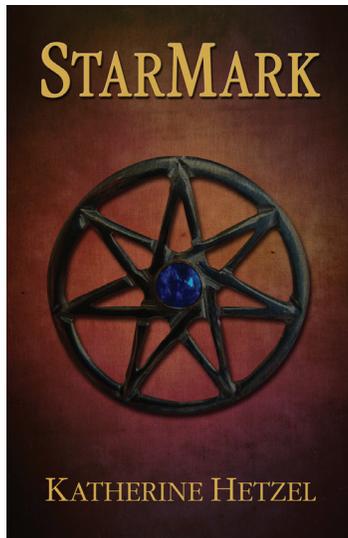


Reading Guide



StarMark

by Katherine Hetzel

ISBN 978-1-943837-02-1

After Irvana's grandmother dies in their remote clifftop home, Irvana must travel to Koltarn. Alone in a strange city, Irvana finds employment at the palace, home of Lord Terenz, current overlord and bearer of the StarMark. Suddenly immersed in palace life, Irvana makes a friend in fellow-servant Rosann, and there is a spark between her and the lively Mikal, Terenz's ward. But when Terenz discovers that Irvana has something he wants, her life is suddenly in danger.

From the author

Why did I write StarMark? I began writing this story so long ago, I can barely remember! I do remember that I was fascinated by birthmarks, which are often used as a sign of a destiny. I began to wonder what it would be like if there was a mark which told of your destiny, written on the skin, passed on from generation to generation. But what if you had a mark and didn't know? Couldn't see it yourself? And what would happen if someone found out about it before you did and tried to stop you from fulfilling your destiny? And so the seed of StarMark was planted, which grew into Irvana's story.

Discussion Questions

1. In Irvana's world, all the overlords have a coat-of-arms which tells people something about them. If you had to design a coat-of-arms for yourself, what symbol(s) would you use, and why?
2. Gramma's box contained lots of objects that were linked to special memories, but Irvana never finds out what they were for most of them. What have you kept to remind you of special people or places?
3. Irvana visits the Great Fair in Koltarn two years running. What was different about her second visit? And what was the same?
4. Captain Davith was loyal to the StarMarks of Koltarn. What do you think of his decision to favour one StarMark over the other, instead of sticking to tradition?
5. Irvana is often uncertain whether she can live up to others' expectations of her. Can you think of a time or situation when you felt the same? How did you deal with it?

About the author

Katherine Hetzel has always loved the written word, but only started writing "properly" after giving up her job as a pharmaceutical microbiologist to be a stay-at-home mum. The silly songs and daft poems she wrote for her children grew into longer stories. A member of the on-line writing community The Word Cloud, Katherine operates under the name of Squidge and blogs at Squidge's Scribbles. She lives in the heart of the UK with Mr Squidge and two teenaged children.