



Firebird (Fairy Tales, Book 1)

By Mercedes Lackey

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Firebird (Fairy Tales, Book 1) By Mercedes Lackey

In Mercedes Lackey's *Firebird*, Ilya, son of a Russian prince, is largely ignored by his father and tormented by his larger, older brothers. His only friends are three old people: a priest, a magician, and a woman who toils in the palace dairy. From them Ilya learns faith, a smattering of magic, and the power of love--all of which he will need desperately, for his life is about to be turned upside-down.

The prince's magnificent cherry orchard is visited at midnight by the legendary Firebird, whose wings are made of flame. Ilya's brothers' attempts to capture the magical creature fail. When Ilya tries to catch the Firebird, he sees her as a beautiful woman and earns a magical gift: the speech of animals.

Banished, the young man journeys through a fantastical Russia full of magical mazes, enchanted creatures, and untold dangers. As happens in the best fairy tales, Ilya falls in love with an enchanted princess, but to win her freedom will be no easy task.

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Firebird (Fairy Tales, Book 1) By Mercedes Lackey Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #895274 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Tor Books
- Published on: 2008-01-08
- Released on: 2008-01-08
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .3" w x 5.50" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 352 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Mercedes Lackey never puts a foot wrong in this confident, funny fairy-tale adaptation. Tsar Ivan has eight sons; all are brutes like himself except for happy-go-lucky, least-favored Ilya. Cast out through the machinations of his jealous, competitive brothers, Ilya stumbles onto an enchanted castle, distressed damsels, a garden of questing princes turned to stone, and the secret of the shapeshifting woman called the Firebird. In love with a captive princess, Ilya enlists the Firebird and a charming, crafty vixen to help him battle the sorcerer. But is settling down with a princess what "happily ever after" really means?

From Publishers Weekly

Taking a vacation from the Vale, the setting of her popular fantasy trilogies (Last Herald-Mage, Mage Winds and Mage Storms), Lackey draws inspiration for her resonant new novel from classic Russian folktales. Ilya Ivanovitch is the middle son of a self-proclaimed "tsar" who has put off selecting an heir, preferring to let his eight sons thin their own ranks through constant, sometimes brutal, fighting. Ilya's luck takes a fateful turn the day he sees the legendary firebird, a beautiful magical hawk with a woman's face and feathers made of flame. The old stories say that once you've seen the firebird, you can never forget her, and you will never be satisfied with a common life. Ilya realizes the truth of this when he begins to have strange dreams and then discovers he can understand animal speech. Driven by curiosity, surviving by his wits (and through the help of a few friends made along the way), he begins a journey that will bring him face to face with the mysterious creatures of Russian folklore. Lackey's first standalone novel since *Sacred Ground* (1994) is a charming coming-of-age tale filled with earthy wit and magic.

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From School Library Journal

YA. A coming-of-age fantasy that will delight Lackey's many fans. Here, the author transports readers to a medieval Russian world based on the folktale of "The Firebird." Ilya Ivanovitch is beaten and teased by his ruffian brothers and ignored by his father, a boyar or Russian prince, whose singular concern is his stolen cherries. While trying to catch the thief, Ilya Ivanovitch is unknowingly cursed just by glimpsing at the Firebird, which is half maiden and half bird. During his brother's prewedding boar hunt, the young man gets lost, but becomes much wiser as the enchanting adventures unfolds. Now, animals, aware of his "touch" from the Firebird, begin to speak to him. His newfound friends return favors helping him conquer the evil Katschei, a feat that was impossible even for the mightiest of warriors. This fast-paced fantasy will be hard to put down, not just for the plot but also for the powerful way the author has woven a memorable tale. *?Bobbi Thomas Skaggs, Robinson Secondary, Fairfax County, VA*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Michael Gibson:

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