



Heirs of Grace

Tim Pratt

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Recent art school graduate Bekah thought she'd hit the jackpot: an unknown relative died, and she inherited a small fortune and a huge house in the mountains of North Carolina.

Trey Howard, the lawyer who handled the estate, is a handsome man in his twenties and they hit it off right away-and soon become more than friends. Bekah expected a pleasant year to get her head together and have a romantic fling. Problem is, the house is full of junk...and siblings she didn't know she had are willing to kill her for it.

More important, the junk in her new house is magical, she's surrounded by monsters, and her life seems to be in mortal peril every time she ventures into a new room. As Bekah discovers more about her mysterious benefactor and the magical world he inhabited, she's realizes that as tough and resourceful as she is, she might just be in over her head...

Heirs of Grace is a tale of family and magic, action and wonder, blending the strong heroine, cheeky humor, and dark fantasy that have become the hallmarks of Tim Pratt's writing.

Heirs of Grace Details

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From Reader Review Heirs of Grace for online ebook

Mike says

Independent, modern young woman narrates, in First Person Smartass, how she was just an ordinary person with an ordinary life who didn't believe in the supernatural, but then it turned out that the supernatural believed in her, and around about the same time she met this guy...

There are hundreds of authors writing that exact book at the moment, many of them very badly; and when I see an instance of it, I usually move on, sometimes with an eyeroll, to the next book in the hope of something I haven't seen dozens of times before. But I was vaguely aware of the name "Tim Pratt" - I think I've read one or two of his short stories - and paused long enough on this one to get the sample and see if he wrote it well.

He wrote it very well indeed.

I was surprised, when I read the back matter, to discover that (as T.A. Pratt) he's the author of the Marla Mason series. I stopped reading that series because it is so completely unlike this. Marla is lacking in empathy, violent, and amoral; the protagonist of this book is intensely empathetic, and her rejection of the easy, violent solution gives us an ending that I found fresh, unexpected, and extremely satisfying.

Also, there's a mysterious magical house, and for some reason I love mysterious magical houses. There are some cool magical items, too, and the author wisely dodges the Q trap (where every single one of them turns out to be the only thing that will save James Bond at some key moment of the plot); some of them are simply cool rather than being at all useful.

I appreciated that the protagonist didn't rush into her relationship with the man she met, and that she took the time to communicate with him about something that could have split them apart (this is lampshaded as something that would resolve practically every romantic comedy plot much more quickly, and is a thing that real adult human beings do). She makes good decisions throughout, in fact - not only good-sensible but good-morally - so the plot is not driven by her stupidity and risk-taking, meaning that when the love interest saves her it's not infuriating.

Overall, annoying tropes are avoided or averted, the characters work well together, the protagonist's voice is genuinely witty and amusing, and we end up in an unexpected and satisfactory place after an enjoyable ride. This book demonstrates that even an overused premise can still be the starting point for a fresh and well-executed story.

Sara says

I picked this up at an Audible sale thinking it would be a cute, light, paranormal mystery. And it was those things, but it was also amazingly, unassumingly diverse, which is not something I've encountered that much in the cozy mystery genre where most of the protagonists are white, heterosexual, ciswomen.

Bekah, our protagonist, is Polynesian. She's adopted. She's bisexual. She is matter-of-fact about her gender fluid half-siblings.

The book isn't perfect and it's by no means the height of literary fiction, but it isn't supposed to be. It's entertaining and fun. And it's not just another cookie cutter protagonist, which was a very nice surprise.

JoLene says

2.5 stars

It is always a challenge to find books for my husband and I to listen to on long car trips. Lighter fantasy fare appeals to both of us so we picked this one. Bekah, a recent art school grad, inherits a house (filled with magical stuff) from a long lost relative. Unfortunately, she also inherits some siblings which are a bit upset about the "will". On the plus side, Trey, the lawyer handling the estate, is kind of hunky and also quite nice.

The book started off well enough. Bekah is quite humorous and her discovery of some of the family secrets with the help of Trey was interesting. The house became a character all its own. Her oldest sibling is really miffed that Bekah inherited the house because there is something valuable in it, but apparently Bekah's benefactor was a hoarder, so finding it is no small task.

