



Kin

Bruce McAllister

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Bruce McAllister's "Kin" is a boy-meets-alien story that hits all the standard buttons of that form. The boy in question—Kim—approaches the alien for help. The alien 1st refuses but is later won over because it senses something special in the boy. The alien helps the boy & offers him the chance to travel the stars. What makes McAllister's version interesting & highly enjoyable is that the alien is a stone-cold assassin & that the something special he recognizes in the boy are the nascent skills of an equally efficient killer. At the heart of the story is the interaction between Kim & the alien, whom the boy manipulates by playing on his cultural taboos & conventions, & for whom he feels equal measures of fascination, revulsion & fear. McAllister could easily have fallen into the trap of making Kim sweet & uncomprehending—gee, Mister Alien, could you help me?—or unrealistically clever & calculating. Instead, he hits the perfect middle ground. Kim holds his own against the alien, but there's always a palpable sense of how close he's skirting to genuine danger, & more importantly, of how incomplete his understanding of that danger is. One often hears readers complain that it is rare to encounter convincing aliens in fiction, but it's just as rare to encounter convincing & interesting children. McAllister manages both.—Abigail Nussbaum's blog "Asking the Wrong Questions" for 4/24/07

Kin Details

Date : Published August 2007 by Fictionwise (first published 2006)

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Author : Bruce McAllister

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From Reader Review Kin for online ebook

Jen says

Long car ride + LeVar Burton reading to me via podcast = heaven!!

At first, I didn't quite get the ending, but when I DID, holy cats, this became a five star "read".

I find it funny that a wish of many millennials is to have LeVar Burton read them a bedtime story. This wasn't quite a bedtime story, but MAN does he have the speaking chops to draw you into the world the author created!

Great story, great narrator, highly recommended! 5 stars!

Melyssa says

Listened to this one on LeVar Burton's Spotify podcast. He's a great reader/narrator.

N.T. Embe says

Thank you for the incredible story, LeVar Burton! <3 What a fantastic tale this was. <3

Nancy says

Kin is a short story that builds momentum as you suddenly see how the title relates to the relationship between an Earth boy and an assassin alien. Young Kim contacts an Antalou alien and convinces him to prevent the forced abortion of his yet-to-be-born sister. At first you will wonder why this alien follows through on the boy's request, but this quietly menacing story will show you how the mercenary alien recognizes that the two share a kinship of character. Evil can put on an innocent face and the alien knows Kim's true nature will soon reveal itself. This thought provoking story was narrated by LeVar Burton on his podcast's first episode @ <http://www.levarburtonpodcast.com/>.

Shelly says

Does it count as 'read' if I listened to this short story in the 'LeVar Burton Reads' podcast? Yes, it totally does! I don't get why some people discount audiobooks. I adore them. I need them! I am not a reader of science fiction, sadly. It's not because I think they are geeky, or trash or whatever stupid stereotype. It's totally my fault, I get too caught up in the pronunciation of words, it's a perfectionist/phonetic reader thing, so you can see my problem. Instead of progressing on with the story, I will stop and pronounce the interesting made up

words. And then I have to try and pronounce them 10 different ways to see which sounds best and then I've forgotten what I'm even reading. Thus, has been my problem with sci-fi. This podcast has convinced me I just need to listen to audio of science fiction, because I LOVED this short story. I didn't give it 5 stars because I wanted more! Short stories done well - not many I've read. This one was fantastic - I learned just enough about the characters to understand what was going on, but it wasn't overwhelming, and it felt rich and full of detail. I felt the connection forming between the boy and the alien. I hated the govt person immediately because of how the author described him, not as 'hey, this guy is awful,' but in finding his thoughts repulsive/small minded. This showing, not telling thing in short story is often truncated or just completely missing, but not here. Not a single time are we told how we should feel about a character, but my feelings were intense. And I just loved how the alien showed the boy his problems could be solved a different way. Loved every minute!

Chrysten Lofton says

2.5? I really felt like I wanted more, but it was still a good story

I read this story, audibly, through the wonderful new podcast LeVar Burton Reads. It was a short read, and I think the biggest sin is that it was actually kept a short story. It seemed to demand expansion, to me as a reader at least. But, it gave a strong and lovely message, it held my attention, it had that nice sci-fi language, and you can listen to it for free via LeVar Burton Reads. It's a great way to spend 30 minutes, especially if you dig science fiction. This story can be for adults or teens, and it has some universal appeal. Don't miss it.

Date Read edited so as not to include story in the Goodreads Challenge, read on the same dates, 2017

Kate (Beyond Bookish) says

Discovered this on the LeVar Burton Reads podcast and loved it!

Shatha says

At first I was listening to the story passively, while I did housework, but by the end of it I was standing still in the middle of the kitchen with my mouth gaping open - an excellent, delightful story

Wade says

It's the book read in the first episode of the 'LeVar Burton Reads' podcast. The story is not bad. Quite short but is presented well. Might have a look at what else they've wrote.

Susan Crowe says

I heard this on LeVar Burton Reads. LB was awesome, of course, but i'm not a real big sci-fi fan.

Kenya Reviews Stuff (ReviewsMayVary) says

Levar Burton reads this on the first episode of his new podcast. I am not actually a fan of short fiction or sci-fi, truth be told, but I can listed to LB talk about whatever.

This is a short story about the meeting and connection between a young boy and an alien assassin.

Rachel says

Listened to this short story courtesy of LeVar Burton Reads (ITS READING RAINBOW FOR ADULTS!!!!). It is a story of a boy who hires a alien to kill someone who is going to kill his sister. The characters show a lot of complexity in a short amount of story and the story itself is heartfelt beneath the whole hiring an alien to kill someone thing.

Magen says

3.5 stars This is a subtle story about connection. It is interesting and unique. While it is almost too short, it is worth a read.

I listened to this story on the Lavar Burton Reads podcast and that performance was a 4.5. The biggest flaw is the advertisement in the middle of the story. I had thought the story just abruptly ended, but then it continued. Otherwise, phenomenal performance.

Betsy Gant says

I'm not a huge sci-fi fan when it comes to literature (has to be super great writing for me to enjoy it). This was a heart-warming short story that sparked my imagination.

Janelle Dazzlepants says

Kin is a short story set in the future, where a young poor boy commissions an alien assassin to prevent the state-sanctioned abortion of his unborn sister. Things don't turn out quite the way the boy had planned, and the relationship between boy and alien becomes more than just a transaction.

I listened to this via LeVar Burton Reads and it was magical! LeVar's narration was truly delightful as

always, but the story itself brought tears to my eyes on my morning commute (and not just because I'm bleary-eyed and uncaffeinated!) I am always a sucker for that meaningful and yet totally platonic Elliott-E.T. type of connection between a human and an alien and this had that in spades.

So touching, and a truly wonderful introduction to this podcast and the world of short fiction.
