



The Land of the Dragon King and other Korean stories

Books Reviewed:

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

Gillian McClure's collection is set amongst the rural landscapes of Korea and was inspired by a visit she made in the 1990s. Sketches brought back from that visit formed the basis of the softly textured ink and watercolour paintings that occupy most of the space in this attractive book. The nine stories range from explanation myths about the saltiness of the sea and the shortness of pig-snouts and rabbit-scuts to the more expansive opening and closing romances. These extend beyond rural settings to the heavens and the depths of the ocean, and are very moving in their depictions of faithful love thwarted then rewarded. Two or three of the stories follow shared motifs with familiar European stories: 'Clever Rabbit' is a tigerish version of the tale of the man who rescues a wolf from the hunt, then has to convince the wolf that he deserves not to be eaten. In McClure's retelling, the rabbit who saves the man escapes the fate of the fox in other versions of the story, but this is in keeping with the gentle tone of this welcome and intriguing collection.

Running Order:

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