Unfortunately, the book really headed south about 2/3 of the way through. Part of it was the narration where suddenly every new character's voice sounded like a robot. It was off-putting to say the least. The mystery of the hidden object turned out to be really silly and the resolution of the book just wasn't satisfying. So, started off a 4, but ended up a 1-2, hence the rating of 2.5.

Julie says

I was intrigued all the way through the story. It has twists and turns and keeps you guessing what will happen next. It is full of surprises, mystery, suspense, romance and magic. Bekah inherited money, a home and so much more she was not ready for. She comes from a large family of half brothers and sisters who start coming around after she gets her inheritance. Trey is her lawyer who helps her get adjusted to her inheritance and maybe there might be some room for some romance. I highly recommend this story to readers who like magic.

Nicole says

I just have to enjoy a book that starts with a sentence like, "My new life was off to a bumpy start even before Trey got eaten by the mirror."

April says

Excellent story with a good main and some very interesting secondary characters. I would have given this five stars but for a few things that I felt could have been done a bit better - the exploration of the house felt like a blurry background and the solution to the main problem seemed a bit easier than it should have though the final solution was completely unexpected.

Heather Henkel says

Good story

This was a really great story on magic and families. It was a very unique take in how magic works and how sometimes your family is what you make of it.

Erin (PT) says

I LOVED THIS BOOK. 4.5 stars, all the way. It's not just the set up, though the premise is one that I adore: someone inherits a big, mysterious house from a relative they never knew they had. But that part itself was great fun and well handled.

But the best part for me was Bekah herself. She's the kind of heroine that I've been desperately longing for and so few authors bother to write, if they even know how. That she's the product of a male author is an even more delightful thing. Bekah is both biracial and bisexual in quiet, casual ways that are, even so, very much present in her narrative. She's smart, common sensical, and pop-culture savvy. She's real-feeling and ordinary while still being the stuff heroines are made of. She understands boundaries and consent and power-dynamics, she has ethics and holds to them. These traits shouldn't be astonishing or unusual...but THEY SO ARE. And I am just beyond impressed with Tim Pratt for getting that and giving us Bekah.

If the book has one flaw, it's the same flaw that inflicts a lot of Amazon serials, one of pacing. I actually think Heirs of Grace is better than most of it's peers; the pacing felt steady through most of the book, only falling down a little at the end. Though the ending felt organic to the story and appropriate, it also felt like it lacked some of the dramatic oomph you want from a book's climax and, ultimately, I feel like more time is spent (a little unnecessarily) on the aftermath and wrap up than on the denouement.

That being said, it was still an EXCELLENT read that I plan to rec to all my friends and I plan to be seeking out more of Pratt's work.

Jess says

I listened to this one on audiobook. It had a lot of promise, but just fell flat for me. I wasn't super impressed with this one. The premise of inheriting a magical house was pretty cool, but the characters felt pretty contrived. Becca was unbearably smug. The author had her use obscure words constantly so that the other characters could revel in her brilliance. I found that obnoxious. Honestly her character seemed like she was trying too hard to be edgy. I wasn't a huge fan of the narrator either. Her southern accents were awful. Think of how Bill Compton says Sookie's name on Trueblood. And then imagine one of the main characters sounding like that every time he spoke. The last thing that really bothered me was that the narrator gave Becca's gay friend a stereotypically effeminate voice. Not all gay men talk that way. That was just offensive. The listeners could have picked up that he was gay from what the author wrote. No need to reinforce homophobic stereotypes. Maybe I would have felt more positive if I hadn't listened to it, but I still don't think I would have liked Becca.

Pat Black says

I want a sequel

It was that good. Great characters, writing and plot. Self contained but oh do many more options available to explore

Deena says

For the first 3/5s of this, I would have given it a 4, but the final 2/5s fell off by a lot. I'm not sure if the length was the problem, or if Mr. Pratt just hadn't decided where it was going before he started, and then didn't know what to do with it. Overall it was pretty good and I'm glad I read it, but it didn't live up to its own potential, which is unfortunate.

Krazykiwi says

Heirs of Grace by Tim Pratt Samsung Kindle freebie of the month (more about that below).

