



# Wayfarer

*Lili St. Crow*

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**Wayfarer** Lili St. Crow

***New York Times* bestselling author Lili St. Crow thrilled legions of fans with her dark paranormal series *Strange Angels*. Now she has created a stirring romantic, deliciously spooky update of *Cinderella*, the alluring second volume in her trilogy *Tales of Beauty and Madness*.**

Ellie Sinder is a Charmer—the most powerful of her age that St. Juno’s Academy has ever seen. But Ellie’s stepmother, Laurissa, wields manipulation and abuse to force Ellie to work her spells ever more intensely, for Laurissa’s profit.

Then a train from over the Wastelands arrives in New Haven, bearing on it golden boy Avery Fletcher, newly returned from prep school, wearing a sweater Ellie’d love to bury her face in and a smile as bright as his blond hair. Avery’s arrival sets Laurissa off on a dark and dangerous scheme—and this time the soul up for grabs is Ellie’s.

*New York Times* bestselling author Lili St. Crow has created a stirring romantic, deliciously spooky update of *Cinderella*, the alluring second volume in her trilogy *Tales of Beauty and Madness*.

## Wayfarer Details

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# From Reader Review Wayfarer for online ebook

## Beth says

I'm a fan of fairytelling retellings, especially ones that make it new and fresh. Just like the first book (which I enjoyed more, to be honest) centers around a Snow White retelling, but had very creepastic vampiric and Unseelie Court elements, Wayfarer centers around Cinderella elements but also has dark fae underpinnings. Nothing overt enough to be recognizable as, say, The Scarecrow King or Diamonds and Toads. But subtly there, in a nicely world-building way.

Speaking of the world- I really enjoy the concepts. It's never fully explained, but having all the hints from books 1 and 2 now, I gather that magic re-awakened sometime in the 21st century, and humanity lost its edge in the face of the wholly unexpected (and frankly terrifying) new reality. So some things are familiar enough to ground you in expectations (the girls are teenagers- trying to navigate school, family chaos, unspoken societal expectations, their futures, romance, etc.) and others are just odd enough to keep an underlying tension to the world (Potential can Twist you into a monstrous form, always angry and/or in pain, and always treated as a fiftieth-class citizen by the rest of the town- so I'm waiting for the riots and revolution to begin any day now).

I think I identified most with Cami, from the first book, even though I'm nothing like her. I didn't feel at all connected to Ellie (not only with her abusive home life but with her level of maturity), but that isn't to say I wasn't invested in her story. Shades of real-life abuse, manipulation, and isolation from support structures abound, to the point where even Ellie was pushing others away and perpetuating the cycle of abuse heaped on her by her stepmother. That made her difficult to like, but realistic. Her insistence that she be independent and do everything herself lands her in hot water, repeatedly. But, given the fairy tale, she's eventually saved by her prince (a very persistent, but sweet guy with an awesomely loving home life), and her friends. And I think that's the bit that bothered me, just slightly- Ellie does SO MUCH in this novel, but very little of it actually improves her situation. Her being forced and coerced by others is what increases her skill (and also nearly kills her, constantly), so it felt like she's empowered but has little agency.

I'd say this is still a good book, certainly well-written and developed, but somewhat weaker than the first book in the series. The next book will clearly center around Ruby (the Red Riding Hood character, whose wolf nature we've gotten a glimpse of in both books), and I'm curious what surprises await with that story. I hope it has slightly more impact than this second book did, but I still love the creepy magical world this narrative is set within.

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## London Loves Gwen Stacy says

If I'm being completely honest, this book made my head hurt. The world building is still sketchy in this book as it was in the one before and I had to constantly remind myself to STOP trying to understand everything because it wasn't going to work. The writing was genuine, but could be terrifically confusing sometimes and often lost me in it's imagery. Avery was such a sweetheart but honestly Ellie was such a bitch to him for like 80% of the book, I don't know why he still liked her. Patience of an angel, that one. Such a precious and good hearted little bean.

My favorite thing about this book was the dress. I'm serious, I WANT that dress on the cover. Someone link

me to where I can find it, I don't care about the price.

