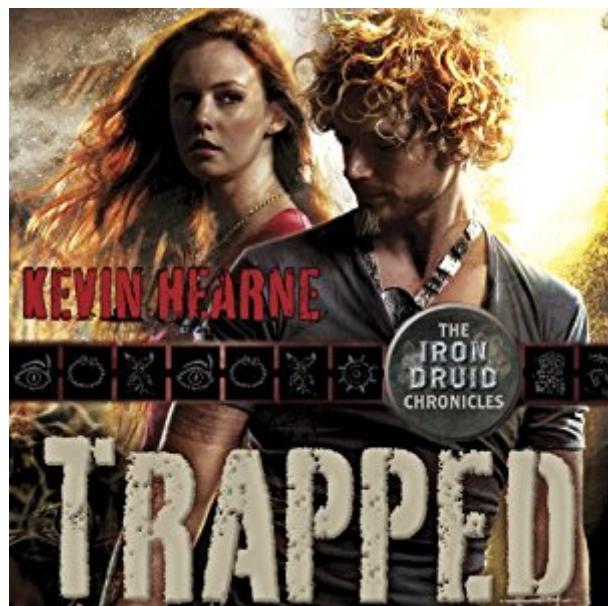


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Trapped: The Iron Druid Chronicles, Book 5



Synopsis

After 12 years of secret training, Atticus O'Sullivan is finally ready to bind his apprentice, Granuaile, to the earth and double the number of Druids in the world. But on the eve of the ritual, the world that thought he was dead abruptly discovers that he's still alive, and they would much rather he return to the grave. Having no other choice, Atticus, his trusted Irish wolfhound, Oberon, and Granuaile travel to the base of Mount Olympus, where the Roman god Bacchus is anxious to take his sworn revenge - but he'll have to get in line behind an ancient vampire, a band of dark elves, and an old god of mischief, who all seem to have KILL THE DRUID at the top of their to-do lists.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 9 hours and 2 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Random House Audio

Audible.com Release Date: November 27, 2012

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00A2ZJ1SA

Best Sellers Rank: #46 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fantasy > Paranormal #51 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fantasy > Contemporary #120 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Action & Adventure

Customer Reviews

I think this is very much a transitional book in the Iron Druid series. It builds a lot on events of the previous books and you will be lost if you haven't read those. So my first piece of advice: don't start with this one! The overall arc of the series is definitely evident here, but I kind of don't feel like this book is a unified whole. It was more a series of parts that happened roughly at the same point in time, but the narrative wasn't entirely cohesive. I'm sort of willing to put up with that in a longer series where many of the books are already published (as was the case here). But if I had read this right after it was released, and without the next volume available, I would probably not have been very happy. In this book, a lot of what Atticus (the POV character) has done/said previously in the series is coming back to haunt him. Unintended consequences and all that. Although in previous volumes, his sense of morality has been just a bit different (presumably due to the time and place

he was raised), he's got a strongly human side here. I think he does feel some guilt for what he's done (or let be done) in the past, and some of the actions he takes are attempts to make amends for that (especially towards the end, with the Norse goddess Freyja). I'm not sure that appropriate amounts of time were spent on each part of the story. There was a rather long sequence in, say, the first 2/3 of the book, where Atticus's apprentice Granuaile was finally being bound as a druid. (Kudos to the author, by the way, for basically saying "twelve years passed" without describing them in agonizing detail.) Of course there are interruptions and celebrations, and the interruptions do serve to further both the plot of this book and the series arc. But Granuaile's tattooing (the final step in being bound) took a long time. And then events that had been simmering earlier in the book got short shrift. The final battle scene was quite brief. And Oberon (Atticus's dog) kept getting left behind rather than going on adventures with Atticus. It's almost like the author was given a page limit he couldn't surpass, or else he got tired of writing and had to finish something up. The epilogue seemed out of place, as well. (It fit with the events of the story but shouldn't have been an epilogue since it was setting up the action of the next book.) That being said, there were some things I did like. Atticus's changing relationship with the Norse gods is interesting. I also liked the introduction to the dark elves and assume we will be seeing them again soon. Atticus's attitude towards Granuaile is refreshing. He does exhibit a desire to keep her safe -- but he fully respects her martial abilities, as well, and he expects her to make her own decisions and not to blindly follow his lead. I think this attitude is fitting, considering what Atticus has to say about female warriors in the Celtic pantheon. Also well-done were the islands where time moves differently, and the way Atticus both introduces them and uses them to his advantage later (and Granuaile's reaction to them, as well -- simply because it was genuine and Atticus did not expect it to be so). We're starting to see what elements make a Druid and what elements make an ancient (Atticus) or modern (Granuaile) human, to separate Atticus as a person from the idea of a Druid. (And yes, Atticus is somewhat immature here. There's no way around that.) The setting for this book is quite a bit different from previous novels. Most of it takes place in/on different planes of existence and/or in remote places. There are few scenes in cities and we do not experience Arizona or the Colorado desert as we did before. So this takes a bit of a detour from urban fantasy. I'm fine with that because I read a lot of traditional fantasy, as well. But keep in mind that it **is** a switch from previous books. The writing style is pretty much the same. Granuaile can now hear Oberon's thoughts, as well, and the author employs this to humorous effect. We get a couple of guest narratives; these have become a staple in this series. Yeah, they're kind of like big infodumps, but they provide necessary background and there aren't really any other ways to work that information in. I would not say there's a great deal of character

development, but there are bits and pieces. It's about average for a first-person POV novel that's later in a series. In the end, pacing was a bit uneven and the plot was not really unified (nor was it neatly tied up at the end), although there were also enjoyable elements and I thought the worldbuilding was great. At any rate, I'm going to continue reading the series because I *am* invested in what happens going forward. 3.5 stars.

