identifiable, yet bringing something fresh and original with each new book she writes. She infuses even the darker stories with beauty and a sense of wonder, and she turns a deft hand at light comedy when the situation requires it.

**She felt as if she had stepped into some dream where anything might happen: Her head might float away and turn into the moon; starfish might walk upright onto the sand and dance a courtly dance.**

Peri, as in Periwinkle, is a young girl who lives in a small village by the sea. When she loses her father in a violent storm, she puts a curse on the cruel sea, throwing into the waves some of her amateurish magical wreaths. Who would believe that a simple scullion girl in the local inn might have the power to awaken terrible forces from their deep blue slumber? Yet soon enough, a magical dragon starts to haunt the sea near the village, a magnificent multicolored beast that is chained to the bottom of the sea by a heavy gold chain. A young man, the obligatory "tall, dark stranger", is also haunting the beaches, always looking out to the sea. Pretty soon, another young man will mirror the first one by gazing longingly from the beach towards dry lands. Both of the boys find refuge in the humble hovel of the girl Peri. And spring is coming to the world, awakening in the three young hearts the thoughts of romance.

*The air was warm, silken, promising longer, lazy days, more light, promising all the soft, mysterious smells and colors of spring after the harsh gray winter. The sand itself was streaked with colors from the sunset.*

Love triangles have been done to the death in the genre, so expect McKillip to not be satisfied with this classical set-up, and to make Peri a girl with her head screwed the right way onto her shoulders, not too easily swayed by the Heathcliff vibe of tragic destiny in the young bucks coming to her door. Read on, and you might find the resolution of romance to be a logical, if unconventional one. (view spoiler)

The plot is inspired by the old Celtic legends of the Changeling, by the magical realm of the faeries existing

hidden beside our own reality, and by the dangers of crossing this invisible barrier between the real and the magical realms. There's a legend like this in the kingdom where Peri lives, a mystery that she unwittingly steps into and must now help to unravel.

*Once upon a time there was a king who had two sons: one by the young queen, his wife, and one by a woman out of the sea. The sons were born at the same time, and when the queen died in child-bed, her human son was stolen away, and the sea-born son left in his place. Why? No one truly knows, only the woman hidden in the sea, and the king. And perhaps the king does not even know. Why? Why is the wind, why is the sea, why is a long road between the world and me.*

I believe I have said enough about the plot for now. I would like to add, as usual, that one of the reasons I love McKillip stories is the treatment of magic in her imagined worlds. Like Guy Gavriel Kay, she considers magic not as a mechanical, learn spells by the rote and cast them whenever you need them, sort of Force. Magical is a secret and wild thing, elusive and unpredictable, a talent that requires an open mind and a lot of patience to develop. Kyo, the young magician hired by the villagers to recover the huge gold chain holding down the dragon, explains to Peri how he experiences magic:

*Slowly you learn to turn the dark into shapes, colors ... It's like a second dawn breaking over the world. You see something most people can't see and yet it seems clear as the nose on your face. That there's nothing in the world that doesn't possess its share of magic. Even an empty shell, a lump of lead, an old dead leaf - you look at them and learn to see, and then to use, and after a while you can't remember ever seeing the world any other way. Everything connects to something else.*

In the current novel, this majesty, mystery and danger of magic is symbolized by the sea, a fickle mistress that can in the blink of an eye turn from coy to murderous. Lyo, with his magical eye, can unveil the poetry of the sea in a way that the gold crazed locals have long forgotten in their daily drudge of earning a living.

*He seemed delighted by the sea life, as if he had seen little of it, yet he rowed fearlessly farther than Peri had ever gone, out to where the very surface of the world was fluid and dangerous, where the sea was the ruling kingdom they trespassed upon in their tiny, fragile boats, and the life and beauty in it lay far beneath them, in places forbidden to their eyes.*

**The Changeling Sea** is one of the novels I would love to see turned into a movie (especially after watching the horrible example of what passes for rom-com today with "Trainwreck"). It may not be action filled or grimdark or even epic, but it has style and charm enough to put me in a good mood, more inclined to see the wonder of the world around me instead of its dinginess.

