



The Wayfarer's Journey

A. R. Pearson

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Familiar but full of adventures, The Wayfarer's Journey is an attention-holding fantasy.

In A. R. Pearson's fantasy novel *The Wayfarer's Journey*, a man works to protect his true love from the forces of evil.

Jack's life is forever changed when he rescues Princess Lily from certain death. When Jack finds himself in her service as a bodyguard, he begins to uncover an evil plot that puts both the princess and the world at risk. Overcoming his self-doubt and traumatic past, Jack grows into the leader he was always meant to be. But then, as dark and light magic entities use the world as their battlefield, Jack is thrust in the middle, fighting for his life.

Jack's is a classic hero's journey, and is predictable as a result. In the beginning of the story, he is a self-deprecating wanderer, but as he grows and evolves, he establishes some authority. His backstory is revealed slowly, and anticipation around him increases as connections to the battle are uncovered. His hasty decision to accept Princess Lily's request of service is explained by his desire for purpose and redemption. Buildups of injustice increase audience empathy for him.

While Jack has some unique traits, like his connection to his horse and disdain for magic, Lily is a flat lead. A stereotypical damsel in distress, she is controlled by and reliant on the men around her. Her relationship with Jack is hurried, but the severity of their shared trauma makes sense of their quick connection, and their mutual longing through dire events feels real.

Here, lands are differentiated via distinctive cultures, histories, and physical characteristics, though a full map of the book's world is hard to imagine. Supporting characters include magic users, allies, and enemies, but their speech sounds the same, down to them speaking the same language despite the world's many territories. An absence of modern technology along with descriptions of royal gowns and warrior's swords communicate a medieval period.

Fast but consistent and with easy transitions, the story includes a variety of settings and conflicts that drive its plot. The book's fight scenes are fun and illustrative. The magical framework is loosely explained, but the exact source of the characters' magical powers is unclear. Twists near the end set the book up for a sequel.

Familiar but full of adventures, *The Wayfarer's Journey* is a fantasy novel with romantic elements.

DELIA STANLEY (April 18, 2019)

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