



Medicine Road

Charles de Lint, Charles Vess (illustrator)

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Medicine Road will be the first in a series of linked novels by Charles de Lint, profusely illustrated by Charles Vess. Each of the projected three volumes will feature various combinations of the seven red-haired Dillard sisters (from Seven Wild Sisters) as well as new characters introduced as the stories progress. The first book will be set in the Sonoran Desert around Tucson, Arizona, with excursions north.

Medicine Road Details

Date : Published April 2004 by Subterranean Press

ISBN : 9781931081962

Author : Charles de Lint , Charles Vess (illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 206 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Fiction, Science Fiction Fantasy

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From Reader Review Medicine Road for online ebook

JeniReadABook says

If I were to be completely honest, I was actually slightly disappointed by this book. I don't think I've ever said that about a Charles de Lint book before. In fact, if you asked me who I considered to be the best author of modern day faerie tales he'd be at the very top of my list. I want to clarify, that this wasn't a bad book. It wasn't. It's just that all of the previous books I'd read by him, set the bar so incredibly high, that this one fell shockingly short for me.

Although each of the books in this Newford series works easily as a stand alone, they all are still part of a greater story. Because I don't have access to the entire set (or the funds to procure it) I've only been able to read a few of the other books, and I've read none of them in chronological order. This particular book, is meant to be the 20th in the series, and it's my suspicion (after reading it) that it was meant to be a sort of Part I of the conclusion for a few of the characters. If I'd read books 1-19 already, I likely would have encountered all of these characters previously and would have gotten their complete back stories, rather than the short summaries included in this book for readers (like myself) who hadn't read the earlier books in the series. It left me feeling like there was much more to the story than I was reading.

That being said, it was still a good story. I still greatly appreciated the blunt way of writing that de Lint has. The way he talks about taboo topics in such a humdrum way never fails to make me smile. The way he makes faerie tales and supernatural beings seem almost mundane and commonplace is like a breath of fresh air. He writes of them as if they are the norm, a rule rather than an exception. He makes believing in magic easy again, like it was when you were a child.

Jason says

I'm usually very enthusiastic about De Lint's books, but Medicine Road had things that made me hesitant to completely embrace it. I loved how he brought the desert and the Southwest to life, and the animal people in human skin (called "cousins") made for an enthralling mythology. Vess' artwork is fantastic. I think my issue dealt mainly with the romance between Jim and Bess, and then Ramona's interference. All of it was a little too pat and felt resolved too easy. I also couldn't help but feel a little preached at with regards to tolerance of alternative lifestyles, sexual and otherwise, which I have never felt in his other books. Still, I found the book worth reading, although perhaps best from the library.

Geoff says

Another solid de Lint book. This one is about the adventures of the Dillard Sisters while they are touring Arizona. They meet up with an unlikely duo who happen to be part of the animal/spirit realm. Bess falls in love with Jim, who is really a red dog called "changing dog." And an adventure follows because of their differences. This is an easy read, and it was fun to have a setting in the Arizona badlands. There is another book about the Dillard sisters called Seven Wild Sisters, which I am hunting down right now. As I gotta read it after I really enjoyed this novel.

Judy says

"Medicine Road" is another brilliant story from Charles de Lint. Urban fantasy at its very best, and de Lint always delights me, which is why he is one of my all time favorite authors. This story is set in Arizona (Tucson, Prescott, Jerome, and Sedona in particular). Twin sisters and musicians Bess and Laurel have left their home territory of Newford for a musical roadtrip in Arizona. Besides playing music, taking in the sights, and falling in love with the desert, they manage to get caught up in a long running deal between Coyote Woman, Changing Dog and Alice Corn Hair. The resolution involves love, overcoming fear and prejudices, and discovery of the wild "cousin" lurking in the twins' souls. Highly recommended.

Patty says

This was a fun book. I have always enjoyed de Lint's stories and novels and this is no exception. Bess and Laurel Dillard are visiting the Southwest for the first time as traveling musicians. At the same time, life is altering greatly for Alice Corn Hair and Jim Changing Dog. They have made a deal that is finally about to fall through.

To say any more would ruin the story. If you haven't read de Lint, this is a good short book to start with. If you have already read and liked his books, you know why you should read this one.

Elizabeth Hunter says

Despite its short length, this felt well-realized. As always, De Lint's characters are what makes his stories work and he's got a nice collection here. Plus I'm always a sucker for a straight-up love story.

Chris says

Solid contemporary fantasy about the fiddle-playing twins from Seven Wild Sisters on tour in Arizona, where they meet some interesting and unusual people...

Jenne says

A long time ago, Coyote Woman gave two Native American spirits, a red dog and a jackalope, the ability to shift into human form on the condition that if within 100 hundred years they can both find soul mates who love them unconditionally they get to keep her gift, but if one of them does not than both will change back into their original form forever. Alice Corn Hair has found hers, but Jim Changing Dog has not found the right one and now time is running out.

Twins Laurel and Bess Dillard are traveling musicians touring the Southwest, playing their music and selling

their cds. When they get to Tucson, they meet a whole new type of people some friendly and others not so. When the man who has caught Bess's eye offers to show them around the twins are happy to comply. Bess is fascinated by Jim's mysteriousness and the attraction is mutual. But not everyone wants life to be easy for Jim and when Bess learns the truth, it so overwhelms her that only if her sister can take courage in her own hands and awaken her own animal spirit in time can disaster for all of them be avoided

As usual De Lint combines the world we live in and the spirit world with flawless ease. Injecting wit and romance with no loss to the mysteries of Native American mythology. (And if you come across his writing in conjunction with Charles Vess's artwork count your self lucky indeed!)

