



The Far Haven Treasury: A Windflower Saga Collection

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The Far Haven Treasury introduces an imaginative fantasy world with historical parallels to our own, through which topics of love and justice are explored.

Aleksandra Layland's *The Far Haven Treasury* is an engaging and thoughtful collection that returns to a fantasy world of romance, intrigue, and history. Set in a medieval world on the cusp of industrial revolution, these stories follow the lives of individuals from mystical lands as they intersect, shaping not only each other but their nations.

The collection's main entry, *A Quest for Certitude, A Fight for Justice*, is the third part of the Windflower Saga trilogy and continues to chronicle the lands and people of Aspatria and Kimbria. Also included in the collection are *Albina, Courage of Ansgar*, and "Kimbria Ke'liani," novellas that further flesh out and explore Layland's fantasy world.

The lands are on the verge of a drastic societal shift that threatens to undo the fragile balance between the two nations. Stories follow a myriad of characters as they meet, fall in love, and impact each other's lives against this backdrop.

Themes of love, duty, and possession are brought up, and plots seek to resolve racial and class tensions brought on by technological advancement. The collection's novellas dig into series lore, exploring familiar characters and new discoveries.

A book for younger readers, *Far Haven* is developed as a fantasy world interwoven with real-world issues. *A Quest for Certitude* addresses topics including human trafficking from the introduction, and tackles slavery in an introductory but nonpatronizing way. The three novellas more or less deal with the same issues but focus more on characters and plot.

Characters are varied and range from princesses to stable boys. Several characters' plotlines intersect, providing a coherent network. Many characters follow similar arcs in development, usually when it comes to romance. And aside from the slavers, most characters have similar ideals and beliefs, which helps to support the overall message of tolerance and positivity.

The inversion of real-world history serve to provide a greater perspective on issues such as slavery, with stories targeting slavery's roots and the problem of othering people who are different. The darker-skinned and more colonial Aspatrians enslave the lighter-skinned and more agrarian Kimbrii. This dynamic is also tied into a fanciful romance between members of the two communities that helps ground the story.

Layland's writing style is descriptive and detailed. Locations are well established, and the history is amply fleshed out. Dialogue is a little stiff, but characters engage with each other well. Syntax is approachable but not simplistic, and helps stories to remain engaging even as they entertain and educate.

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CJ TRIPLETT (July 17, 2017)

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