

Point of Direction

Rachel Weaver

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Depth of internal struggle, powerful themes, and setting as character—Rachel Weaver has achieved greatness with her debut.

In Rachel Weaver's *Point of Direction*, Alaska is bared in all of its glory and tragedy as Anna and Kyle struggle to forge a relationship and run a lighthouse on a remote island. Weaver's ability to create setting as a character is stunning, giving a glimpse into the turmoil the characters endure both inside and out.

Alaska is often seen as the last outpost for those running to escape something in their lives. Its remoteness and beauty can be a balm to those who have suffered, and that is what draws Kyle and Anna to the job of lighthouse caretakers on a remote channel island. Weaver's recreation of the power of the Alaskan wilderness becomes a separate character with excellent details. You can feel the cold as she describes a glacier hike: "We entered an old drainage area that water had carved into a steep sloping wall of dense blue ice. It rose forty feet in the air off to our right. It was like hiking through the inside of a frozen wave. The color of the air changed as the blue rose above us."

Both Anna and Kyle are fascinating characters. They are dealing with their own tragedies, and together, their individual struggles seem to intensify. Anna is struggling with the death of a teen in her care when she worked as a hiking guide in the glaciers, and Kyle is struggling with his relationship with his father. Both Anna and Kyle are wounded, and we feel empathy for them and their situations. Anna's tragedy seems to be more developed in the book, but that doesn't make Kyle any less interesting of a character.

This is Weaver's first novel, and she hits every nail on its head. Not only is the setting vivid and each of the characters interesting, but the theme of the story is powerful. As much as Anna struggles with the death of one of her hikers, she learns that as she channels her grief and guilt into her art, she is able to let go and heal. In the same way, Kyle begins to heal from his father's betrayal by working on a kayak.

This would be an excellent book for teens as well as adults. Each group may take something different away from it, but it will be satisfying to both types of readers.

LYNN EVARTS (Summer 2014)

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