

A complex and creative collection of unique, dark fairytales.

How does one understand life and the relationships we engage in on a daily basis? Do we measure ourselves based on these relationships? Or by the thoughts within our own minds? The *Seed and other Fairytales* takes a thoughtful look into the meaning of these questions.

Hillenbrand's debut anthology showcases a variety of styles and themes. A little girl, Caroline, shares a deep friendship with a ghost. A flash-fiction story about a woman who despises wishes and enjoys fish smoothies. A story of war, peace and a soul-consuming water dragon. An unwelcome and lost man within an unworldly kingdom—with seemingly no way out. A girl looking for her fortune among some hopeless creatures with much to offer apart from the one that literally takes all she has. A man who eats his emotions. These themes convey complexity and hope; however happy endings are not a guarantee. The final pages of this collection will leave the reader wondering why the seeds were thrown, and why some characters were able to grow while others drown in the storm. For example, *Hunger Pangs*, features these lines: "Then I found a bit of hope. Stale and moldy as it was, I took a bite. That was a mistake. I couldn't keep it down." These are lines that will stay with you at the end, and make you question whether or not hope is what keeps some characters strong while others drown in their insufferable weakness and self-servitude.

While this anthology promotes elements of fantasy and contains all of the components of a traditional fairytale; the tales are not for children. These stories are for students and adults; they're literary (as fairytales should be) and thought-provoking. A similar creation can be found within the pages of the *Grimm's Household Tales*. The formatting and editing is excellent. The artwork, which introduces each story, is both awesome and unearthly. These stories range from a couple pages, to novella-length, neither sacrificing quality or plot development.

Overall dark, quirky, and literary entertainment for adults. Compelling and artistic in more ways than one.

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