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## **Renee says**

After loving **Nameless** in ways few can possibly imagine I practically jumped out of my skin in joy when I forgot that **Wayfarer** was coming out and randomly saw it at Barnes N Nobles. I grabbed it up did my stupid Doctor Who/book dance and proceeded to gobble it up.

This was not as good as Nameless, but it was good. The Cinderella re telling was very different from any other I have read, it was dark and very promising. There is an interesting twist with all the “evil” characters. The Step mom, the one Step sister and the “fairy god mother.” So it kept me on my toes in an enjoyable way.

This novel gives you even more insight into the awesome and creepy world the author introduced us to in Nameless. The “prince” was a good solid love interest and not quite an insta-love story. He wasn’t even what I would consider a main character, which is refreshing.

The darkness of this series is what really draws it to me, so far none of the female characters have been Mary Sues and everything is just a little off, like a nightmare...so just up my alley!

The reason I am not giving this five stars is because the main character, Ellie, was a pain in the ass. She was pretty cool at times, quiet with a mean streak, shy with a passionate edge... However she was also dumb and spends most of the book whining.

She wants to run away and is saving money cause her life sucks so badly, which I understand...However she shuts out her friends and is so scared of her Stepmom she doesn’t tell grownups how badly she is being treated. She pushes her friends away and treats them like shit; it is amazing they care for her at all afterwards. She whines about her life, but aside from squirreling away money doesn’t actually do anything about it. When people offer to help her she brushes them off playing the I-am-so-alone card followed by the no-one-can-understand card. It really began to grate on my nerves after a while.

All in all I found this to be a dark, fun, fast paced read that I really enjoyed and cannot wait for Ruby’s story! If you haven’t read Nameless stop right now and do so, if you have then read this good sequel asap.

Bright Blessings and happy reading!

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## **Y. C. says**

To be honest, I liked the first one more. The first one was so much darker, that the contrast between the fairy tale and Lilith's book is all the more amplified. It's a pity that these books are not more popular. Because there's some parts that are really worth reading.

What's problematic is the lack of clarification in the world building. The concepts of magic this series diverges too much from traditional fantasy, which can be a bit overwhelming with the lack of details

provided. I mean, here I am reading about Ellie making cloths, and half of my head is still asking questions about families and jacks and charms, which has still not be explained from the last book, and none of this is helpful. In fact, it is quite unhelpful, and it takes away from the actual story, even if the details have nothing to do with the actual plot.

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## Miss Clark says

Second in St. Crow's dark fairytale series (which is worlds better than her Strange Angels series) and this time we are following the story of Ellen Sinder, Cami Vultusino's co-best friend.

Ellie is so filled with anger and pride. She is abused and orphaned. Feels abandoned. She lashes out like the beaten creature she is, turning on those who only wish to help her.

Abused and bitter - so bitter, even at her friends who are all trying to help her. They are recognizing that she is in distress and in dire need of aid - and Ellie just lashes out at them viciously. She hates their "charity" as if she were some object of pity or a project.

"I don't need charity," she informed them all. "From *anyone*. Thanks, but no thanks. I was stupid to come here. You can *all* go to hell."

and

"I'm gonna overlook that," Ruby said softly, "because I am a self-centered bitch. Fine and good. But *you need help*."

"D-d-d-don't fight." Cami was breathless, and the edges of her straight black hair lifted on the uneasy breeze. "Please don't f-f-f-f"

"Too late," Ellie informed her curtly. "Shut up."

Cami's hand flew to her mouth, caging broken words. Reddened lips, slim fingers, her skin glowing like an alabaster lamp, the Vultosino girl stared at Ellie with wide, tear-brimming blue eyes.

1)She knows that she is their friend or she at least damn well should.

2)This is largely about Ellen's own pride reacting and I am heartily sick of it.

3)She is really awful to them and tries to act as if it is coming from a place of concern and fear for her friends that she hates for trying to her help and giving her "charity" should they get in the way of Laurissa. You cannot have it both ways, Ellen.

4) After all Cami has been though with her self-image issues, especially with her speech and how unwanted she has felt, this was horrible to see, knowing how Cami feels about Ellen.

Nice twist with the fairy godmother being the one to help her but also slowly killing her. I did not understand why she bothered to teach Ellie all that magic if she was just going to kill her? Why so MUCH?

