

## Lost Prophecy: Realm of Secrets

**C. C. Rae**

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*Lost Prophecy: Realm of Secrets is an exciting fantasy with depth beyond its entertainment value.*

In C. C. Rae's enjoyable and complex young adult fantasy, *Lost Prophecy: Realm of Secrets*, three friends battle against incredible odds.

The story opens shortly after Nicole returns home through a portal after narrowly escaping death in another realm. In the rush to escape, two friends from the alternate realm arrived with her: Raiden, whom she's developed deep feelings for, and Gordan, who can morph at will into his native dragon form.

Nicole was a normal high school student until she discovered her powerful and dangerous magic powers—hallmarks of the fera, a creature native to Raiden's realm whose emotions can trigger destructive reactions in the external world. Because feras can be lethal, the ruling council of Raiden's realm is bent on destroying Nicole.

While Nicole learns how to control her magic and evade enemies sent by the Council, the three prepare to flee. Before they can get away, Raiden is snatched back to his own realm. Realizing that Raiden, who was supposed to keep an eye on Nicole, has developed feelings for her, the Council snatches him for surveillance. As Nicole and Gordan flee, Raiden plays a dangerous game with the Council, pretending to go along with them while trying to protect Nicole from afar.

The narrative is action-driven, with events spilling forward fast enough to satisfy even the most impatient reader. This pace sometimes comes at the expense of clarity, as the text pauses to explain the importance of what just happened. It also occasionally detours away from major events—like Gordan morphing into a dragon to fly Nicole to safety—to concentrate on secondary events.

The text is light on description; the bulk of the world-building was done in the first book of the series. The text is balanced, giving each character time in the spotlight. Intriguing plot threads carry the story.

Despite being drawn from different realms and having supernatural powers, Nicole, Raiden, and Gordan are believable teenagers. They are bonded in their support for each other, and their mutual friendship shines through in lively dialogue. Each character faces an existential dilemma, and each is placed in situations that force them to weigh self-preservation against conflicting desires and loyalties. Probing issues of fate and free will, the story also emphasizes choice as a basic human desire.

This second book in the Hidden Magic series ends on a knife edge, with plot threads still in delicious suspense. It is an exciting fantasy with depth beyond its entertainment value.

SUSAN WAGGONER (July 12, 2018)

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