



# Waer

*Meg Caddy*

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## Waer Meg Caddy

*As night fell, something stirred the darkness. Birds shrieked, rising into the air as the peace cracked and fell apart. Flashes of crimson uniform cut the smothering black of the woods. The smell of smoke lifted through the boughs and choked the leaves. A drum beat out a steady pulse as soldiers tore over the dead leaf matter, hacking their way through the web of forest.*

*The prisoner ran.*

When Lowell Sencha finds the strange girl lying as if dead on the riverbank, he is startled to find that she is like them: waer. Human, but able to assume the form of a wolf. The Sencha family's small community has kept itself sequestered and unnoticed, free from persecution. The arrival of a fellow traveller, and a hunted one at that, threatens their very survival.

Sure enough, the soldiers of the blood-purist Daeman Leldh soon descend on the village searching for her, burning and slaughtering. Lowell and the mysterious stranger are among the few to escape. And now they must find their way to the city of Luthan where, she says, they will find people to help them bring down Daeman Leldh.

If she can persuade them not to kill her.

## Waer Details

Date : Published March 1st 2016 by Text Publishing

ISBN : 9781922182210

Author : Meg Caddy

Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Shapeshifters, Werewolves

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# From Reader Review Waer for online ebook

## K. says

Trigger warnings: death of family members, torture, war, violence, seriously just SO MUCH TORTURE.

I read this because it's short listed for the CBCA Book of the Year for Older Readers this year.  
And...honestly? I'm not sure why.

I've read a lot of great Australian young adult literature from the past year. And this pales in comparison.  
Let's bullet point some shit.

- The worldbuilding is...dribbled out. As a result, I never felt like I had a full understanding of the world or how it worked.
- I thought the big plot twist with Lycaea was predictable af.
- The romance was instalove central.
- The pacing felt really off.
- Like, it started solidly, and then the middle dragged on forever and ever. And then the ending was kind of abrupt?
- It was hella violent. Like, suuuuuuuuper violent.
- The world is very Welsh, and that reminded me of Meryll of the Stones and then I was sad that I wasn't rereading Meryll of the Stones rather than reading this.

Sooooo. Yeah. I quite liked the writing. But this story just straight up wasn't for me.

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## Clare Snow says

How did it take me a year to find this book!?! Meg Caddy is phenomenal. A well deserved contender on the shortlist for the CBCA Book of The Year for Older Readers.

*Waer* seems to be a stand alone, but I want more of Welsh inspired werewolves fighting bigotry, internal demons and evil overlords. If I can't have dogs, give me wolves any day.

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## Bec says

This review first appeared on Readers in Wonderland

## INITIAL REACTION

### 5 THINGS ABOUT WAER

*Fantastic debut!*

There is a fear when you start a debut novel that the writing will be subpar or struggle to pull off the premise of the novel due to inexperience. WAER did not have this problem. At all. Every element of the story was

constructed well and it reads like some of my fantasy series I've been following for years. Nothing confused me and I was more than happy to sit there and enjoy the ride. It even managed to shock me a few times (which twists I really should have seen coming but didn't because I was too busy enjoying it). I don't think I can find one element to criticise!

### *Fascinating characters*

Oh my god the characters! I loved every single one of them so much, and I loved them a lot very quickly. The reasons I loved them were the same as usual: they're strong, determined, and grow so much over the course of the novel. Each character have their own struggles and drives and are incredibly unique, even the side characters. My favourite is Lycaea, which should be no surprise. She's angry, and troubled, and strong, and determined. The other main character, Lowell, was precious. Everyone needs to be more like Lowell, so kind and compassionate.

### *Dual Narration*

WAER is narrated in alternating first person POVs from Lowell and Lycaea, with the occasional third person part from someone called Kaebha. The voices of both characters were easy to read and what surprised me was that, despite the character names at the top of the chapter, it was so easy to tell the two apart. As soon as I switched to Lycaea's first part she developed a different voice in my head. Her voice was so distinct to Lowell's. I enjoyed them both immensely.

