

Lord of the Wolves

James Matlack Raney

CreateSpace (Oct 26, 2016)

Softcover \$14.99 (256pp)

978-1-5391-6068-7

Lord of the Wolves is a creative, fast-paced journey filled with plenty of excitement, danger, moments of self-discovery, and character growth.

In the wake of tragic loss, five young wolves set off on a journey toward safety and self-discovery in James Matlack Raney's epic lupine tale, *Lord of the Wolves*.

Born the runt of the litter with only three functioning legs, Watcher knows he's fortunate to be alive; most runts in his condition would not be given a chance to live past birth. But loving parents and an understanding pack do much to make up for his lame leg, and he soon learns that strength is not found only in the physical.

When a rival pack led by a heartless lord named Bone challenges their territory and brings tragedy to the pack, Watcher and his brothers and sisters go on the run, knowing that Bone will not rest until every member of the pack is "brought to the red snow." Their journey leads them into many adventures, and tests their loyalties to each other and to their way of life. Each of them ultimately must make difficult choices to survive and ensure their future.

Lord of the Wolves is remarkably creative work. Raney's attention to detail leaves nothing out, from characters' relationships to the description of the world in which the wolves live. There are no humans in this story; rather, there are the Trees of the Old Forest, respected for their contribution to the earth; the Great Crowns (deer); the Owls and other birds who are honored for their wisdom and guidance; the wolves themselves; and other animals. Tradition and a respect for history are the foundation for all, and the world-building is imaginative and realistic.

The characters are fully developed and engaging. Perhaps most notable are Watcher, whose disability means he needs to find another way to contribute to the pack, and Orion, his older brother, who is the strongest of them all and must decide whether his place is alongside his siblings or if his path leads elsewhere. Watcher's other brother, Kicker, struggles with jealousy and resentment, and their two sisters Windy and Glimmer have their own unique attributes and challenges. Readers are sure to identify with at least one of the siblings as they bicker, make up, and work together toward their future. Through these five very different characters, Raney effectively conveys the difficulties of finding one's place in the world, as well as the importance of love, family, and community.

Lord of the Wolves is a creative, fast-paced journey filled with plenty of excitement, danger, moments of self-discovery, and character growth. Lessons are clear and subtly conveyed, emphasizing the need for family, self-awareness, inner strength, and sacrifice for a greater good.

JEANNINE CHARTIER HANSCOM (December 14, 2016)

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