



## Mountain Garden

*Will Ottley , Chloe Holt (Illustrator)*

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## **Mountain Garden** Will Ottley , Chloe Holt (Illustrator)

Buckan, a brave young stag, embarks on a journey to find a mythical garden in order to gain the strength to save his fellow deer from the attacking wolves. The journey tests his faith and courage, and forces him to overcome his deepest fears.

A tale of trust and bravery of heart, this compelling and poetic fable shows the importance of intuition and love.

## **Mountain Garden Details**

Date : Published February 14th 2014 by Perpetualaum Books

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Author : Will Ottley , Chloe Holt (Illustrator)

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## From Reader Review Mountain Garden for online ebook

### karen says

this book gets five stars for its illustrations:

four stars for the writing, which is full of absolutely gorgeous descriptions and imagery of natural landscapes and the animals who dwell within, even though it's super-confusing to see deer and lions cohabitating in the woods along with crocodiles, bats, mountain goats, salmon, etc. but this is a fable, not a nature documentary, so after the initial "what the what?," it was less weird.

three stars for the "message," which i am totally respectful of, in terms of someone else's secular spiritual path, but isn't something i feel realistically applies to my own life and experiences. i definitely appreciate the emphasis on the value of community, which would have come across as treacly if the characters were human, but with animals it's somehow more powerful. that's allegory for ya! but as for "love overcoming fear," that one gets a little trickier. i think fear is a healthy evolutionary drive that prevents foolish risk-taking. and maybe i'm too cynical, but i also think that both love and forgiveness have limits, and it's a little jejune to adhere to the "love conquers all" mentality of fairy tales. but i'm old and crochety, and i get a little squicky with the idea of the noble sacrifice. but that's my path and my experience, and i'm not arrogant enough to think i know what's best for everybody.

so, take the average, and it's a four-star book for me. i love its size - how compact it is, and i would definitely read some straight-up nature writing from this guy, because he has a real skill at writing descriptions of natural vistas in a way that's breathtaking, which is rare. except for thomas hardy, i'll frequently skim outdoorsy descriptions to get back to the story. here, nature is a character unto itself, and it leaps from the page and is truly lovely.

a well-written and well-illustrated fable, even though it didn't pierce the rhino-hide of my heart.

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### Samantha says

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#### **Rating:** 4/5

A short fable with a strong moral centering the story. Will Ottley delivers an astounding story full of imagery and imagination.

Mountain Garden is a quick read and can easily be read with the whole family (or by yourself - no judging!).

Buckan, a young stag, must face his fears and encounter foes on his journey to the Mountain Garden, all in the hopes of saving his brethren.

The words conjure powerful images equal to the artwork courtesy of Chloe Holt.

Buckan's journey was fun and inspiring to read. It was good to read his missteps and triumphs. While, Buckan "learned" his lesson, the reader could definitely partake and acknowledge the moral of the story, as fables often do.

All in all, Mountain Garden is down right beautiful.

**Quotable Quotes:** "Love dissolves fear."

**Read if You Like:** animal main characters, fables, moral stories

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### **Sam says**

It was entertaining and the illustrations were beautiful but fables are just not my thing. I dont have the ability to connect with a buck in an emotional way yet, sorry.

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### **Dakota★Magic in Every Book says**

*I received a copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review*

This book reminds me so much of something my parents would've read to me as a kid. A fable with beautiful illustrations, powerful imagery, and an important message were often the ingredients of fables my parents would read to me, among many other books, and it was refreshing and comforting to read one again. There's something about fables or stories such as these that give you a strong sense of love and pride as you watch the protagonist learn an important lesson about life as they journey through the pages and Mountain Garden is no different in providing that sense of comfort and warmth.