**It's an odd thing, happiness. Some people take happiness from gold. Or black pearls. And some of us, far more fortunate, take their happiness from periwinkles.**

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## **Srividya says**

The sea has always fascinated me, mayhap because I was born near one and usually went to sleep lulled by the sound of its waves. It could also be because I have loved its might, which made me feel totally

insignificant in the entire realm of things or maybe because I always stood tall before the sea, almost as if I were challenging it to do its worst, while it gently responded to me by lapping at my feet, almost caressing me and soothing away my pain and anger. I will never know the exact reason but I believe that it is a combination of all this and more, which makes the sea a special entity in my life.

Are you wondering why I am waxing poetry about the sea? Don't worry, I have not gone completely nutty, it's just that this book is set in a place by the sea and deals with both the magic as well as the mysterious nature of the sea. This is my first book by the author and I must take time to point out that she definitely writes a lyrical story, one that is both high on imagination as well as story building. A true page turner that leaves you spellbound at every moment. It was almost as if the author had a magical romantic tryst with herself while writing this book, her love and passion flows through the pages and the story, leaving the reader feeling warm and yet seeking an unknown that is both within reach as well as beyond.

The story is about a girl, Peri or Periwinkle, a floor scrubber in an inn, who loses her father to the sea. Her mother, devastated by this loss is almost like a mute sculpture, which adds to the loss felt by Peri. She hates the sea for the loss of her loved ones and with the help of an old woman in the village, she manages to hex the sea. Of course, she doesn't believe that her hexes will come true and goes about her work as usual. During this period, she meets the Prince Kir, son of the King of that country, who truly yearns for the sea as no one else can. The story moves onto include a magician Lyo, a sea dragon and some wonderful twists and turns, ultimately leading to a wonderful story, which is both romantic and poignant.

Where the story starts with a very light and sweet note, it quickly takes its turn to the mysterious and magical. What made me really like this book was the fact that the twists and turns do not seem to be forced or a farce. You move with it, experiencing the pain, angst, love, magic and all other elements that are thrown in together and faced by the characters. Each character is extremely believable and well developed. Whether it is the anguished Prince Kir or the lost sea dragon or the beguiling magician or even Peri, the main heroine, they are all believable and definitely characters that you can relate to.

I loved the writing, which as I mentioned earlier is totally magical. I usually don't have favourite quotes or passages from the books I read or rather don't usually mention them but there were two in this book that really struck me, which makes me want to share it here to explain just how poetic the writing can be. Of course, I can be accused of liking cheesy writing by some, but honestly to me it was magical.

**When asked to explain what magic was, the magician Lyo says these words:**

"Magic is like night, when you first encounter it. A vast black full of shapes... slowly you learn to turn the dark into shapes, colors... it's like a second dawn is breaking over the world. You see something most people can't see and yet it seems clear as the nose on your face. That there's nothing in the world that doesn't possess its share of magic."

**And at a later stage when explaining how he knows when Peri calls him, he tells her this**

"I listen," he said obscurely. "If you listen hard enough, you begin to hear things... the sorrow beneath the smile, the voice within the fire dragon, the secret in the young floor-scrubber's voice, behind all the talk of gold..."

Overall this is a simple story that is told beautifully, full of magic that makes you feel as if you are being soothed and rioted by the waves of the sea. So if you are in a mood to relax and enjoy a simple story, with some magic and beautiful presentation, do pick this one up and I can guarantee that you will enjoy it.

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## Manju says

Its my second book by Patricia McKillip after the The Riddle-Master of Hed. I liked that book but I loved this one. It is a short, simple and beautifully written book. It is a story of a girl, two princes, one magician and a sea dragon.

After Perriwinkle's father's death, her mother is in a deep depression. Peri has stopped living with her mother and has started living in an old woman's abandoned house near the sea. Though she visits her mother occasionally but her mother rarely acknowledge her presence. With each passing day Peri is getting more and more frustrated. One day when she couldn't bear anymore. She uses a little magic and hexes the sea and curses it. This sets a series of events in motion and Peri finds herself between two princes and their wishes to live in a place they crave for.

