

Voluspa: A Magical World

Sam D

Ray East

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Amy's life as a self-conscious, lonely girl changes forever when she finds an old history book about a strange world called Voluspa. The book awakens latent magical powers that transport her to this alternate realm. There, she meets and instantly connects with Drake, a powerful shapeshifter and the son of one of the clan leaders. As she and Drake struggle with their forbidden attraction, Amy begins developing her own powers at a magical school. But discord in Voluspa is growing, and when Drake is in tremendous danger, Amy must find incredible strength and courage to save him—and prevent a worldwide crisis.

Sam D and Ray East, the authors of the Voluspa series, have created a tale with incredible potential that falls a bit flat upon execution. Voluspa is truly an interesting place with a unique backstory. The authors have all the elements to build an authentic world: a place with history, religion, a specific social order, and cultural norms. However, the overall story fails to fully integrate these traits in a comprehensive way. Often this is the result of poor pacing, with some of the plot feeling rushed. Events happen constantly, with little buildup in some cases.

Amy's character is particularly well constructed. She evolves into a new person, and it is rewarding when she finally shows confidence and strength. Though she and Drake have the kind of intense, little-explained connection found fairly often in this genre, there is a refreshing moment when she stands up to him and puts her own well-being first. She is often quite relatable as she battles with her own self-image and lack of confidence, making it all the more heartening to see her succeed.

However, too often the writers fall into the trap of telling instead of illustrating. With all of the great ideas jam-packed into the book, there is almost too much going on, leaving many parts underdeveloped. There are also nearly constant run-on sentences and grammatical errors that significantly take away from the story.

Eager teen readers of the genre may overlook some of the less than professional aspects, such as the poor editing and cover. For those readers, the book offers the kinds of creativity, action, and romantic moments that are perennially popular.

As the authors develop and build upon the stronger elements of this novel, future books in the series could prove to be remarkable fantasy reads.

ALICIA SONDHI (August 20, 2012)

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