The characters are simplistic but elegant, fitting nicely in this fable. The writing conjures powerful imagery, the words painting the picture in your mind as the author vividly describes scenery and animals. This incredibly imagery is paired with beautiful, elegantly drawn illustrations that tie together neatly giving the story a vivid reality in the reader's mind. While I had a small problem with the consistency of the journey and it's encounters, it's nothing I could put into words other than the story still seem a bit rough around the edges, though the writing is significantly polished.

The story is graceful, powerful, and simply put together but is a nice example of a fable and can be enjoyed by children and adults alike. Not only that, but the book itself is beautiful with a colorful, sophisticated cover and a petite size that fits nearly almost anywhere. I am very grateful to Ottley for receiving this refined and beautiful fable and look forward to seeing what other stories he may write.

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### **James Lafayette Tivendale says**

"When darkness falls the White Stag will gather the forces of light"

I had this book delivered to my house yesterday and ever since I have opened the package it has taken my

breath away. The book itself, the artwork and the story. It is nice to get the vibe an author really... like REALLY cares about the work they are putting their name behind.

We find ourselves in a forest when Buckan, a brave young stag is preparing for an upcoming battle for his race against the opposing and intense forces of the wolves. To make things worse, former allies the lions have changed sides and are foes for the imminent battle. It is a quite simple narrative that follows young Buckan from the battlefield to find the mythical mountain garden with the hope that what he finds on the journey and at his destination can aid his brothers. It highlights his colourful adventures on the way. The story is beautifully written. It is amazingly poetic and Mr. Ottley flaunts lots of imaginative and picturesque similes and metaphors for our benefit. I liked this one in particular. "(He moved) like an eagle diving through a cloud". Some of the language used is quite complex so don't think this is a book merely written for children. I thought that this would be the perfect book for a parent to read to a son or daughter so that both parties would enjoy thoroughly.

I am not 100% sure what the message is that the author is trying to portray. That is not a bad thing. The amazing thing about art is that it is our views on the subject that make it special. I believed it was a very human tale about brotherhood, friendship and overcoming difficulties that are presented by real life. These struggles are presented in this book to young Buckan as animals he meets on his way who try and hinder his progression. We all have obstacles in life and how we get through them makes us stronger for future engagements. Buckan encounters a bat, a crocodile, a serpent among others. What I liked about this was that the author refers to them as bat, crocodile, salmon instead of using A. I took this to mean that these characters were representing a theme or an idea - quite often opposing our young hero.

The novel features stunning artwork by Chester, the UK-born Chloe Holt. I recommend checking out her work. She tours quite often around the UK and I might visit one of her exhibitions soon.

To finish the book the credits state that Will Ottley wrote this book as it was the book that he personally always wanted to read. I can't wait to see what he decides he wants to read next and to read the resulting novel which I guarantee will be just as picturesque and enchanting.

Highly recommended. James x [www.youandibooks.wordpress.com](http://www.youandibooks.wordpress.com)

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## **sue says**

I know this is basically for children, but the beauty of this book is awesome, you really need the hard copy to appreciate this, and OK I'm not a child but I read it, yep, I read it and you know what? I LOVED it.

I have no young children, my kids are 29 and 31 years old, neither have children of their own yet.

I can't see any child not loving this book, the pictures, the graphics, the imagination and writing that runs through this is pure magic.

The book arrived today, so I took it with me to read whilst waiting for my daughter at the hospital.

First of all, I need to mention about the cover, its beautiful. The illustrations inside are as equally appealing. I was in awe of the presentation of this book. You really need to purchase this in hardback to appreciate its beauty. OH did I say that already :)

Now onto the story.

"You must win the battle before you fight" I thought these were very wise words I read in this story.

"Withdraw before your advance"

"Love dissolves fear"

Those sentences stood out to me. I think no matter what age you are, there is a message there.

A bat appears and tells Buchran not to eat the berries along the way.

He has to get over some terrible hard obstacles that come into his path.

Buchan once there, what meets him in Mountain Garden is something that is not the end of the road for him.

There is something destroying life and beauty.

"Face your deepest fears"

So when he arrives at Mountain Garden he still has things to learn.

