Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

Song of the Golden Hare

Written by

Jackie Morris

Published by

Frances Lincoln Children's Books

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

For Lyn Oates, who has seen a golden hare.
For Cathy Cooper and a piece of synchronicity.
For Nicola Davies who suggested 'silver'.
For all the singers, and most of all for the innocent hare.



JANETTA OTTER-BARRY BOOKS

Song of the Golden Hare copyright © Frances Lincoln Limited 2013
Text and illustrations copyright © Jackie Morris 2013
First published in Great Britain and in the USA in 2013 by
Frances Lincoln Children's Books,
74-77 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF
www.franceslincoln.com

All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electrical, mechanical, photocopying,
recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher
or a licence permitting restricted copying. In the United Kingdom
such licences are issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency,
Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-84780-450-1

Illustrated with Windsor & Newton artist's quality watercolours, on Arches hotpress watercolour paper

Set in Cochin

Printed and bound in China

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2



Song of the Golden Hare





Jackie Morris

FRANCES LINCOLN
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The boy loved hares for their twilight dancing wildness, the light in their amber eyes, their long velvet ears, their speed.

And he loved music for the way it made his heart dance inside him. He often played, strumming and plucking delicate tunes on his harp.

But he never sang. For some reason he thought he couldn't.

He had always known that his family was special. While others in the village would hunt the hares with fierce, swift hounds, his grandfather would seek out orphaned leverets, raise them until they were strong and then set them free, back into the wild land.

"You never know," he would say, "which might be 'the one'."

But this wasn't why the family was special. It was because they held the secret of the golden hare, and they held it very close.

Once, every fifty years or so, all the hares in the land would gather together. In a clearing in the woods, the males would strive to win the heart of the Golden Queen of the Hares – for a new queen was needed.

A few people, who had heard rumours of golden hares, thought this was why hares boxed in the twilight. But the family knew that the hares would sing, and this was how one hare would win the queen's heart.

It was the task of the boy's family to keep the old queen safe, to make sure that at the end of her days she reached the shore and crossed to the Island of the Golden Hares.

For others who had heard of the golden hare thought to catch and kill her, sure that her golden coat would bring wealth and health to whoever possessed it.

And how the boy ached to hear the hares sing. No one knew when it would happen. His mother had lived her life without a whisper of hare-song.

Grandfather often sang strange soft melodies when he tended the orphans, gentle music as the tiny creatures rested, warm in the bowl of his huge hands. The boy would try to catch these melodies in the strings of his harp, weaving the tune with his clever fingers while Grandfather hummed and sang.

And then one day the hares began to move.

The boy was awake early, out in the twilight dew-dropped morning.
At first one, then two, then more and more hares began to move
across the land from east to west, shadows made long by
low morning sunlight.

He ran home, woke his sister and they gathered together
food, a blanket, a flask for water.
And away they ran, hand in hand,
following the hares, leaving behind
two sleeping people and a note:
“We are gone, for the hares are running.”