Peri is a very intriguing character. She is introvert and alone, a girl craving her mother's love and attention. When her father who was a fisher dies in the sea, her mother starts thinking that her father is alive and is in a Kingdom that exist under the sea. That is one of the reason that she wants to unravel the mystery of the sea. She is a brave girl and her courage earns her the trust and respect of the men around her.

Its a fairy tale kind of story and McKillip has told this in a wonderful way. Her writing has lyrical feel to it. The story is short yet it has a great character development.

All in all its a story of magic, mystery, fear, courage, hope and love.

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## Swaye says

*"Come out of the sea and into my heart  
My dark, my shining love.  
Promise we shall never part,  
My dark, my singing love."*

This is no ordinary book. It is a key to another realm. I journeyed through the labyrinthine pathways of her heart to enter a secret world full of magic and beauty. And I am forever changed.

I have always been a creature of the sea. My soul heard her song and found it's way to her shore. She gives me shelter from the storm. Her heart keeps me warm.

Thank you, Lia, for sharing this precious treasure with me. I will cherish it as I do you, always. ∞

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Note: I listened to this on repeat throughout. It fit so perfectly and added even more depth and wonder to my experience. ?

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## **Laura Lulu says**

I just couldn't get past Peri loving a man who was so tormented, who gave her nothing in return--was *incapable* of giving her any of himself. But she was still in love with him & pined for him when he was gone. Just not my favorite message for the target audience. Save the angst for the older crowd--I prefer children's books when the girl falls for a boy who is actually nice to her and thinks of her and not just poor, poor him.

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## **The Shayne-Train says**

My daughter and I both enjoyed this book about magic, loss, loneliness, and people wishing for things they can't have and to be things they can't be.

There were some pretty heady concepts in here, and some nicely complex language. The little one ate it up like shrimp chowder with a spoon. And, y'know, I kinda did, too.

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## **Simon says**

This short, standalone novel (a novella really) written in McKillip's usual beautiful yet elliptical style is exactly the sort of thing that I come to expect from her work.

A lowly scullery maid, who's fisher father died at sea and who's mother is psychologically lost to the sea, hates the ocean and tries to put a hex on it but ends up becoming embroiled in powerful magic and the King's family who's one time tryst with the sea queen is coming back to haunt him.

Those who have read McKillip before will find the evocative prose and the opaque dialogue, in which the characters seem to talk around each other, quite familiar. Once again the emphasis is not on action but rather the emotional conflict and tension.

Not quite up to the standard of *The Forgotten Beasts of Eld* but a very good book nonetheless.

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## **Angie says**

It's no secret that Patricia McKillip is a most beloved author for so many fantasy readers. I discovered her late in the game, when I ran across a beautiful reissued omnibus edition of *The Riddle-master Trilogy* in a Barnes & Noble several years ago. After finishing that excellent trilogy, I went looking for any other McKillip books I could get my hands on. The result was a binge, of sorts, in which I blew through six or seven titles without a by-your-leave. And it was an immensely good time. But it did result in a little bit of fatigue, as her writing style is very specific and lyrical and I wound up needing to cleanse my palate a little after. Since then I've re-read a few of my favorites here and there, particularly the *Riddle-Master* and *The Book of Atrix Wolfe*, but not since *The Tower at Stony Wood's* release have I picked up one of her new ones. While I was perusing the McKillip section on my shelves the other night, the slender little volume *THE CHANGELING SEA* caught my eye and I got to thinking it might be time to get back on the McKillip

wagon. Originally published in 1988, this young adult fantasy has stood the test of time. Firebird put out the pretty little edition pictured on the right in 2003 and, having worked hard to find my own used copy, I was happy to see new life breathed into it. I also think it's the most accurate artistic representation of Peri herself and the spiraling, mesmerizing tone of the novel.