This is not high literature, but on a snowy morning at home with a cold, and wrapped up in a blanket and the cats, it was just the right kind of Christmas candy and I enjoyed it. It might be a case of "Right book at the right moment", but I think if you're a contemporary UF fan, this is well worth a shot, particularly as it's a) a standalone and b) there's a pretty good chance you can get it free until the end of the December 2016 (I wrote "the month" there, but that's no use if you're reading this a year from now.)

The opening line is a pretty good insta-taste of the writing:

My new life was off to a bumpy start even before Trey got eaten by the mirror.

The bones of the plot is nothing we haven't seen before: Young woman discovers she is the inheritor of a massive amount of power, and has to figure out by herself how to deal with it.

What's great:

- Bekah is 24?25? non-white (she's not actually sure what she is, as she's adopted, and it is partly cleared up in the book.), not entirely heterosexual, non-virginal, non-neurotic and definitely no damsel in distress. She is brave and kind, and in charge of her own life, and enjoying it. She's also not perfect, her innate kindness and self-reliance puts her in danger a few times, but she generally gets herself out of it again, or at least gives it a shot. And yet, despite being a thoroughly modern miss with agency and self-esteem, she actually asks for help from people who can help her, when possible, and accepts help when it's offered if it makes sense to do so.
- Sure she's been given a big dose of magical inheritance, but not on a plate. For most of the book, the main problem is she knows about it but she can't find it (it's literally been put in a physical form and then lost). And when she does find it, she can't figure out how to access it. And when she does finally get there, she gets to decide if it's what she really wants or not, taking it on isn't the only option.
- It's a standalone. As much as I liked this little world and the fact that it's obviously not the end of the world

for the characters, it feels like this story is told and wrapped up, and it's nice to just have a standalone book now and then.

- The ending is quite unexpected. Mostly in a good way (The epilogues could have been tightened up a bit though.). There's a great deal of kindness and gentleness in this book, which is funny considering it's also got monsters getting their innards made outards by double-barrelled shotguns, etc. It just doesn't lead at all where you think it's going to.
- There's a lot of really witty banter, and occasionally fabulously funny dialogue, but actually very little snark. I love snark, heck, I am more or less made of snark IRL, but non-stop all the snark you can read is a little much. It was kind of fun to see this style of writing done without it.

What's not:

- The love interest is a bit of a sap. A terribly charming, cute and sweet sap, but he's basically Bekah's puppy. In part that's a plot point and there is a reason, but only in part,
- There are a couple of places where she's just a little too persuasive. And they're both huge plot points. As in, she talks her way out of situations, or talks other characters into things, that just don't quite seem plausible.
- There are the usual problems of male authors writing inside a female POV character's heads. That said, they are remarkably, refreshingly few, which is great but makes them a little more jarring than usual when they do happen.
- That ending really is a bit too pat. Despite being in character for Bekah, and the fact I actually liked it a great deal, in the end everyone gets off a little light.
- There's a lot of really witty banter. Even snarkless, and as much as I enjoyed it, there's maybe a little TOO much. There's a few places where it's a bit much and one where I thought to myself "Really? You're making jokes already? Five minutes ago you had your neck broken and then you got stabbed. It's ok to be serious and contemplative now and then." Right before the characters made a joke at each other about how they were already making jokes at each other. Maybe reading this all in one sitting isn't ideal. It was originally released as a 6 part Kindle serial, and while it works well as a novel, the parts are self-contained, not cliffhangery, and just about the right size for a helping.

About that Samsung freebie thing:
(view spoiler)

Chelle says

Short version: fun in spite of its flaws, well-written and a good choice for someone looking for some feel-good fantasy.

Long version: I didn't learn until after I finished this book that it started published life as serialized kindle singles. Once I did, some of the book's flaws made perfect sense. See, there aren't chapters in this book, there are parts, five of them. While each part isn't exactly an unbroken wall of text, the lack of chapter breaks gave it a kind of meandering, loose, occasionally long-winded quality. In fact, especially in the earlier parts, there

would be a whole lot of meandering, and then a brief flurry of action just before the end of the section. Makes a lot more sense knowing the author had to be sure his audience was hooked for the next part. In novel form, it makes things rather jerky. There were also several instances of "if I had only known then," which probably serves the same purpose. When this was turned into a novel, it would have benefitted greatly from some editing and reformatting. I don't know how these things work, though; possibly that wasn't an option.