My thoughts:

There are a lot of messages in this book that even us adults can take away from this, we all have challenges in life, we all have things to overcome and the hero is inside yourself.

WONDERFUL READ.

Highly recommended.

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## Sam says

Mountain Garden is a short book with the narrative style of Folklore. It follows a stag named Buckan who goes on a journey to find the Mountain Garden and save his species against the wolves and lions. Along the way he meets different animals and has many struggles. Personally, I enjoyed this book because I like the style of folklore. It has just the right amount of detail to create a short story that still strikes a cord.

There were many elements of the story that I enjoyed, particularly the fact that the Mountain Garden was struck by lightening whenever Buckan faltered on his journey. I thought that element was interesting. And I also liked how the Great King Stag was wise enough to let his soul go so he didn't have to kill Lion and thus make things worse between the species.

The illustrations are absolutely beautiful, I love the art style. I think they perfectly fit the theme and tone of the book.

The reason I only gave the book three stars was because it didn't always hold my attention and sometimes I wasn't sure exactly what was going on. I also thought some of the word choices could be improved.

Overall, I would recommend the book to anyone who is interested and enjoys Folklore narratives. It's a short book so it's not a huge commitment and it's worth the time!

### **Danielle Lovesey says**

This was a really Beautiful and amazing story, the art in the book is so complementary to the story and beautiful to look at, only wish it was in colour and not black and white but thats the only fault i can find with this book!

the story is beautifully written and elegant in its descriptions and ideas bringing for subtly the belief of love being stronger then anything else in this world something i can relate to

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Really great book Must read!!!

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### **Kimberley doruyter says**

the book is beautiful, the mix of the story and the illustations is wonderful.

my only issue was the animals involved, as far as i know normal deer and lions don't live in the same area.

that being said the story itself makes up for that little bit of weird.

the best way to discribe it is bambi meets king arthur.

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### **Mira says**

This book is beautiful inside out! The illustrations by Chloë Holt are absolutely breathtaking, and the story itself has a great message. "It is love that gives us strenght." Buckan the White Stag goes on a journey to find the magical Mountain Garden to save the deer from the wolves. On the journey he realises the power of love, and with that power he goes back to the beech woods where he faces the wolves in a battle with the other deer and some unexpected allies who learnt their lessons by seeing the brave stag's actions on his difficult, but life-changing journey.

The writing in this fable is beautiful, and I loved the rich descriptions of nature. I liked how the story was kind of dreamlike, and had magical elements to it. The illustrations added so much to the story, and I just stared at them for a long time.

I think I would have absolutely love this when I was younger because I loved all the stories with animals in them. Although Mountain Garden might have been little scary or for my younger self with all the battles!

Overall a great fable with a beautiful message!

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### **Rebecca says**

**In a nutshell:** Mountain Garden is a quick yet lovely read. It's a well-written fable, with beautiful imagery and illustrations that compliment the story.

It has been a while since I've read a book like this. Mountain Garden is the kind of book my parents/teachers

would read to me when I was younger. While this isn't necessarily my usual kind of read, I really enjoyed it. It was a refreshing read and one that can be enjoyed by all ages.

The idea behind Mountain Garden is a simple one - Buckan, a young stag, has to overcome many of his fears when travelling to a mythical garden in the hope that it can give him the strength to save his fellow deer from the wolves' attack. The reader, through Buckan's eyes, goes on the journey with him as he overcomes many obstacles. It is simple yet meaningful, with a powerful philosophical meaning behind it. The message of Mountain Garden is predominantly one of love, hope and overcoming fear.

There is a nice flow to the writing in Mountain Garden. The imagery is beautiful and the author does a great job at capturing the essence of nature and Buckan's surroundings. The words essentially leap off the pages. It is a very quick read but it's one that leaves you with a feeling of warmth, as fables typically do.

