



## The Innkeeper's Song

*Peter S. Beagle*

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*The Innkeeper's Song* is the story of young Tikat's search for the lover whose death and resurrection he witnessed. It is a search that will lead him into a world of magic and mystery beyond his comprehension, for his wild ride sets him on the trail of three women who are blessed—or cursed—to undertake an impossible mission of their own.

Each of the three has secrets—from the world, from the two others, from herself. Each is followed by demons she can never escape. And all their destinies will be irrevocably linked in a far distant inn, when hunted and hunters finally meet. Karsh, the innkeeper, has no choice but to let the tangled drama unfold beneath his roof; his stable boy, Rosseth, is so mesmerized by the three cloaked women that he is soon finds a way to uncover what is perhaps their deepest secret; and Tikat continues his journey, refusing to let death bring an end to his love.

But it is not until the once-powerful man who has called the three women joins their number that the true quest will begin. And this is a challenge that may claim all their lives before they are done. For he who has been their mentor in the past, he who has been the greatest of wizards, lingers now at the very edge of death. And only they can save him from the enemy who has brought this doom upon him, an enemy who is heir to all the ailing man's magic, an enemy whom even Death has not been able to defeat...

## **The Innkeeper's Song Details**

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Author : Peter S. Beagle

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### **katayoun Masoodi says**

the story and the people and the writing needs time to completely enjoy, i was thought about of not continuing when i was in the third or fourth chapter and my confidence in the author and the reviews nudged me on and then after a while i was not reading a book but living a story, an amazing story. i will never doubt mr beagle again!

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### **Rosemary says**

One of those amazing experiences that come along every now and again was hearing Peter Beagle read from scraps of this book before it was published. And when it was published, what a novel! Nobody has ever kept so many point of view characters dancing in such an elaborate and intricate tale, with it all ending as it should, something only a true master of the art could pull off.

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### **Kelley Ceccato says**

This isn't so much a DNF as a "set aside for now." I admire the writing, but the plot and the characters aren't really landing with me. I think it may have a bit to do with the rapid shifts in POV. I usually like multiple-POV stories, but here I felt it had a distancing effect.

There are just so many books I want read.

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### **Rebecca McNutt says**

*The Innkeeper's Song* isn't overly memorable to me, however it's a gripping, philosophical story of a person's search for the answers to the mysteries of life and death.

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### **Michelle Wardhaugh says**

This was one of those "something to think about" books. Crossroads, change, endings and beginnings. The infamous bedroom scene actually grounded the story in a way that was necessary with all of the wizards' battles and heroes' adventures. It wasn't really a story about wizards and heroes even though many of the characters fit into those categories. Like *The Book of Atrix Wolfe*, there's a strong element here of common people mixing in with wonder and a conscious and unconscious search for identity. It took me quite a while to read this. The style didn't pull me through the way the style of many popular books does. This book was about the journey, not the destination, so that fits. Not that I found anything unsatisfactory about the end. It wrapped the plot up neatly. I think this book, like others of Mr. Beagle's, will be one to come back to from time to time to see what else can be found.



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## Tim says

I quite enjoyed the shifting perspectives of this book -- for some reason, though, I wanted every chapter from a new person's point of view. (Perhaps this was because the initial discovery of each character's distinct persona through a first-person lens was so exciting and entrancing, I just wanted that to keep going!)

Once I adjusted to that, and what all was going on plot-wise, it became a somewhat more introspective, at times almost mystical, fantasy. More creative than most, I dare say (this is Beagle, after all), and with unfailingly engaging characters.

And of course, I'm a sucker for shrewd, tough-as-nails, heroines (of which this story has two!) My favorite scene, hands down, is when one of them defeats the one opponent she meets who is her martial superior, who has already beaten her handily... by telling him a story. A woman warrior, mage, storyteller, trickster -- how could I not love such a character?

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## Aoife says

Honestly: I'm not quite sure how to sum up my feelings for this books...or just say anything about it. I found it awesome. I also think many people might find it terribly dull, which I somehow also understand but I still think it's awesome.