More like 2.5, but we work with what we have... I loved the first 4 books of The Iron Druid. They were one of the proverbial breaths-of-fresh-air in the somewhat polluted miasma of urban fantasy. A 2100 year old Druid, last of his kind... a snarky Irish wolfhound... and *all* faiths and pantheons were represented! What's not to love? *SPOILERS AHEAD* So, okay, I don't know the author personally and don't need to. He's either married to a strong-willed woman who beats him twice a day, or he's *extremely* dateless. How might I come to such a strange conclusion? Exhibit A: Granuille. Exhibits B through Z (to the Zth power): See Exhibit A. WHY is it, when a female character gets introduced, she *has* to be immediately more powerful and competent than the male? So, check this out... Atticus, our hero, last of the Druids for two millennium, has been running and hiding in terror of his life for two friggen millennium, because one of the Tuatha de Danaan wants to kill him. He's hiding because he knows he has a snowball's chance against Angheus. After two millennium of learning, practicing, living, experiencing, he's (perhaps rightfully) scared of going toe-to-toe with a not-too-bright Tuatha de Danaan. And yet, Granuille, on her first DAY as a 'real' Druid, fights the Warrior Champion of the Tuatha de Danaan and knocks him on his ass! Sure, it's two out of three and Ogma does win... barely... but seriously? At best we have a human woman maybe 30 years old, may have been studying staff-fighting or martial arts for what... 20 years? If not a mere twelve? Against a god who's been fighting for how many thousands of years? *Every* trick she knows, he probably invented, as well as a dozen counters! And given that Celtic warrior-women are pretty badass, I seriously doubt he's gonna go easy on her because she has breasts. Nope. Twelve years of training, one day as a Druid, Granuille makes a war-god *work* for the victory. Why? Because she's the *girl*, of course! Would Atticus step into the ring so nonchalantly, after 2100 years of fighting and living and learning? Not unless he has zero choice in the matter because he doesn't want to get his butt kicked. Granuille, however, has breasts and an author simply CANNOT show her to be other than supremely awesome at whatever she attempts. See, I get Atticus being worried about fighting gods (never mind how many he's killed so far). That makes sense; even a Druid has limits and it was one of the more interesting aspects of the previous book. Unless that Druid, however new they might be, has breasts. Then she is apparently unstoppable. Atticus has the form

of a stag; Granuille gets the shape of a beautiful horse. Atticus, a wolfhound; Granuille gets to be a panther. Atticus, an owl. Granuille, a peregrine falcon, the 'fastest bird alive'. See how it's going? Granuille is no Honor Harrington, who works for what she gets, and grows to ever more intriguing powers and levels over time. She's not Mercy Thompson, who uses the 'lesser' powers she's gifted with to triumph. She's not October Daye, who tries, fails, gets up, keeps going, loses a few battles but eventually wins the war. She's not Paksennarion, who sweats and bleeds and suffers in order to triumph. Nope, she's Granuille, SuperDruid, She That Can Do Anything. Sadly, I used to like her, when she was a waitress/bartender/clueless apprentice. She had good banter, a good heart, and a sort of hopeful innocence coupled with the desire to do Good Things. She could have been a great character...but instead we get SuperDruid. From what we've heard or learned of Atticus' training and early Druidhood, I'm pretty sure he spent the first hundred years after his tattooing barely being trusted with a sickle to harvest plants. He wasn't out kicking gods' butts his first day on the job. And sorry, that ruins the series for me. I love Oberon, I love the Morrigan, I even like Brighid and Flidais, I loved the interaction with Lief in the earlier books...but when PC GRRL POWERRRR enters the series, I depart. Not because I'm opposed to powerful women...the series starring the women named above are in my top ten all-time favorite, re-read-whenever-I-can series...but because the PC GRRL POWERRRR Trope is what it is, and not even close to realistic, even operating by the fantastical rules that allow Druids and gods and vampires, oh my! to exist. It just does not make *sense* that Granuille is as powerful...more powerful, to be honest...than Atticus, who's been practicing his craft for TWO FRIGGEN MILLENIUM! And reading blurbs and reviews of the remaining books...apparently, it just gets worse. Sorry, Kevin, I'll read and enjoy the first four books, but you lost me with 5 and beyond.

This is book 5, you need to read the previous books for the full world building. Twelve years have passed and it's time for someone to be bound to the earth, and of course it's not going to be easy. Many adventures occur and much traveling by our Druids is done. There are lots of complaints that Atticus is 2100 years old and he should grow up, you have to remember that most of all his years were spent quietly tending to the earth, not getting into trouble. It's only been recently that he made a bad decision that has snowballed into his own form of hell. If he had questioned some of his choices, or really thought about what this God/godless is going to get out of the deal they present to give him help, he may not be running for his life so much. Now it's cleaning up his messes that he has made while trying to keep the end of the world at bay, and it's quite a ride. Granuile and Oberon give him company and backup to take care of business in a humorous, and clear thinking

plan of action, and not too many guesses who is after him in Hunted.

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