When they finally get her back, she realizes what true friends they are.

They hadn't even considered letting go of her. *Not now, not ever*, Ruby had said. Cami didn't have to say it, it just *was*."

Even after all the insults and the rage and vitriolic, cutting things that Ellen has thrown at Ruby and poor Cami (who is much more fragile in her spirit than Ellie has any realization and who has herself frequently questioned her place with her friends and in life itself), the girls never give up on Ellie and that is why I really do like these books despite some of their poorer elements.

I liked the connection with her mom. The abrupt ending with Rita and the scarecrow-come-back-to-life was a bit odd though.

I liked that the romance is not the focus of the story. Ellie's life with all of its pains and issues comes first. Her loss of her parents, her desperate search for her mother and the love and care she lost, escape from the horrors of Laurissa's "guardianship" and abuse, a way to LIVE. Yes, she is attracted to Avery who seems like a fairly decent guy. A good looking lad, head-over-heels for her and kind.(Although reinforcing the whole "I had a crush on you so I threw stuff at you and generally made your life miserable because I wanted you to notice me" is not really going to help his case - ugh. Stop it. Boys should not treat girls like crap because they "like" them and the girls are not noticing. NO.) It was just - not enough time spent getting to know one another for me.

I had hoped that we would get to see Nico and Cami in a few scenes together to gauge how they are doing. Maybe in #3. And I say that assuming we will be getting a third book about Ruby...

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## **Shelly Hammond says**

Make sure you take note here that this is the second book in a three book series, just incase you don't realize that before you start reading it. I failed to notice such a thing (duh to me) and it took me a bit to play catch up. I was a little lost on how the magic worked and what the terms were and things like that which I can only assume would have been already explained in the first book, among a few other things here and there. However, once I realized the err of my ways (and shook my head at my own self many a time since I actually have the first book as well) I found myself enjoying the book! So no stars lost on the part of my flaw!

All that aside, the book was pretty good. It was definitely one of the more unique takes I've read on fairytales and the tale of Cinderella. You knew it was telling that story in some way, but it stretched it out and molded it so that it was fun picking out the parts that fit that story. The author created an entire new world with new creatures and species making everything seem so alive! The characters all had their very own distinct personalities.

The book wasn't perfect but the pluses completely annihilate the not as good bits. The only things that were a little not as good might be that there were some times jumps between chapters, and the main character had some possible annoying issues (which I won't mention because if you read this and what I thought was annoying, you might focus on that and it would ruin your reading experience!) but aside from that, it was really a very good book! Now I need to go back and read the first one because I'm so curious about what I missed!

This is an enjoyable book/series that is worth picking up and giving a chance to if you like the stories with very unique fairytale spins.

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### **Dani says**

Reading this book so long after reading Nameless was a bit difficult. I had to try and remember the different terms and places and characters, using context clues and vague hinges most of the time. From what I can recall of the first one, I think I liked that one more than this one. This book was still ok, but I felt Ellie went too long without asking for help. I understand it was a part of her character and backstory, but you can only go so far and fall so hard before you seek aid.

Another slight criticism, I felt that Ellie didn't miss her parents as much as I expected. Yes, she often thought of her mother and father, but I didn't get the sense of mourning or sorrow that they were gone. I understood the longing of wishing they were alive, but I missed the emotional sorrow from their passing.

I feel like I need to reread the first book so I can put the timing of the events further into place.

This series reminds me so much of the trilogy by Rose Mannering. Both Crow and Mannering take a twist on fairy tales in new ways I haven't seen before. Crow's focus is on Snow White, Cinderella, and Little Red Riding Hood while Mannering takes interest in Beauty and the Beast, Swan Lake, and more to come. Both trilogies contain new worlds with magics and charms that boggle and intrigue my brain. Crow's books delve into the issues of the protagonists while Mannering's zoom in on the journeys of the protagonists.

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### **Elizabeth says**

Ellen Sinder is miserable. Her father recently died and before she could even begin to heal, her evil stepmother revealed her true colors. This marked the beginning of Ellen being treated as a servant in her own home and being subjected to all kinds of verbal, emotional, and physical abuse. She can't just leave because her school enrollment in high school and university are dependent on living in her family home. A few things are keeping her sane: her two best friends Ruby and Cami, her magical talent to charm, and the hope that she can eventually get away and make a real life for herself. Unfortunately, her situation is getting worse and worse as her stepmother gets more oppressive, her friends seem more distant, and her life is just

disintegrating before her eyes. When will the downward spiral end?