Well what's it about? There is a boy who sets out to save his true love (turns out she doesn't want to be rescued), there are two very beautiful and very misterious women, one of which has a name that reads like someone's been sick over a scrabble-board (it just gets abbreviated to 'Lal' most of the time). The other is called Nyateneri, which is slightly better. One third into the book there is a not too explicit but somehow still gracious foursome sex-scene, and only afterwards does the plot really start...it involves an old misterious, wise and powerful wizzard and another one who is even more powerful but not as wise. There is danger of the world getting destroyed.

Oh, and there's a shapechanging fox of mediocre importance.

All this sounds like someone just mashed a couple of random fantasy-cliches together but it's so much more. It is hard to describe, why exactly (and I'm tempted to say 'Well because it's Peter S. Beagle'). I think it's because all that is not the most important part. It's about love, friendship, relationships, running away from your past, trusting people and so much more. Saying that sounds terribly pretentious, but it is true.

Another beautiful thing about the book is, how it is told: Different characters tell the stories from their point of view. Not all of them are directly involved in the events, there's a traveling actress and different people, working in the inn, where most events take place, who tell the story, even though they have barely/no influence on it. But still, every character has a distinct voice (except perhaps for Nyateneri and Lal, they sound quite similar at times) that makes him immediately recognisable.

It is not a book for everybody. I wouldn't even guarantee that you'll like *The Innkeeper's Song* if you have liked *The Last Unicorn* because in a way TLU is still a more typical fantasy-story than this...Now there

should be a 'but', but I can just repeat: you might find it awesome. You might find it boring if you're expecting conventional fantasy. Go and find out for yourself.

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## Tessy Ijachi says

Buddy read with **Laura**

Hoping this chases away my five day slump

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## Jenny says

Isn't it annoying when a book ends that you don't want to end? Then, you sort of feel weird because a world has closed. You can reread it, reenter the world, but you'll never be the you that you were when you first read it, so it won't be the same. That's how I feel about The Innkeeper's Song just like I do about The Last Unicorn. Beagle is a magician, a good Arshadin, someone you know immediately is a master who you'll never surpass. But you don't mind because you get to experience the magic.

That's all I can really say about how I feel for this book. I can also say I didn't feel this way at first. The more I read it, the more it got to me. The characters. The story. The world. I'm sure most people won't feel this way, but I love this book. I can't recommend it unless you love Beagle and other worlds and characters that you wish you knew in real life but are glad that you don't know because they would break your heart. Otherwise, don't read it because you'll ruin it.

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## Mary says

A fantasy book for those that don't particularly like fantasy (like me). Beagle, also a songwriter, actually wrote the song (excerpted below) and then several years later, he wrote this book because he wanted "to find out what the hell the song was really about."

"There came three ladies at sundown:  
one was brown as bread is brown,  
one was black, with a sailor's sway,  
and one was pale as the moon by day.

The white one wore an emerald ring,  
the brown led a fox on a silver string,  
and the black one carried a rosewood cane  
with a sword inside, for a saw it plain... "

And what a wonderful, magical story he came up with. By using the points of view of a dozen or so different characters, he weaved a romping fun tale of Lal, Nyateneri, Lukassa and all the other great characters from the Gaff and Slasher as they journey to save their wizard friend/mentor and subsequently find a little bit about themselves and the world in the process. Beagle's writing style was beautifully descriptive but never too flowery or long-winded.

This book will be one of my all time favorites and one that I would highly recommend to fantasy lovers and



## **Katy says**

"The Innkeeper's Song" is a wonderful addition to Peter S. Beagle's astounding repertoire of fantastical stories. It deserves to be remembered with his classic works such as "The Last Unicorn" and "A Fine and Private Place."

The story starts with death. Lukassa and Tikat are very much in love. They grew up together in their small fishing village, sharing joys and sorrows their entire young lives. Until by cruel twist of fate, Lukassa falls into the river, and though Tikat valiantly tries, he ultimately fails to save her and she drowns. Which, normally, would be the end and not the beginning of a love story. But a mysterious woman using a ring raises Lukassa from death days after she fell into the water. Together they ride off with a third woman - and Tikat follows. Ultimately, they end up at the Gaff and Slasher, an Inn run by Fat Karsh and a small cast of characters to include the stableboy, kitchen girl, cook and others. The mystery of who the women are and why they are at the Inn unfolds.