### *I put off study to finish it*

This book does not let you go once you start. I was enjoying it from the very beginning and with that fast pace I never wanted to put it down. Every reading opportunity to read was snagged so I could progress through this story and see more of the characters (this almost led to me leaving this book in a lecture theatre. The horror!) When I got to the last 100 pages when the action started I couldn't help but abandon study just to get to the end.

### *It's a standalone*

Yes, it's the rare fantasy standalone! And one that wraps up brilliantly in only 300 pages. Who even knew that was something that could be achieved? Every question is answered and you're not left hanging. The story is very self contained and delivers exactly the right amount of information you need to understand the world and character pasts, not too much or too little. It's perfectly balanced and very well constructed.

### **In Summary**

WAER is the first story I've read featuring werewolves in a long time and I loved it. Incredibly addictive and fast paced with some amazing characters. If Meg Caddy's future books are as good as this debut I may have to add a new favourite author to the list!

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### **Jas Sahade says**

I dropped it because I found that the plot wasn't moving very fast. I may come back to it in the future but for now I'm going to leave it.

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## Summer Matthias Herondale says

This review is spoiler free!

Listen up, guys. You have to read this! This is Meg's first book and it is amazing! The world building is rich and imaginative I could see the lush forests and hills of the Valley so clearly in my minds eye. The writing pace is strong, intriguing but not overwhelming, whilst also contributing to both character and plot development. It flows smoothly throughout, without rushing or dragging.

The characters are real, loveable and brilliant. Lycaea is a strong, quick witted heroine but she isn't a cardboard cut out of a strong woman. She struggles against her past and the events that have turned her life upside down from when she was young. We also see her evolve so much throughout this novel, and I loved where she ended up in the epilogue.

Lowell! This young waer has a firm place in my list of my favourite fictional characters(as does Lycaea!) . He's so innocent, and yet wise. He goes through so much in quite a short time throughout this novel. His relationship with his family made my heart melt. Speaking of relationships, I loved the dynamic between Lowell and Lycaea. Unlike some other YA dynamics, it's real and full of heart. No meeting each other and ten pages later being all over each other or being weirdly obsessed with the other! It's very nice to see a relationship that is given realistic time to grow and evolve as both Lowell and Lycaea do themselves.

Writing in this genre, you want to be able to draw and keep readers attention by standing out. Meg Caddy does this brilliantly! As you can guess, the waer are werewolves. However they stand out from the pack with how they can soul bond with each other and how their Shifting sends out a pulse of air. I also liked how they differentiated by having no connection to the moon or lunar cycles, and the portrayal of how the wolves spoke to one another once they had shifted is the most realistic I've seen in any YA novel, based on what I know about wolves(They're my favourite animal!).

The lore, with the three Watchers: the Healer, the Assassin and the Dealer was unique, intriguing and well fleshed out. In addition, the way that they were woven into the story throughout was genius and I loved it.

Finally, the main antagonist! Daeman Leldh is one crazy psycho! He actually reminds me of the Mortal Instruments Valentine with his obsession with blood purity. Definitely not the sort of guy you want to meet in a dark alley, or anywhere else for that matter! I'll say no more for the sake of spoilers, but you can be assured that his threat is present throughout the whole novel and he doesn't disappoint!

Also that cover! Beautiful and eye catching! My only negative of it is that my ongoing novel in progress can't have it now xD

Finally, I would like to give praise to Meg Caddy. Debut novels are hard work, and some others I've read are quite hit and miss. However yours is amazing, action packed, heartfelt and wonderful. There is no doubt that I will read this many many times in the future, and as someone who is writing in this field, this novel is an inspiration and an example of how to do things right! Everybody, werewolf fans or just fans of a great story, I implore you to read this! :)

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## Kristin says

Ok. I really wanted to like this book. We get a full story, intriguing characters, and a good wrap-up ending...except for one character, and unfortunately I just can't let it go. Meg Caddy spends two or three glorious sentences introducing us earlier on in the book to this shark (Cornelius) and...that's it. She drops it. There's no backstory, no flashback or dialogue about the life of this incredible, engaging creature that is Cornelius the Shark, and there's no conclusion. He's there, and then he's gone. She spends so much time wrapping us up in the grip of this character and then there's no catharsis, no way to expel our emotions on or about this superb fish. A majestic king in his ocean realm, torn out of place and ripped apart to become food for the death-breathing ground-swimmers. I desperately wanted to like this book, but she missed the ball with Cornelius.