Wayfarer is the follow-up-not-quite-sequel to Nameless (which I absolutely loved) and focuses on Ellen Sinder. This retelling of Cinderella vastly expands the unique fairy tale world that draws upon many recognizable tales and combines them in interesting ways. Again, Lili St. Crow just throws the reader into the deep end of her world with Families, Jacks, Twists, and the Deprescence. Things gradually come into focus, but the beginning is a little disorienting, especially having read the first book over a year ago. The Deprescence occurred in the 20's and was an explosion of magic that ruined a lot of the world and a lot of people in it. People were Twisted into monsters and Jacks, which made them no longer fit to be a part of normal society. The positive side is that some people have Potential that means when their power settles, they can do wonderful or terrible things with their magic. Magic is used in everything from clothing and fashion production to medicine. The magic system is more explored here through Ellen's eyes and it seems to be a mix of magic and science, but without any specific explanation to really blend the two together. I liked the apprentice system for beginning Charmers and the way magic and Charms are integrated into their everyday lives.

Lili St. Crow takes the flat, stock characters of fairy tales and gives them dimension and at times unexpected characteristics. Ellen is obviously Cinderella, but she isn't the stereotypical enslaved but cheerful princess. The abuse definitely takes a toll on her. Hearing day in and day out that she is useless and unwanted wears on her and she subconsciously internalizes the insults. Leaving home isn't as easy as her friends make it sound. The abuse may be bad, but the unknown may be worse. At least she knows what to expect at home. Leaving could have her be without food, education, or even a place to sleep. She's determined not to be a burden or charity case to her friends. So many people are blind to Ellen's abuse that she feels completely helpless. This sentiment is repeated often, but is misguided since her friends only want her to be safe and happy. I grew annoyed with Ellen's insistence that her friends only wanted her around as charity or as some cruel joke when they showed time and time again that they were worried about her and cared for her. She also lashes out at them again and again until I was surprised she even had any friends left. I would have liked Ruby and Cami to have a more major role in the book. Most of the book has Ellen making horrible decisions after horrible decisions and simply ignoring or hiding from the consequences. This part was incredibly frustrating to read and I just wanted to talk some sense into her. Once she figured some stuff out and realized her own worth, I began to enjoy the novel again. Although it infuriated me, this portrayal of the effects of abuse is pretty accurate.

The other characters are equally dynamic. Cami and Ruby are amazing friends who couldn't be more different from each other. Cami is quiet and sweet while Ruby is loud and brash, but they both care for Ellen in their own way. I felt so sorry for them when Ellen refused to accept their help or listen to their advice. Avery is the Prince Charming here and while he was sweet and nice, the romance could have been developed a bit more. The evil stepmother is the only character that is completely and flatly evil. She has the ability to charm other people, especially adults, into not seeing her horrible side, which definitely reminded me of some real people I know. I loved to hate her and the depths of her evilness surprised me. The fairy godmother Auntie is my favorite of the minor characters. She's a weird mix of a typical fairy godmother and the witch from Hansel and Gretel.

I didn't enjoy Wayfarer as much as I did Nameless, but it has the same magical world, darkly humorous writing, and realistic language. Some may be offended or condemn the language as too adult, but it's the reality of how people speak. It was nice to see a YA not censoring itself for its audience for once. My main problems were with Ellen's refusal to see sense for much of the book and the slow pace at times. I still liked the book and devoured it within a day. I can't wait to read the next book, Kin.

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## Darkphoenix says

3.5 stars

Wayfarer is the second book in this series of fairy tale adaptations and while I did not like it quite as much as the first one, it was still entertaining and an interesting take on a fairy tale we are so familiar with.

