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The Fourline Trilogy #1: Gateway to Fourline

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Natalie needs a new job. She is attending an Ivy League university on a partial scholarship but her father’s recent injury and inability to work has put stress on the family finances. Between her cafeteria job and the effort to keep her grades up, Natalie is stressed and falling behind financially and scholastically. Luck is on her side when the costume director for the theater major hires her to help with her off-campus family business. The business is actually a front for a Gateway into a land called Fourline. The king of Fourline is hiding in this world until he is old enough to take back his throne and the rest of the odd crew in the costume shop are his entourage who escaped with him. They need Natalie to use her intelligence, speed, and courage to destroy a tracking system that keeps them from returning to their world. They make a financial offer that Natalie can’t refuse. She crosses the barrier, falls in love, faces danger, and returns having completed her mission.

This is a very enjoyable, if formulaic, read. The characters are likeable and courageous with some complexity to their make-up. The plot is solid and moves at a decent pace but there is some wobbling between reality and dreams that can take a double read to comprehend for a sure sense of place. Natalie makes some understandable gaffs while in Fourline as she tries to fit in, but the really surprising thing is that both sides of the gate speak the same English and no one has difficulty understanding her, nor does she have any trouble understanding them. This isn’t central to the plot or characters but seems a little odd. Lack of attention to this type of detail is the book’s biggest flaw, otherwise it is quite enjoyable. Because ideas are not new and overall the story lacks depth, the book deserves an excellent, not an outstanding rating.

*Contains mild violence.