Clarion Review

Fantasy

Unchosen Destiny
Kathie Lightfoot
AuthorHouse
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Two Stars (out of Five)

Few groups are as misrepresented in fiction as the Wiccans. From the evil witches prone to stealing red slippers to all-knowing druids who leak cryptic clues to fantasy novel heroes, it's rare to encounter a realistic character who practices witchcraft. In *Unchosen Destiny*, Kathie Lightfoot goes against the grain with her portrayal of Kayla Green, a white Wiccan who is aware of the energies around her and can dream walk.

Opening with an idyllic picture of her life in the first chapter, Green, through first-person narration and random dips into second person, describes how she's a much better adjusted Wiccan than her siblings and introduces the readers to her children and their gifts (empathy, dream walking, and talking with ghosts). But when strange people move in next door and her long-term boyfriend suddenly becomes hostile and then violent, Green discovers that she and her children are in grave danger. Luckily, she is not fighting alone. Green quickly learns that the mysterious stranger visiting her in her dreams is vampire Artemis Young. Due to a sacrifice made by one of her ancestors, Young's family pledged to help, protect, and love Green's family. And like all well-created characters, Green goes through a transformation along the way—in more ways than one.

Unlike most heroes, who are drawn so flawlessly they lack believability, Lightfoot's Green is the novel's strongest and most original character. Through her actions and observations, she reveals herself to be self-centered and manipulative. It provides for some comic moments, particularly early on. For example, shortly after giving the reader a list of what's wrong with each of her siblings, Green sees a moving truck appear at the house next door. "I never really enjoyed meeting or having new neighbors," Green tells the reader. "They all seemed to be way too nosy or they gossip way too much for my taste."

A slew of editing problems make reading this novel difficult. In many scenes,

Lightfoot's word choice is repetitive without being rhythmic. And an abundance of run-on sentences and sentence fragments cause occasional confusion. But the inconsistent and missing commas, errors like "after words" instead of "afterward," and missing words in key lines of dialogue completely destroy the reading experience. Such basic mistakes make it impossible for readers to lose themselves within the story.

Kathie Lightfoot ends *Unchosen Destiny* with the hint of a sequel. With any luck, readers will have the chance to enjoy another tale of vampires and witchcraft from Lightfoot without being distracted by issues that could be resolved with the help of a copy editor.

Joseph Thompson