Also, toast. Not nearly enough toast.

(I'm so glad I'm halfway around the world right now.)

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## Christaaay - Christy Luis Reviews says

*I forced myself to accept his help. I needed to regain my strength. I had not escaped Caerwyn to just like down and die."*

**About :** Young waer Lowell Sencha and his family live in the sheltered, idyllic Gwyndhan Valley, where they can shift into and out of their wolf forms without fear of persecution from the prejudiced blood-purists residing in other parts of Oster.

But when a wounded female waer named Lycaea washes up on the shores of the valley river, everything changes. Lowell helps the renowned healer Moth Derry care for Lycaea until, suddenly, a powerful blood purist attacks the valley in a frenzied hunt for the waer girl. The two women convince Lowell to travel to Lycaea's home-city of Luthan to gather allies against the blood purists. *Debut standalone YA Fantasy by Australian author Meg Caddy, a personal mentee of Juliet Marillier. Published March 1st 2016 by Text Australia and available in the US on Book Depository. Shortlisted for the Text Prize.*

**Thoughts :** **In the tradition of Juliet Marillier, Caddy brings a legend to life and surrounds it with a lush world of tradition, travel and diverse cultures.** Readers journey with the characters through the lands of Oster, discovering mythology, new terrain and the ins and outs of shape-shifting.

*"There are waer in the southern desert, near where Dodge Derry comes from. But they are...different from us."*

*'How?'*

*'Much bigger, and more savage. They do not cook their kills, they take meat raw. And some other are not...born waer.'*

I wish I could quote half the book to you, just to prove how wonderful the travel-writing is; but rest assured, I got lost in this world and you will, too, if you read *Waer*. One of my favorite things about the worldbuilding is how tenderly Caddy builds Lowell's shape-change religion (and, later, challenges it and everything it means to Lowell).

*“I burned a sprig of rosemary in the candle, and let the ashes fall into the water in homage to Freybug, born from a rosemary bush. Finally, I blew out the candle, sipped from the bowl and trickled some of the water over the stranger’s brow. It was a bitter brew, but all elements of life joined in the water. Drinking it was a giving of thanks.”*

And the characters! If Tamora Pierce wrote in first person, she might write characters like these. Lycaea is a prickly new shape-changer. She has a complicated relationship with her Waer form, but luckily for her, Lowell, a believably perceptive and wholesome country boy, understands this.

*“It was clear to me from the beginning that she had her own distaste for our people, complicated by the fact she was one of us.”*

Caddy develops the characters well enough that they have **actual fights about things that matter**. I wish I could quote one for you, but as with the travel scenes, it’s probably better if you experience them in the context of the story.

As for the plot, the twists didn’t surprise me, but Caddy still uses the main one effectively as a psychological expression of Lycaea’s internal struggles. And although one character is clearly a convenient plot device, **the writing, characters and worldbuilding far outweigh any problems with the fast-paced and straight-forward plot, especially for such a young author with her debut.**

I just had such an emotional, immersive experience with this book, I can’t seem to care about anything else!

**Overall** : What a fabulous surprise! **This is exactly what I want, when I pick up a YA Fantasy.** It’s so nice when YA—which has so much potential for emotionally impactful coming-of-age fantasies—gets the details right. I love everything about this book. An ungrudging five stars for *Waer*!

**Recommended To** : Fans of Juliet Marillier, Tamora Pierce and Robin McKinley. **At the risk of sounding like the complete fangirl I am, I would say, were J. R. R. Tolkien writing in the modern YA field, he would write something like *Waer*.** I can’t wait for my birthday, so I can buy this for my personal library. And when it becomes available on Amazon, I’ll be getting it for the teen section at my work! **I can’t wait** for Meg Caddy to publish something else!! Hurryhurryhurry....

