



Northwood - Brian Falkner

Published by Walker Books, RRP \$22.99

An absorbing adventure told in traditional style. The storyteller sets the scene with an enticing introduction: "This is the strange story of Miss Cecilia Undergarment and the black lions of Northwood. It is probably not true, but who really knows for sure."

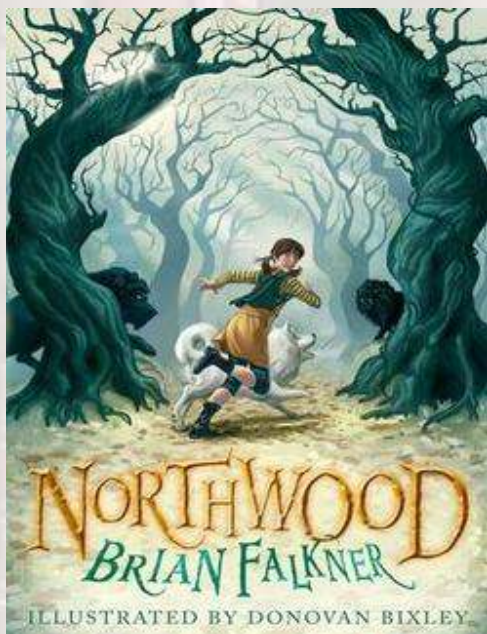
Of course, danger lurks in the dark and mysterious forest. Cecilia finds herself lost in the woods with only a white Samoyed dog as her guide. He proves a trustworthy companion and leads her to a strange castle. But is it a safe place?

Cecilia discovers an odd assortment of people trapped in the castle and living an old-fashioned lifestyle. Although she makes friends with young people in the community, she's determined to return home.

However, the king does not want change. Cecilia is a resourceful girl and soon discovers the king's secret. There's a touch of the magical in this intriguing tale. The author reveals the mystery through tantalising hints and subtle clues. Readers are kept guessing as the story twists and turns like the paths in the dark forest.

Black and white illustrations by Donovan Bixley add atmosphere to the shadowy Northwood. Bixley's vintage-style drawings capture the characters and their way of life. An enjoyable fantasy novel for primary to intermediate-age readers.

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett.



Promoting the enjoyment of children's literature.