

《The Grey King (平装)》

图书基本信息

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作者：Susan Cooper

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内容概要

Gr 5-8-While recovering from hepatitis, Will Stanton is sent to a farm in Wales where he is soon caught up in the battle against "the Dark." He struggles to recall the prophetic lines he once memorized and gradually, as he learns the local place names of the geographic features around him, the meaning of the lines becomes clear to him. Through Bran, a young boy with mysterious origins who becomes Will's friend, Will fulfills the prophecies and once again defeats the Dark. This fourth book of Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising* series (S&S Childrens, 1975) won the 1976 Newbery Medal. Twenty-five years later, it is still as powerful and mesmerizing as when it was first published. Richard Mitchley's reading is excellent and heightens listeners' enjoyment of Cooper's prose. His ease with Welsh pronunciation and the distinctive cadence of Welsh English adds greatly to the authenticity of the story's setting, which is an essential element of this book. He gives the characters distinctive voices without actually doing voices for each. Children not familiar with the earlier books in the series may find the basic premise a bit confusing since Will's status as an "old one" and the conflict between the light and the dark are not given much explanation. However, this audiobook is so well done that those who enjoy fantasy will relish it. It will also be a good choice for older children with reading disabilities when they need to "read" a Newbery title.

Louise L. Sherman, formerly Anna C. Scott School, Leonia, NJ

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Will Stanton, youngest of the Old Ones, goes to visit his Welsh relatives to recover from a serious illness and complete the first quest he has undertaken on his own. Aided only by the mysterious albino boy, Bran, and his gray-eyed dog, Cafall, Will must find the magic golden harp and use it to defeat the Grey King of the mountain and awaken The Sleepers, who will be powerful allies of the Light in its final stand. Strangely enough it is the very real peril of two dogs - Cafall and Pen, who become pawns of the Grey King and are accused of sheep killing by the villainous farmer Caradog Prichard - which occasions most of the suspense. In the whole epic tug of war between Good and Evil, Cafall's death is the first loss worth tears and it makes us care deeply about his loyal, grieving owner, Bran. . . who turns out to be the son of Guinevere and King Arthur, but that's another matter. The Welsh-accented spells, the gray, spirit foxes who come out of the hills to prey, the climactic battle of enchantments between the swans and cormorants commanded by Will and the seething fish controlled by the Grey King must stir even the most sluggish imagination. Yet Will's special status as an Old One - his ability to summon a new, previously unheard of spell or power at each crisis - tends to lull the reader into passivity; there's something alienating about not knowing the rules ahead of time. Although the imagery here is somewhat more familiar and less eerie, this is every bit as grandly orchestrated as *Green-witch* (1974). Cooper is clearly building towards a thumping conclusion in the fifth and next volume and even those of us who have doubts about the significance of all this thunderous moral absolutism will want to get in on the action. (Kirkus Reviews)

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