*Thank you so much to Meg Caddy, Text Publishing and Netgalley for my e-galley of *Waer*.*

**If you liked this review, you can read more of my speculative fiction reviews on my blog**

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## **Tilly Booth says**

My copy of *Waer* is sadly covered in dirt, creases and smudges and although that disheartens me it also shows my love for this book because I couldn’t put it down! Even when I had a moment to spare at work I would be diving back into this book and into the world of Oster.

Meg Caddy is amazing. I officially place her on my fantasy throne alongside Sarah J Maas, Leigh Bardugo and Marie Rutkoski. The way that she writes is phenomenal. It opens up your mind. She describes and creates a world with flaws, beauty and best of all you can see exactly what it’s like. You can feel the grass from the Gwydhan Valley beneath your feet or the smells that’s linked to some of the greatest characters.

There are twists and turns that I didn't expect and from the beginning of this wonderful book, I knew that it would break my heart. But in a good-my-poor-darling-characters-that-deserve-to-be-happy-and-safe-forever kind of way.

There were points in this book where I dropped the book to cover my shock and other times that I smothered myself with it when I was overcome with joy and happiness. Meg Caddy knows how to write a fantasy book that keeps you on the edge of your seat, turning pages and leaving you fully invested in the world, the characters and her as an author.

The book is basically perfection in my eyes besides two things. Firstly, the ending seemed a bit rushed to me but it brought the book to a nice ending and secondly, I wished that this book was bigger. I wanted to know more about the side characters, the world, the gods, the storytelling. I want to sit down on a log and listen to Dodge tell me all the tales and stories he's gathered throughout his life. I'm left wanting more which is a good thing...but also torturous. However I will deal with the pain of unknowing by holding this book close to my heart and dreaming about this book forever.

Waer by Meg Caddy is so far the best book I've read this year and it's going to be hard to beat it at the top of the list. I never wanted the book to end and I really hope that there's going to be more of this story in the future. Regardless, I look forward to reading more from Meg Caddy.

For all you fantasy lovers out there, pick up this book. And if you don't like fantasy...this is the perfect book to show you some of the greatness and wonders in the fantasy genre.

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## **Lost Girls says**

An amazing debut by a talented young author. When I first heard that Meg Caddy was mentored by the wonderfully talented, Juliet Marillier, I knew I had to give her book a try. I am so glad I did. She presents the werewolves in her world as gentle, peaceful creatures. I immediately fell in love with them. The world she created was beautifully done with many surprises and twists thrown in.

This book is a standalone and I am partly sad because I would love to journey back to Caddy's universe and revisit these characters. The story wraps up nicely and you are not left with any lingering questions. Things aren't wrapped up in a neat little pretty bow. This is a story of heartache and loss, battles won and lost, redemption, love and forgiveness.

The story is told in alternating POVs mostly through Lycaea and Lowell's perspectives. Lycaea is waer, but she was not born that way. She was turned against her will. I found her to be rough and tortured and not particularly likable at first. She has gone through many horrors and feels betrayed by those close to her. It wasn't long before I began to understand and care for her character. Lowell was born waer and he lives with his family in peace until he finds Lycaea washed up by the river. His character is kind and gentle and I absolutely adored him from the very beginning.

There was enough action and danger to keep me on the edge of my seat, especially toward the end. The romance was slow burning and did not take over the story. It was incredibly well done and I am very much looking forward to Caddy's next book.

*I received a copy of this book through netgalley in exchange for an honest review.*



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## Anna says

For me, this book was enjoyable but nothing special. The plot was good and the characters were interesting, but the writing style grated on my nerves a bit too much for me to really lose myself to the story.

Many of the sentences were truncated and when they weren't there was usually an 'and' with a comma before it that *really* did not need to be there.