Nobody ever really noticed Periwinkle. She and her small family have always been a bit on their own, quietly living out their lives in their sleepy fishing village. And then the year she turns fifteen, Peri is suddenly really and truly alone for the first time in her young life. It seems the sea has taken everything that she loves. First her father who drowned and now her mother who failed to get over her father's death to the point where she no longer talks to Peri at all. And so Peri spends her days working as a chamber maid, scrubbing floors at the local inn, and her nights trying desperately to curse the sea that's been the source of all her sorrow. Magic has always been a part of Peri's world, though it's never made itself known with quite such a presence as it does the day the King arrives in town with his son Prince Kir. The unhappy prince has a problem that plagues him, a problem he hopes Peri may be able to help him with. If she will just include something of his in her latest curse, perhaps the longing that rides him will abate. Neither of them expect the sea monster who rises as a result. A sea monster bound by a golden chain and from that point on, nothing is the same in Peri's life, and it is with gratitude she accepts the help of the wizard Lyo--a sort of local wise man. Between the four of them--the girl, the prince, the wizard, and the dragon--they piece together the mystery of what happened in that same place so many years ago and why it's rearing its ugly head now.

I loved Peri instantly and without reserve. From the very first page, she is not your classic fairy tale heroine. The opening lines:

No one really knew where Peri lived the year after the sea took her father and cast his boat, shrouded in a tangle of fishing net, like an empty shell back onto the beach. She came home when she chose to, sat at her mother's hearth without talking, brooding sullenly at the small, quiet house with the glass floats her father had found, colored bubbles of light, still lying on the dusty windowsill, and the same crazy quilt he had slept under still on the bed, and the door open on quiet evenings to the same view of the village and the harbor with the fishing boats homing in on the incoming tide. Sometimes her mother would rouse herself and cook; sometimes Peri would eat, sometimes she wouldn't. She hated the vague, lost expression on her mother's face, her weary movements. Her hair had begun to gray; she never smiled, she never sang. The sea, it seemed to Peri, had taken her mother as well as her father, and left some stranger wandering despairingly among her cooking pots.

She is not beautiful or poised or charming or sweet. But she is kind and determined and involved in unraveling the mystery from beginning to end. She earns the trust of the men around her before (if) she earns their love and we (and they) are frequently reminded of her flaws, from scraped knees to a nose on the large side. Urchin from top to bottom, it is most definitely what's inside that matters with this girl. And it matters quite a lot as so many come to depend on her, including the unusual and wondrous creature from the sea who is himself not exactly what he seems. As is always the case with a McKillip tale, the poetic language and gracefully interwoven magic lend a golden glow to the whole. At the same time, this is one of her more "real" stories. Peri is so real. Cloaked in the unreal and unbelievable elements around her, she remains focused and bright. Clocking in at a scant 144 pages, it is also a prime (and all-too-rare) example of a book I don't wish longer. It's perfect just as it is, especially the ending. The briefness only accentuates the sweetness and strangeness and I never fail to finish it at ease with my world and hers.

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## Jenna says

An emotionally rich, well-plotted sea yarn from a generally excellent fantasy author. The half-human/half-otherworldly love triangle reminds me more than a little of Robin McKinley's *Hero and the Crown*, particularly in the way the afterlife is evoked to allow for a layered resolution; the debonair young wizard character has a whiff of Diana Wynne Jones's Howl about him, and the rustically witchy protagonist a whiff of Jones's Sophie, with her talent for "talking life into things"; the heart-tugging minor chords of the story's emotional palette, revolving around the inexorable power of the sea to take and keep what it pleases, put me in mind of John Allison's *The Case of the Fire Inside*, among other great selkie stories. This is a book with something to say about bereavement, mourning, and closure, and also about literature/storytelling/writing, which seems to be the true subject of this passage that is nominally about magic:

*He smiled, his eyes, facing the sun, full of light. "Magic is like night, when you first encounter it." "Night?" she said doubtfully. She skipped a beat with one oar and the Sea Urchin spun a half-circle. "A vast black full of shapes . . ." He trailed his fingers overboard and the Sea Urchin turned its bow toward the horizon again. "Slowly you learn to turn the dark into shapes, colors. . . . It's like a second dawn breaking over the world. You see something most people can't see and yet it seems clear as the nose on your face. That there's nothing in the world that doesn't possess its share of magic. Even an empty shell, a lump of lead, an old dead leaf—you look at them and learn to see, and then to use, and after a while you can't remember ever seeing the world any other way. Everything connects to something else...."*

This was my third McKillip novel after *Winter Rose*, which was very formative for me, and *The Book of Atrix Wolfe*, which I honestly don't remember at all. I would rank it somewhere between the two -- quite satisfying.