We learn that Lal and Nyateneri, the two women, are each powerful warriors, but they are both looking to help someone who, long ago, helped them each in turn. A powerful mage who is being hunted by someone or something looking to destroy not only his body but his mind. But first they have to find him.

Beagle is able to weave a compelling and beautiful tale using his masterful grasp of poetic language, while never losing sight of the narrative. He creates a world that stretches far beyond the pages of this one book. He does it in a way that is deceptively simple, never fully explained, and never becomes tedious. Everything feels vivid, genuine, and beautiful. And that he makes it seem so effortless is a testament to his considerable skill as a storyteller.

The story unfolds through the tellings of various narrators. Each showing different facets of the story through their telling. It is in turns, humorous and heartbreaking and always beautiful. If you have overlooked this stand-alone piece of Beagle's work, you should pick it up. You won't be sorry.

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## **Richard says**

A plot summary of this book might go something like this: A wizard and his former students fight against another former student who has traded his life to the darkness for power. It would be accurate, but totally misleading. So what was the book really about? Stories. Singing. Love. Hate. Obligations. Responsibilities. Death. Rebirth. Redemption....

If I had to describe The Innkeeper's Song in a word, it would be this--chewy. Some books are like milkshakes. You just drink them down easily and go on to the next one. Others, like this one, you read slowly. If you don't, you miss half of it. Beagle has packed in enough story in this novel for a book three times its size. Another author would have turned it into a 1000 page doorstop and it would have taken no more time to read than it does at its proper length. This is one I'll probably have to read again, since I'm sure I could come back to it in six months or so and be thinking "I totally missed that!" in every other chapter. There's a lot here. Take your time.

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## **Jacqui Talbot says**

When three strange women (one black, one brown, one white) arrive at a wayside inn called The Gaff and Slasher, Karsh, the innkeeper, takes them in against his better judgment. Two of the women—Lal and Nyateneri—are searching for their former mentor, a powerful magician who has summoned them to save him from destruction and worse at the hands of his most powerful pupil, Arshadin. The third, Lukassa, is a village girl whom Lal resurrected after she drowned and whose childhood love, Tikat, pursues the three, intent on regaining her. When these blighted souls converge on the inn, life there is forever changed as powerful forces wage ungodly battle for possession of the magician's soul.

I first came across The Innkeeper's Song ten years ago, and it's still one of my favorite fantasy novels. Beagle is a masterful stylist, his narrative full of wonderful, unexpected metaphors and fierce musicality. There is poetry in this book few writers can manage, full of things left unsaid and subtle inferences. All of this comes together to weave a compelling story that is impossible to put down.

Told from various points of view, The Innkeeper's Song is a multi-faceted fantasy, not just one tale, but several woven together seamlessly, flowing in and out of stream-of-consciousness. Hard to fathom, I know, but it works brilliantly because Beagle is a master of characterization. There is never any doubt who is talking, even when the differences are subtle.

In elegant yet simple prose, Beagle plumbs the nature of life, death and love by illuminating the shifting relationships among the various major and minor players (including an irascible shape-changing fox) who people this affecting tale.

**Favorite Line/Image:** My name is Karsh. I am not a bad man.

I am not a particularly good one, either, though honest enough in my trade. Nor am I at all brave—if I were, I would be some kind of soldier or sailor. And if I could write even such a song as that nonsense about those three women which someone has put my name to, why, then I would be a songwriter, a bard, since I would certainly be fit for nothing else. But what I am fit for is what I am, everything I am. Karsh the innkeeper. Fat Karsh.

They talk foolishness about me now, since those women were here. Since that song. Now I am all mystery, a man from nowhere; now I am indeed supposed to have been a soldier, to have traveled the world, seen terrible things, done terrible things, changed my name and my life to hide from my past. Foolishness. I am Karsh the innkeeper, like my father, like his father, and the only other country I have ever seen is the farmland around Sharan-Zek, where I was born. But I have lived here for almost forty years, and run the Gaff and Slasher for thirty, and they know that, every one of them. Foolishness.

**Bottom Line:** A fantasy masterpiece that has withstood the test of time, The Innkeeper's Song is not to be missed.

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