



2002

The Healer's Keep

Rachel Wadham

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Hanley, Victoria. *The Healer's Keep*. Holiday House, 2002. ISBN 0823417603. \$17.95. 364 pp.

Reviewer: Rachel Wadham

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fantasy fiction; Adventure stories;

Subject: Healers--Juvenile fiction; Dreams--Juvenile fiction; Books—Reviews;

The Healer's Keep weaves the story of two couples as they struggle to save their world from being destroyed by the minions of the Shadow King. The slave girl Maeve has inherited the powers of her father, a Dreamwen, to walk in dreams. But her power has attracted the attention of the evil Lord Morlen. She executes a courageous escape with fellow slave Evan.

At the same time, Princess Saravelda, the daughter of Torina and Landan (from the companion book *The Seer and the Sword*), comes to the Healer's Keep where she hopes to be trained. But before long, trouble erupts. Sara and fellow student Dorjan, also a Dreamwen, are accused of causing the trouble and they are forced to escape into the night.

Soon Dorjan and Maeve meet in a dream and discover that they share the same father. As all four companions come together they discover the evil plot to drain off magic from objects so the boundary of the Shadow World will be destroyed, giving the Shadow King ultimate power. As the tension increases it is up to the four companions to seal the boundary, save the Healer's Keep, defeat Lord Morlen, and save Sara's parents from being killed.

The Healer's Keep is an exceptional novel full of fast paced, exciting action. While the plot line is complex, Victoria Hanley expertly weaves all the different stories together and brings them to a smashing conclusion. Much improved from the *Seer and the Sword*, the magical setting is believable and well defined. While fans may find that Torina and Landan have lost some of their luster, the new characters more than make up for the lack. Maeve is especially well drawn, a courageous and determined young woman. Sadly, in this fine work the relationship between Dorjan and Sara is ill defined and lacks conclusion. Especially disappointing is Dorjan's declaration of love the lack of reciprocation from Sara...or does this mean a sequel?