I loved Chloe Holt's illustrations. They were used sparingly throughout the book, though they were well-placed and effective. The drawings complimented the story and were beautifully done. I also love the cover art.

Mountain Garden is a fable I would recommend to readers of all ages. I'd particularly suggest reading it if you wanted something a little different or perhaps a quick read with a nice meaning behind it.

I received this book from the author in exchange for an honest review

You can also find my reviews on my book blog

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## **Lianne says**

Mountain Garden is the story of heroic Buckan, a stag who must journey to the fabled Mountain Garden in order to save his family and friends from the vicious wolves. The prologue introduces us to our main character and immediately launches him into danger — the deers' lion allies have broken a pact of peace and allowed the wolves to run through their lands unchecked. Our hero swiftly escapes the ensuing battle, and after speaking with the Great King Stag, he begins his journey in search of the magical place that will help him drive back the evil devouring his homeland.

This short tale is beautifully written. Ottley really captures the essence of a deer, perfectly bringing to life Buckan's cautious, flighty nature, but also his strength with scenes that see him battling against foes, internal and external. The illustrations by Chloe Holt are beautiful. The art style puts me in mind of the wildness of nature, and although I would have perhaps liked to see the images integrated into the pages rather than slotted in, they breathed further life into this wonderful fable.

At its heart, Mountain Garden is a story of perseverance, inner strength and love. Buckan's ability to be kind to others, and to stand true to himself, is a beautiful message to send, and although some of the language might be tricky for younger children, this would be the perfect book to read at bedtime.

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## **Rita says**

Initial thoughts:

1. Beautiful illustrations.
2. The writing is amazing!
3. Very philosophical and applicable to every day situations in life.
4. Buckan's story itself was very interesting.
5. I heard there will be a sequel?!

Check out my full review on my blog!

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## **Mary says**

Mountain Garden was a beautiful read. I haven't read a fable since...middle school, I think, and it was nice to branch out to something different for a change.

What I enjoyed most were the descriptions. Will's writing painted such a beautiful picture - the forest, the mountain, the garden, you could see everything through his words. This was coupled with some amazing art, courtesy of Chloe Holt, that made the reading experience even more great and fulfilling.

The message is one of hope and love - that to overcome your fear, we have to battle not only external voices, but our own as well. Most of the times, the way to anything we try to succeed in is blocked by ourselves. And those times, we have to look inside ourselves to figure out what we need to do and to draw strength.

I recommend this to anyone who wants a break from everything else. It's a quick read, and it leaves you with a warm and fuzzy feeling. And I'm leaving here my favourite quote, which I wholeheartedly agree with:

"Love dissolves fear."

★★★★

To everyone who got this far, thank you for reading and have a wonderful day! Also, feel free to share your thoughts, comment or tell me anything :)

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## **LovelyOwlsBooks says**

This will be a non-spoiler review. Firstly, this book was very different to what I usually read since it's in a stag's point of view. I've read in the POV of Death from the Book Thief so it was good to read something new and in an animal's perspective.

The way the story was told with the fluidity of the sentences and the descriptions of scenery was beautiful and refreshing and with the lovely illustrations, telling the story of this book was ten times better.

The plot of the book wasn't great as in it's a short book and only so much can happen. It's pretty much the stag's, Buckan's, journey to help the deer, find Mountain Garden and also a story of self discovery but there are some things that shocked me since this was a battle of animals once their alliance broke.

It also went in a sort of chronological order like in children's book where the main character faces one obstacle at a time, learns from it and journeys on. Buckan was on the verge of giving up many times but always found hope and it was nice to read. The ending was rather abrupt, maybe? Well it was a short book and so the ending was short and resolved quickly.

The rating of three and a half stars is because I did like the book, although I appreciated the take on the different point of view, it's not something I usually read. I also would have liked the book to be a bit longer but this is a nice and quick read.

Also, I have to say the cover is beautiful. Even my sister, who isn't a big reader, loved it. A thank you to the author, Will Ottley for sending me this book.

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