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## Lia Bonnibel (pidgey) says

Whenever I think about this novel, I feel warm. I feel at home.

This is the book that made me fall in love with reading, the very first one I bought with my own savings, more than 10 years ago.

It took me half an afternoon to finish it and, once I was done, I immediately went and reread it, skipping homework and totally forgetting about the world outside.

I remember I found it magical and beautiful, simple and yet complex and intense in its simplicity.

It gave me such strong feelings, made my mind and heart travel to places I never thought existed.

I often reread it, every now and then, and every time it's like the first time.

No matter how great or famous or brilliant or heartbreaking a book is, it will never be as important to me as this one is.

I still cherish it and forever will, too.

Because it's my most precious treasure and it taught me how to dream.

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## Isa Lavinia says

Originally posted at Paperback Wonderland.

Sometimes people ask me to recommend a book and it usually goes a bit like this:

Hipster girl: Hey do you know which book I shoul--

Me: The Changeling Sea!

~\*~

Metalhead dude: Hey, I've been thinking about readi--

Me: The Changeling Sea!

~\*~

Mum: Any books you--

Me: The Changeling Sea!

~\*~

Some friend: Got any books yo--

Me: The Changeling Sea!

Some friend. You always say that! I've already read it!

Me: **READ IT AGAIN.**

Anyone who's lived their whole life by the sea will tell you that it's hard to successfully write a story that will give you the sense of wonder and possibility it brings. A *Menina do Mar* comes to mind, and though it's a children's book it's absolutely perfect, perhaps because I read it when I was a little girl and those books always have a special place in our hearts. The Changeling Sea through what I can only assume to be some freaky magical powers Patricia McKillip possesses, managed to be placed into that same corner of my heart even though I've read it as an adult. I guess that's the highest praise a book can get.

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## Kristen says

I first read a book by Patricia McKillip about three years ago and decided I *must* read more of her work. This has proven to be an excellent life choice since it's introduced me to books like *The Changeling Sea*, a beautifully written (and short stand alone!) fantasy story with themes of love and loss. The combination of legendary occurrences and everyday life by the sea is handled masterfully, and I added this memorable book to my favorites shelf immediately after finishing it.

Full Review: <http://www.fantasybookcafe.com/2016/0...>

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## TheBookSmugglers says

Originally reviewed on The Book Smugglers

In a small fishing village on the coast of the wide, stormy sea, a bright-eyed young woman named Periwinkle makes her home. After her father, a fisherman, rows out his ship and never returns, Peri's mother lapses into quiet despair, forgetting to talk and always staring out at the roiling sea and fantasizing about the people that

live in its depths. Without her parents to watch over her or remind her to do things like brush her hair or hem her clothes, Peri grows from a quiet child to a wild and somewhat neglected young woman - her hair always a tangle, her dresses bleached of all color, too tight in some places, too loose in others. Even the old wise woman who used to brush Peri's hair in her small cottage disappears one day, leaving Peri without anyone to care for her at all. During the day, she works at the local inn, scrubbing floors and cleaning rooms; by night, she returns to the old woman's cottage and makes her own isolated home where she plots her revenge against the sea. Hateful of the ocean that has taken both of her parents away, Peri crafts three crude hexes to curse the sea - it is here that she meets Prince Kir, who also knew the wise woman and years for her counsel. Kir has deep troubles of his own, also connected to the watery depths, and hopes that Peri can help him make his peace with the ocean that haunts his every waking moment. When Peri finishes her hexes and throws them deep into the great water, she also includes an offering from Kir - and to Peri's great astonishment, her hexes start to *work*.