Wayfarer is about Ellen Sinder. The first book gave very obvious hints about Ellen's stepmother (Laurisse) and the way she was treating Ellen at home. Laurisse was the quintessential evil stepmother, she did everything from beating Ellen for things that were by no means her fault, to making her do house-work. Initially, Ellen had moments of respite when her father was around but after his death, the evil stepmother had free reign to do as she pleased. She makes Ellen charm shoes and overworks her to the point of exhaustion. There is also an addition to this family of two, Rita, a relative of Laurisse who suddenly comes to live with them. At first Ellen thinks that she and the new girl might be allies but that doesn't quite work out. Another new character is Avery Fletcher and he seems very interested in Ellen. Meanwhile, she is falling apart from the pressure to survive at home and also protect her friends from the evil stepmother.

Like the first book, this one too is very heavy where descriptions are concerned. This time we also learn more about charming which was nice. Wayfarer is a long book and it is also slow. It takes its own sweet time to get moving, but it keeps a consistent pace. This could get frustrating at times and the long descriptions got annoying. If you're looking for a quick fix, this is not for you. It took serious patience and perseverance for me finish it and I bothered only because I had enjoyed the first one quite a bit. And all said and done, the end was satisfying. Also St. Crow has some interesting takes on both the fairy tale and some of its characters. For instance, the fairy Godmother of the original is replaced by Auntie and I liked what she had done with the character. It fit the overall atmosphere of the book. A traditional fairy Godmother would have been woefully out-of-place.

As far as characters go, I was way more fond of Cami than I was of Ellen. Not that there's anything wrong with her, Cami was just more firm and stronger. It was commendable that despite everything Ellen was going through at home, she still managed to do well at school and kept up appearances that everything was fine, even if was plain to see that they most certainly weren't. I just did not get why she didn't just talk to Cami and Ruby (or even Avery). I get that she thought she was protecting them but in the process only ended up hurting them and isolating herself even more. She doubted herself so much, it was a wonder she was even functioning. There were also times when Ellen's intuition was screaming at her, telling her something was wrong and she chose to ignore that which often landed her in deeper trouble. It was a little odd that despite the fact that Ellen was almost always covered in bruises and scabs, the adults just did not see the signs (or chose not to) Keeping that in mind, it does make sense why Ellen would want to keep it bottled up. Not daring to tell anyone in the off chance that they don't believe her and she's sent back to live with the step, which would have been much much worse.

As far as despicable evil stepmothers go, Laurisse is close to the top. She was really horrible and downright revolting. In the end, I am not really surprised with what happened to her and serves her right for what she did. It makes me wonder how Ellen's father could have married her? Did he not see that there was something seriously wrong with her?

I was glad to see Cami and Ruby again. Cami's quiet, calming presence mixed with Ruby's vibrant energy and wildness. They were good friends to Ellen, they stuck by her even when she lashed out at them.

Avery was probable one of the sweetest guys I've read in YA. He was sweet and seemed to genuinely like Ellen. He was so nice it made me suspicious. I thought maybe he has an agenda as well. But no, he was just a really nice guy. Ellen wasn't very nice to him and he still stuck by her and offered to help her out. Honestly, if he were any nicer, he'd be walking around with a permanent halo around his head.

Wayfarer was a somewhat trying and taxing read but one that I did ultimately enjoy. It was long winded and long in general but if you're willing to give it time, you will not be disappointed. For now, I want to know when we're going to get Ruby's book. She is my favourite character so far and while it is obvious that she is Red Riding Hood, I am curious to see how St. Crow plays with that story. I just hope that Ruby's character doesn't change, I love her devil-may-care attitude and the fact that she remains unfazed by pretty much everything.

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### **Ratnika says**

What problem do all the MCs in this series have with getting a little help?! It's the same as Nameless all over again. Ellie, just like Cami, is in shit way over her head and she absolutely refuses to let anyone help. It's obvious how the others, Cami, Ruby and Avery, care for her very much and want to help but all Ellie does is feel sorry for herself and complain about how she has no one. I went along with all the pointless whining in the first book because it was okay from Cami's POV but it makes no sense from Ellie's. She came across as smart, sensible and so strong in the first book while in this one, her character just deteriorated. She is basically the girl who needs to be rescued from all the unnecessary trouble she is falling into. So, it got *really* annoying *really* fast.