I also counted at least 6 other spelling or grammar mistakes, including my favourite:

*I burned a sprig, cupped the ashes in my calms.*

(While we're on the topic of the above quote, ignore the actual spelling mistake and let me draw your attention to the sentence structure. Ohhhh how it irks me. So many sentences were like this and it made me mad. It would be so much better if it said:

*I burned a sprig, **cupping** the ashes in my palms.)*

Aside from the things which annoyed me, I would like to mention that there was a plot twist in the book which I really liked! It caught me by surprise (which I think is the sign of a plot twist done well) and I gasped aloud when reading it.

(view spoiler)

So overall, the book was pretty much okay. I didn't find it spectacular but I didn't think it was really bad either!

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## Kelly (Diva Booknerd) says

It's just a case of it's not you, it's me. I just can't seem to get into it sadly. Will give it another go, but putting this one aside for now.

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## YA Reads Book Reviews says

Originally posted on [www.yareads.com](http://www.yareads.com), reviewed by Nichole.

I love a good werewolf story, even though I haven't been able to read much of them lately. Waer was a wonderful way to bring myself back to the shape-shifter world. Author Meg Caddy has come into the bookish world on a high note and I can't wait to read more from her!

Waer definitely starts off with a bang! Lowell, a Waer (waerwolf/werewolf), and his little brother Kemp are enjoying a day of hunting on their land. What starts as a seemingly normal day takes a turn for the strange as the boys find a washed up Waer, severely injured and disoriented-who can only seem to say one thing Kee va. I was instantly drawn into the story and it couldn't wait to see where the mystery lead-and I certainly wasn't disappointed!

Lowell and Lycaea (our injured Waer) are the main characters of Waer. Whilst I absolutely loved reading from Lowell's POV I found it rather difficult to like Lycaea. Did I feel bad for what she had gone through? Absolutely, but I just wasn't a fan of her for the most part. At certain times I would have that moment of connection where I would actually like Lycaea, but it was fleeting. However, this did not take away from the over enjoyment of the novel.

Lowell, on the other hand, I adored. He was just a genuinely sweet guy. Lowell has had his world thrown upside down with the arrival of Lycaea, and combined with a certain tragedy (which shall not be spoiled) I was pleasantly surprised that we got to see his emotions play out but also got to note how he held it together to help everyone else and himself.

I liked how the romance in Waer wasn't the main focus. Yes it was definitely in there, and I did enjoy the heartfelt scenes, however it wasn't the overall theme of the novel. There were other obviously pressing matters at hand which were talked about and acted upon without constant romance scenes.

The one thing that made me love Waer was the plot. I was just so interested and invested in what was going on! I had no parts that lagged for me and I didn't want the novel to end at all! My only tiny problem with the end is that it seemed a tad rushed.

Overall, Waer by author Meg Caddy was a thoroughly enjoyable book and I most definitely am looking forward to read more from this author.

Thank you to Text Publishing for providing this review copy in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Kirsti says**

A kind of Lord-of-the-Rings-esq YA fantasy, which works as well as it sounds. Basically this book has giant battles, good vs evil, dark creatures, a kind of 'wizard' in the way of the Watchers, as well as what I imagine would be a huge backstory in the author's head. Certainly this only felt like a small snippet of what this world might have to offer.

I really did like this one, although if you know my reviews, then you know that three stars is actually rather low for me. I guess I had a few disappointments, and they eventually dragged the book down a little on the scale. I wanted the romance to be fresh, young love, but it kind of was over in a blink and (view spoiler) I'm not even going to hedge on this one; I hated Lycaea's name. I had to check the back of the book on the spelling, even though I just read it a hundred times. In my head, it read as 'Lick-ay-ee-ah' and I kept shortening it to Lick. Calling the main character Lick when she's a wolf just seemed wrong haha :/

BUT for all it was only three stars, I would read this author again. She has a dramatic high fantasy vibe going with her writing that I enjoyed. There were other characters that might need a story or two. Plus well, if any other book by her has a cover that's half as pretty I'll be sucked in again. Whoops! (<----this person judges covers. Me. I judge covers!)

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### **Rachel says**

MY EMOOOOOTIONS

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**Anni (Tea in the Treetops) says**

A quick YA fantasy with waerwolves. Interesting world and subtle magic. Full review very soon!

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