A great sea dragon starts to appear amongst the fishermen's boats on the sea, with an impossibly large gold chain around its neck. Then, a magician comes to town, promising that he will be able to remove the chain and give the gold to the villagers - for a price. And most importantly, Kir's dreams of the sea grow more fevered and frantic, as his own unknown, hidden past catches up to him. And it is all up to Periwinkle to set everything back to rights.

To date, I've only read a handful of books and short stories from Patricia McKillip, mostly her recent releases. *The Changeling Sea*, however, is one of McKillip's earlier works, originally published in the 1980s and instantly endeared itself to me - a changeling fable that takes place by the stormy sea? What better place to jump into McKillip's rich and extensive backlist? And you know what? I absolutely loved this book. Shortly put: *The Changeling Sea* is another gorgeous, wonderful book from the incredibly talented McKillip.

I'm going to say something that sounds incredibly cheesy, but it is so very true: Patricia McKillip has a way with words that is simply magical. Like *The Bell at Sealey Head* or *The Bards of Bone Plain*, *The Changeling Sea* is a slender book, but one written with lush and evocative prose that is as beautiful as it is simple. For example:

A sigh, smelling of shrimp and seaweed, wafted over the water... In the deep waters beyond the stones, a great flaming sea-thing gazed back at her, big as a house or two, its mouth a strainer like the mouth of a baleen whale, its translucent fiery streamers coiling and uncoiling languorously in the warm waters. The brow fins over its wide eyes gave it a surprised expression. Around its neck, like a dog collar, was a massive chain of pure gold.

Beautiful, no? Such is McKillip's writing, littered throughout with these gleaming gems of description and story.

Love and anger are like land and sea: They meet at many different places.

As the title suggests, *The Changeling Sea* is a fable about a changeling, and a story whose heart is inextricably tied to the sea. It's a book about love - no, scratch that. It's actually a book about *yearning* for what once was, and what can never be again. It's the book of a King that yearns for the beauty of the sea queen in all her splendor, the story of two brothers crossed at birth that yearn for their true homes on sea and on land. It's the story of a wild haired, barefooted fisherman's daughter that dares hex the spiteful sea, and yearns for the love of one that can never return it. Aren't these some of the best of all? These stories of want

and hate and love, all jumbled up into one powerful package of emotion?

And then there are the characters! Periwinkle, our heroine, is a pinched and angry character at first, who scowls at the ocean but refuses to leave its shores despite her hate. She's bold and wild, who cares little about the conventions that bind others - she doesn't have secret dreams of catching the prince's eye like the other girls who work at the inn, and she doesn't pay attention to her clothes or her hair. She's smart but rough around the edges, passionate but obstinate - and for all that, a character you cannot help but love, flaws and all. There is the tortured Kir, who is...well, defined by his yearning for the ocean and his feeling that he does not belong on dry land. There's also the sea dragon himself, who is not at all what he seems, and a king that has made mistakes in his past but loves his children and lovers dearly. But for all that, my other favorite character in this beautiful little book is Lyo - the canny magician, with his smiling face and his penchant for twisting magic in delightful, unexpected ways.

All in all, I loved *The Changeling Sea*, and absolutely recommend it. I cannot wait to try more of Patricia McKillip's work - now, any suggestions on where to go next?

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### **Krystle says**

This book is so gorgeous it hurts.

I'm serious. The prose is so beautiful you can't help but foam in envy. Her writing has such luscious descriptions you just want to gather them all up and devour them like precious edible gold. It's just amazing how she manages to spill her wonderful imagination out into the pages and spin a story with the skills to back it up.

Sure this novel (a novella almost, really) is short but I really loved how she takes a familiar aspect in fairy lore (the switching of babies) and places it in an entirely different setting. Her transformation of it is fabulous and I thought worked really well with the sea backdrop. The characters may not be so deeply explored but we see them shine on the pages that they are on.

The ending of this book was very quiet compared to the mysterious and overwhelming sense of mystery and pull we had at the beginning, which I think made for a nice contrast. It's almost bittersweet but we are left with such pleased emotions after.

I know everyone has said this already but this tale is exactly that: lovely. A lovely, lovely tale with some of the most beautiful writing published.