Other aspects of the story were pretty much similar to the first. I loved Avery's character. Overall, it does seem that this series focuses on great guys acting like a hero all the time, some good friends and a pretty whiny MC who falls into truck loads of trouble and needs to be rescued. If only the characters were as good as the world building in these stories (sigh!)....

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### **SBC says**

I was disappointed. This story had so much potential but the writing style made what was developing nearly incomprehensible. I really tried to hang in there to understand what was going on.

The setting had the potential to be fascinating. A parallel universe in which our history diverged at a certain point when faery creatures came to earth. There are fae and witches, monsters and magic, Magdala nuns (whose outfits leave nothing to the imagination) and Mithros nuns who run high schools. There is an array of fairy tale heroines and heroes - Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood, and this book's focus, Cinderella.

The problem with the book was that the wonderfully strange setting is hard to understand and the author doesn't help us with that at all. Maybe there were more explanations in book 1 in the series, Snow White's story (which I haven't read)? Additionally, the plot moves in mysterious ways, peculiar things develop and happen and we have to guess what it all means.

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### Abbie says

I must say that this wasn't as good as the previous book but it was still dark and humorous enough to keep me entertained.

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### Arianna says

This series is so haunting. The original darkness of fairy tales is brought back in these stories. Lili St. Crow tells about a world

like ours and yet not, and in such a way that a reader can accept the unexplained and still be reeled into the story itself. Highly recommended for older, mature readers - this is not a light read.

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### Jilly says

What happened?

<http://i203.photobucket.com/albums/aa...>

The same cool world as Nameless, the same artistic writing style, but the main character was a nightmare! I have to like the main character at least a bit, or understand them in some way, to be able to immerse myself in a story. Ellie didn't make any sense at all. She had a huge support system of people who had power and the ability to help her, and yet she continually lashed out at them and wouldn't accept the help they offered. I get that battered women lie for their partners, but this is a teenage girl who had only recently started being abused by a step-parent. I can't see a teen covering for a step-parent like that. Also, the relationship between her and Avery felt so unreal. Why in the world would this guy pursue her so strongly? There is nothing to back this relationship up at all. She treats him like dirt and he loves her? Why? It makes no sense. None of it made sense.

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### Amy says

**1.5 stars**...because this book wasn't absolutely despicable, just absolutely *meh*

I loved the possibility hidden within Nameless. The strange world, unique creatures, and varied characters...it could have been so much. But it wasn't. I was so convinced the story could be better that I decided to read *Wayfarer*, even though the synopsis didn't strike me as that amazing. Cause really, another Cinderella re-telling? Just what the world needs.

Or not.

This book was utterly confusing. I found it much more difficult to pierce the confusing rounds of characters and plot elements and to discover that elusive what-might-be that drew me into the first story. I'm still not clear what it means to Twist (outside of a deformity of sorts?), how that differs from a Jack, and where minotaurs fit into all this. There seem to be different power groups (charmners, The Family, whatever it is Ruby belongs to) but these never get fully fleshed out. Still, I suppose this second book does a better job than

the first in introducing them. There was just so many unexplained factors. I wanted to like it all...but I couldn't understand it. Also, what was up with the pseudo-Catholicism? Does this author need to work through something in her boarding school past?

Ellie was a constant blur of shifting, bitter emotions. It drove me crazy. She is constantly pissed at everyone and the frequent use of language grated on my nerves. I found it hard to like or sympathize with her character. (view spoiler) She had good friends. It made no sense for her to constantly consider herself a third wheel...especially when we got that particular fear/pity party from Cami in the last book.

Her relationship with Avery was okay. I liked that it wasn't insta-love. In fact, there romance was pretty decent. Avery is your average, dorky teenage guy. There is just a problem...he isn't Nico. *Nico* basically made the last book worth it, and I'm not usually one of those girls who goes for a bad boy. But in *Wayfarer*, there is no Avery POV to give explanation. He is wholesome and dorky and...nice. While that certainly added to the story, it lacked spark.

Speaking of Nico...where was he? Oh, I know this was Ellie and not Cami's story, but I sure would have loved a little more of Nico/Cami.

The story had a good twist at the end (view spoiler) and I liked all the adults who finally stepped forward. The action scenes were confusing and largely hard to follow.

In summary...disappointing. The story wasn't bad but it lacked spark. Meh.

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