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Clarion Review ★★★☆☆ FANTASY

The Search for the Unnamed One: Book Two of the Souls of Aredyrah Series

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Picking up shortly after where the first Souls of Aredyrah book, *The Fire and the Light*, left off, *The Search for the Unnamed One* preserves the adventurous and exciting spirit of the series as Reiv and Dayn face new challenges that test their courage and define who they will become.

The story centers a bit more on Reiv, who is trying to make a life for himself among the Shell Seekers in the coastal region of Meirla. As he heads into Pobu to see Dayn and her sister, Alicine, Reiv is unaware of the growing speculation about whether he is the mysterious Unnamed One mentioned in an ancient prophecy. These rumors have led the Priestess to command his death. Escaping back to Meirla, Reiv is then faced with a crisis that gives him the opportunity to save an innocent loved one, but only through a dangerous ritual where he will venture into the After Realm. The successful completion of this ritual grants him the knowledge and understanding he needs to join Dayn in support of the Jecta (the residents of Pobu) rebellion against the oppressive Tearian royalty.

Akers further develops her characters in this second novel. Dayn overcomes the pain of his past and finds self-worth as he fights for justice. Reiv loses much of his prideful nature and, more importantly, any remaining longing to rejoin the Tearians after his otherworldly experience shows him the cruel truth of their reign. The fact that the characters exhibit new behaviors and emotions in this sequel only increases the vested interest readers have in their fates.

The book has many interesting plot elements, so it is particularly disappointing when Akers rushes through them. The fast pace urges readers on, but at least two instances of great significance could benefit from a bit more elaboration to fully convey their gravity. That said, the quickly moving plot will help reluctant readers stay engaged in a fantasy novel that imparts a number of meaningful messages. Significant ideas about the power of knowledge and truth are present, as are themes of destiny and how our choices determine our character.

A much smaller aspect of the book addresses the teens' romantic feelings and the jealousy, tension, and other complexities that arise from them. Akers also includes a few casual sexual jokes that seem awkwardly out of place.

Although this book ends with more finality than the first, there are a few hints that Reiv's role is not yet fulfilled. There is also plenty of potential for Dayn and Alicine's story to continue in this enjoyable series.

ALICIA SONDHI (October 11, 2011)

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