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### **Nikki says**

This is a gorgeous, bittersweet, perfect, completely unsatisfying story. It's a fairytale that feels real. All of those things at once? Yes.

I didn't like the other book by this author I've read nearly as much -- perhaps not at all, I can't remember. But this is lovely. It's a story about longing, really, longing and love. It spellbound me, and managed to capture something I love about the sea: its beauty, humans' fascination with it, its danger... Dar Williams' *The Ocean* comes to mind here, somewhat.

It's not really a story tied together by plot, but by emotion, and Kir's longing, Peri's love and hope, the king's sadness, it all got to me. The book is short, but I'll be thinking about it for a while. Another comparison that comes to mind is Susan Cooper's *Seaward*.

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## **Mimi says**

Another winning tale by Patricia McKillip. This is only the second book I've read by her, but I'm convinced she can do no wrong. There's something delightful and magical about the way she writes that pulls me into her stories, and I don't surface until the last page is turned.

It doesn't happen often to me, but once in awhile I come across a book and wish I was young again to enjoy it with an open, less burdened mind, and to enjoy it in the spirit it was written and, just for a moment, be its target audience again. This is one of those rare books in which the magic is real; I just can't feel it anymore.

Even though I enjoy it now and really like the writing, it's a cold, intellectual kind of enjoyment. Lovely prose, lovely story. I love the way it reads on the page and can methodically deconstruct all the things that I like about it and appreciate the parts as much as the whole story, but it doesn't hit me right in the feels like *The Forgotten Beasts of Eld*. Yet I'm certain I would have loved this book more when I was younger, when I would have been eager to be fully immersed in the mystique of the sea and its mysterious magical pull. I think, back then, I would have been able to hear it calling as clearly as Peri.

"Be happy now," she whispered, aware of all the shining waves behind him reaching toward him, withdrawing, beckoning again. She added, feeling the pain again in her throat, "When I'm old--older than the old women who taught me to make the hexes--come for me then."

"I will."

"Promise me. That you will bring me black pearls and sing me into the sea when I am old."

"I promise."

[...]

"Your heart sang to the sea. I heard it, deep in my coral tower, and followed the singing. Humans say the sea sings to them and traps them, but sometimes it is the human song that traps the sea. Who knows where the land ends and the sea begins?"

"The land begins where time begins."

[...]

"It's an odd thing, happiness. Some people take happiness from gold. Or black pearls. And some of us, far more fortunate, take their happiness from periwinkles."

Cross-posted at <https://covers2covers.wordpress.com/2...>

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### **Susana says**

Heart-breaking, atmospheric and unforgettable.

This story was all I could ask for, and more.

It doesn't need three hundred or four hundred pages, much of them filled with boring details to tell its story.

It slowly arrives, it tells its tale, it imprints it in our hearts and minds, and calmly goes away...

A coming of age punctuated by loss and finding what's important in one's life.

*"It's an odd thing, happiness. Some people take happiness from gold. Or black pearls. And some of us, far more fortunate, take their happiness from periwinkles."*

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### **Kaora says**

My goal for next year was to read more female fantasy authors. I started this a tad bit early, but was unable to put it down. I hope I find more authors like this while achieving my goal!

I don't normally like books with romance in them. Especially romance books that are also Young Adult. This book was way out of my comfort zone being shelved under both.

But the writing was so well done and the tale so beautiful that I enjoyed this one immensely.

*Everyone who tells the tale of a sea- journey, or listens to it, travels there safely and comes back again.*

The story is about a girl named Periwinkle who has lost both her parents to the sea - her father who disappeared while fishing and her mother who stares at the sea all day mourning his loss. Using spells taught to her by an old lady before she too mysteriously disappears, Peri hexes the sea.

*"I hex you. I hate you, I curse you, I lay a hex on you, Sea so that all your spellbindings will unravel, and all your magic is confused, and so that you never again take anything or anyone who belongs to us, and you let go of whatever you have."*

And thus begins a whirlwind story of two princes, a King, a magician, love and the land under the sea.

I highly recommend this book, and I am looking forward to exploring this author's other works.

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**Nafiza says**

SO GOOD. I loved it. The feels man.

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