

Along the Watchtower

David Litwack

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Fantasy and reality walk hand in hand for a wounded veteran in this poignant story of love, loss, and faith.

A wounded veteran returns home with more than just physical ailments to contend with in *Along the Watchtower*, which brings the reader into the conflicted mind of a returning soldier whose next battle lies deep within himself. Mixing fantasy with reality, David Litwack tells a powerful story of loss, faith, and healing that is emotional and captivating, and gives readers a telling look into the personal struggles facing our own heroes.

Lieutenant Freddie Williams, injured by an IED (improvised explosive device) in Iraq, wakes from a medically induced coma to find himself in pain and facing a long road to recovery. But harder to handle than his physical problems are those he faces spiritually. With so much death in his life—his father, mother, one brother, those he fought with in the war—and unable to remember what happened to his second brother, Freddie finds his subconscious escaping to another world to try and cope with it all.

In his fantasy world, he is known as Frederick, Prince of Stormwind, whose father, the king, is dead. It is up to Frederick to save his kingdom from ruin, and to do so he must successfully face four trials. In a world where demons, elves, and magic exist, and where weapons are useless in this spiritual fight, Frederick must learn to face his own personal demons, or find despair.

The correlation between reality and fantasy grow as Freddie slowly comes to terms with loss and begins to heal. In both worlds he has those who help him. At his side in reality are Dr. B, Nurse Dinah, Ralph, and most importantly, Becky, his physical therapist. In fantasy, he has Sir Gilly, Malfurion the great elf, the plumber, and a beautiful woman in the royal garden—Rebecca. Facing the four trials in the fantasy means remembering and coming to terms with his ghosts in reality. As his body and mind grow stronger and the pain lessens, and as he finds himself falling in love, Freddie's world finally begins to right itself.

Along the Watchtower is a sympathetic tale that is appropriate in a time when the world is growing more aware of the emotional and physical pain soldiers endure. Litwack writes a fine drama that offers hope and the promise of a better future to those enduring these trials.

Litwack's writing is flawless, as is his ability to mix genres. As fine as his writing is, his choice of cover art is impeccable and offers a perfect glimpse into the heart of the story. *Along the Watchtower* would be a perfect choice for those in the service or for those who support them, or for anyone who likes a great book that intertwines reality and fantasy.

TAMMY SNYDER (June 28, 2013)

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