Obviously I found a lot to like about this book if I'm giving it four stars. The writing and narrative voice were strong and our heroine, Bekah, is instantly likable. Listening to her tell the story made the meandering parts less of a slog than they would be in the hands of a less-capable author. She and her romantic interest actually talk, hang out, bond, go through things together, have common ground, and communicate like actual adult human beings, about things like consent and the rather unique challenges their relationship faces. Bekah actually makes a pretty meta comment about this at one point; like the "if I had only known then"s, there are a few of those sprinkled throughout the story. They could be a bit blunt, but at least our leads were the kind of savvy, snarky people who might reasonably make observations like these.

Though there are a few fairly brief moments of shock and violence, this book overall is pretty fluffy. If you're looking for something weighty and grim, you've come to the wrong magic house. The plot is certainly extant but nothing mind-bending, though I still think the overall quality of the book is pretty special.

While Bekah finds out a lot about herself that she didn't know before, I can't say she or any of the characters grow or develop that much. She never has to make any hard choices, and she sidesteps any potential moral pitfalls by being strong-willed, sensible, and good. There's nothing wrong with this, of course, and I certainly don't think a character has to suffer for them or their story to be worthwhile. Static characters are less interesting, though. A great deal is made about the price of magic but while other characters are shown to have suffered greatly for it, Bekah seems to sacrifice very little. It was a bit convenient and pat.

But there's a place for uncomplicated stories like that, and as far as options go, Heirs of Grace is a pretty good one. Our heroes are likable, the dialogue pops, and the world is vivid and unique. While not quite realizing its full potential, it's still a gem and worth the ride.

Amanda Meggs says

I liked everything about this book, it is such an unusual combination, as suggested in the book by Bekah is it a rom-com, thriller or fantasy? It's a combination of all of them. Great characters, no cardboard cutouts here and a storyline that worked well. Excellent.

Rachel Olivier says

Fun urban fantasy (I'm talking Emma Bull/Neil Gaiman/Charles de Lint contemporary urban fantasy, not paranormal romance, which often gets confused with urban fantasy).

Intelligent, artistic, snarky Rebekah Lull has just been told that she -- liberal, bi-sexual, urban, brown-skinned Bekah -- has just inherited a house and fortune from an old white guy in the middle of nowhere in North Carolina. Pretty much everyone she knows, including herself, assumes that if this isn't a joke, then she'll sell the house, invest the money and be back in Chicago by the end of the summer. And then she'll apply to museum curator jobs, because everyone knows she's not original enough to be an artist in her own

right.

But then she meets Trey, and an older sister she didn't know she had, and another older sister she didn't know about. And then she finds out her father was a sorcerer or a wizard, and before she knows it, she's enmeshed in a world she was never prepared for.

I really enjoyed reading this story; it was a satisfying magical adventure story. Tim Pratt thought long and hard about the elements he put into each character as well as the disparate elements he mixed into the story. For example, Rebekah is a 21st century womanist. I feel like I know Bekah. I have friends like her. I never felt like she stepped out of character. She didn't morph into some "fantasy baebe" once the fantastical part of the story got going. She was always Bekah. And he was equally good with the other characters (there was one character who seemed too good to be true sometimes, but it that's me, I think. I don't trust white frat guys to be anything but white frat guys.)

Then there's the magical house. Always a fan of the magical house (see de Lint's magical house in Moonheart for another example). And the dysfunctional family members. And lots of homages and dropped hints to other scifi/fantasy stories/writers out there in the world. As both a reader and a writer I always enjoy those. It makes me think I'm in on story, in on the joke, with the writer and the characters.

As a writer and a proofreader/copy editor-type person I also was a fan for various reasons, including, but not limited to: the clean copy (I only saw three places where probably a sentence was rewritten and not quite cleaned up during a revision), the clean storyline (as in he stuck to the plot and the elements and it wasn't muddy and he tied up loose ends, and the ends that weren't tied up were firmed up), the tone of the piece, the research, the logic of the story, the -- I don't know what to call it -- but detailed elements he took the care to put into the story (like three generations of lawyer, three siblings, triplets, three items found in a spot, etc. - three as a magical number).

So, while I really enjoyed the story as a reader, I also had a deep appreciation for the craft, talent, and work that went into the story.

I recommend it as a good read.