Peter says

This was a book I picked up used at Black and Read because I though the cover was cool. I've not read any of Charles de Lint's work before, so I think I went into it pretty much as blind as I could.

It's not a dense book, weighing in at less than 200 pages, but it tells its full story with no issue. There's not a lot of intense descriptions, but the author does name drop quite a few places around Arizona. Maybe a little too much, but I didn't really mind personally.

This is a tale written by someone who loves road trips. He does a great job of capturing that feeling of seeing something new and exciting, and being awed by things that the locals would find mundane. That's its strongest point, and he does a fantastic job of using that in every bit of his story.

If you have any interest in traveling, or seeing Arizona, or in Native American folklore, it's worth checking this book out. Even if you don't, and you just want to feel like you're on your own road trip, it's worth it for that feeling. It is a light read though; if you're looking for something with a bit more meat on it, you may be disappointed, or not. It tells its tale and doesn't overstay its welcome with needless padding, and it's a subtle skill to achieve that properly, so maybe it's worth it anyways.

Nora Peevy says

Medicine Road by Charles de Lint is another beautiful addition to the Newford series with a mystical look at the world of magick from a Native American perspective. Alice Corn Hair (a shifter jackalope) and Changing Dog (Jim, a shifter red dog) are given one hundred years by Coyote Woman to discover their true love. If after one hundred years the two haven't succeeded, they must return to their animal form forever and leave behind the world of the two-leggeds. Time is running out. Alice has found her true love in Thomas, but Jim is still single. Will he find true love and be able to stay in the human world or will Alice have to say goodbye to her one true love forever? Read and find out. You're guaranteed to fall in love with this cast of whimsical characters.

Melanti says

The first Charles de Lint book I ever read was Forests of the Heart. It was beautiful, lyrical, and amazing. In that book, it was almost as if the desert itself was another character -- it had a presence, a shape all of it's

own.

This book is sort of a not-sequel to *Forests of the Heart*. It takes place in the desert, and Bettina makes a brief appearance. It's not necessary to read the first to enjoy this one but they're somewhat similar.

However, this book slightly disappointed me. I was expecting that same presence to the desert, the same sense of it being its own character that I found in *Forests of the Heart*, and the same sense of character that I get from the Newford setting. But... what I got was scenery. Beautiful scenery, to be true. De Lint's descriptions of the cacti and the flowers and the dry river beds make me want to visit and see them for myself. But in the end, all I got from it was scenery.

Maybe it's because 2 of the 4 main characters aren't from the desert, so it's not as important to them. Maybe it needs more legends? More calling the cacti Aunts and Uncles? I'm not sure what exactly was missing here, but it definitely felt like SOMETHING was just a little bit off.

Other than that, it was a sweet little light-hearted romance. Well written, but it lacked some of the profoundness, the sense of connectedness that I've found in his other Newford stories. It's almost YA in nature.

Catherine says

Charles de Lint books always remind me that there is a gentler more natural life to live. If we all connected more often with nature we would be better off. This book follows that theme.

Having read his books for around 15 years I have only just realised that the all the good guy characters live a very minimalist lifestyle. They don't tend to buy things, or own homes or cars. They are also able to go great distances and to great lengths without many possessions, but they always seem to have friends or make friends, that see them through.

His stories show that the good guys are usually the ones that have true friends and despite adversity, come out on top.

Miz Lizzie says

One of my top favorite authors, any book by Charles de Lint is a treat. This one was an especially wonderful treat as it is set in Arizona (Tucson, Prescott, Jerome, and Sedona in particular) and I read it partially while on vacation in Sedona. Twin sisters and musicians Bess and Laurel have left their home territory of Newford for a musical roadtrip in Arizona. Besides playing music, taking in the sights, and falling in love with the desert, they manage to get caught up in a curse Coyote Woman put on a Red Dog and a Jackalope. The resolution involves love, overcoming fear and prejudices, and discovery of the wild "cousin" lurking in the twins' souls. Past adventures are referenced and familiar people (both real and fictional) make cameo appearances much to this fan's delight.

Julia says

Laurel and Bess, Sarah Jane's older twin sisters, are professional musicians on the road in Arizona and are drawn into an ages old wager between Native American spirits who take human form. Jim Changing Dog and Alice Corn Hair have been changed into humans by Coyote for 100 years, but they have to have fallen in love to regain their two- shaped existance.

I have read that de Lint wants to leave Newford behind for Tyson and the desert. I love Newford; I guess I will come to love the desert too, if that's what de Lint wants to write about, because if he's writing it it will be lovely and full of heartache and magic and beauty and pain.

(It's still urban fantasy if it's setting is the rural contemporary desert, right?)

Cupcakencorset says

Shorter, less convoluted and with a smaller cast of characters than most of de Lint's novels, Medicine Road is perhaps even more charming and accessible as a result. The main human characters are the musical Dillard twins from Seven Wild Sisters (another de Lint novel), this time in the American southwest. They encounter Alice Corn Hair and Jim Changing Dog and are drawn into their real-life world of myth and magic. The story is charming and, yes, enchanting. The only thing it lacks (in comparison to most of de Lint's works) is a true bad guy, which isn't really a fault, as the characters have plenty of inner barriers and desires to keep the story moving along to its natural (but not inevitable) conclusion. When the tale ends, there is the promise of so much more to come, from all of the characters. And that's never a bad thing.
