



Journeys to the Heartland

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*An age of heroes is dawning...*The time has come for the wolves of Europe to take back their ancient Heartland. For centuries it has been corrupted and poisoned by the Mennen and by the evil Magyar wolf-pack. Only by reclaiming it can the true gods be reborn and the natural order restored.

All over Europe, wolves are beginning the quest in answer to a mystical summons. Together they become the Wolves of Time. Together they will herald a new age...

Journeys to the Heartland Details

Date : Published 1996 by HarperCollins Publishers Ltd (first published November 1st 1995)

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Author : William Horwood

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From Reader Review Journeys to the Heartland for online ebook

Annika Howells says

I adored this book when I was a kid. I even recreated the landscape map in my school playground and started my own wolf pack.

Steff Wallner says

Absolut genial geschrieben; eins der BESTEN Bücher

Becki says

This in a nutshell is a Lupine Epic.

If you come to this book expecting a short, fast plot and shallow writing you may as well back away from the pretty booksies now.

Journeys to the Heartland is something I wish more animal Point Of View novels were! It's an adult epic following the magic of wolves drawn together for a higher cause, the world building and characterization is truly masterful.

This book deserves a lot more recognition than it gets, 5 stars.

Kelly says

I SO BADLY wanted to like this book. In my quest to read all animal-point-of-view adult fiction, I'd been eyeing this one since I was fourteen. Finally I got a copy for a buck online, and the whole time I thought "people call my writing long-winded and unreadable, and yet this made it to the shelves." I hate to be so vitriolic about an animal fiction writer, but I only made it through because of my childhood resolve. In the author's defense, he set up a great premise (gods being banished to 100 years of mortality and now on the cusp of reckoning). But then it went nowhere.

caroline Hutchins says

Great read, it was very difficult to put it down once I started reading it

J.T. says

I *did* want to like this book, but I just could not get over the prose style and the book's execution.

Journeys to the Heartland begins with an interesting concept, with the wolf gods being banished to 100 years of mortality, but it is watered down with halfhearted characterization and a dull atmosphere. The journey itself is repetitive and forgettable. I don't quite understand why Horwood decided to add the parts of the book about the good human and the Huntermann - they seem to be unnecessary components shoved into the plot. I also felt that in the 610 pages of the Mass Market Paperback, the story went almost nowhere.

But I do have to give the author praise for something: although none of the characters are truly fleshed out, the author actually put forth some effort to make sure his characters acted like wolves, not humans in fur coats. Aside from those vaguely human names, and the "Fuhrer" title of the Magyar pack, their behavior/culture/interactions didn't seem too un-wolflike.

Fiona says

Journeys from the Heartlands is an anthropomorphic novel about the wolves of Europe who are fighting and struggling for survival against human violence and oppression. Horwood writes with a bloody realism, trying to be as realistic to wolf society as is possible in such a book, without turning them into wolf-shaped humans. Wolves follow their beliefs in ancient wolflore – the stories of Wulf and Wulfin who are their spiritual guides. *Journeys to the Heartland* is the first book that follows a number of wolves who are journeying to the Heartlands, to form a pack and take back the Heartlands from another fearsome pack, the Magyars.

Horwood set out to write a trilogy but due to problems after publication in relation to one of the main distributors, this did not happen and he only published one more, resulting in the author having to combine the storyline of the third into the second book. This might explain why the one and only time I saw this book was at the time I bought it – since then I have never seen it or the sequel anywhere.

This book has been very contrary for me. Did I like it? Did I enjoy it? Did I not like it? My answer to these questions is yes, yes and yes. I liked it, I enjoyed it and I didn't like it. I am interested in reading the second book, but at the same time I feel no desire to actually read it – merely find out what happens to these characters I came to know and care about.

His strengths lie within the writing and characterisations. The wolves felt realistic but at the same time they became people that I wanted to succeed and I felt close enough to relate to them. Horwood is a good writer in that he manages to take you deep within this natural world and make you understand and become a part of it. The plot itself I felt was interesting enough but it unfortunately lacked a lot of direction. This is where for me it becomes very contrary – it is well written enough to be enjoyable just for the sake of being in that 'world'. However the characters and writing together do not really make up for the want of a strongly defined plot.

Some parts of the book come from a human's perspective – a good human and a bad human. These parts felt a little disjointed and injected rather than developed. It is set during the second world war – a time of great upheaval, violence and death. Perhaps Horwood decided on this setting to represent the destructive forces of humans. However due to wolves not really understanding human warfare it is again, a very vague part of the book and feels an unnecessary component towards the plot. I understand this theme will become more apparent in the second book – one of the characters from the evil Magyar pack even known as the Fuhrer. The parallel though is weak – as is the idea of evil.

One of the themes of the book was the corruption of the world by humans, known as 'mennen' to the wolves. Most of the wolves in this book had been victim to human destruction or cruelty of some sort. The lead female of the Magyar pack was brought up and thus corrupted by humans. She became a particularly sick and twisted character to a very exaggerated degree.

I'm okay with sick and twisted – but only if I think there is a point to it and I didn't really think he put it across very well at all. If this evil wolf was meant to symbolise the corruption of humans upon the natural environment then Horwood failed in my eyes. There could have been a stronger, more meaningful message but instead Horwood tied it up with this caricature of evil that will continue onto the second book – another reason that puts me off wanting to continue reading this story.

It is a bit ironic that after ten years sitting around on my shelf, never being read and getting dusty – that in the end I did not enjoy it as much as I hoped. Dust Mites one, Fiona nil.

At least it is off my shelf and onto bookmooch, if anyone wants it that is.

Clodagh says

Continuing my obsession with all things wolvis. This is a fantasy type book that I picked up in the library in Callan. Some of what the author writes about wolves would follow on from the factual "Wolf Totem" for example that they are extremely clever, assimilate to their surroundings and the hierarchy of the pack. It's set in the present time and wolves are almost extinct, but something is guiding individual wolves from all over Europe to some sacred place, they don't know why, they just know they have to get to The Heartland. The book is a critique of human "civilisation" and our destruction of the planet. I found myself punching the air when Klimt savages a Mann (as the wolves call us). Yeah, you show that f*cking hunt scum. Written in very dramatic, emotional language.

Bryn Hammond says

I'm a Duncton junkie. This was awful.

Mazil says

Beautiful, though the narration is heavy-handed, as is the foreshadowing and “spiritual” style. I’d recommend reading Duncton Wood and sequels first. If you enjoy those, this is a worthy and wolfy successor.

Holly says

I must say, an absolutely riveting story. The lore is some of the more creative and fascinating that I have read. I was very impressed with the rich history and compelling characters. Each character felt unique and very fascinating, while in the beginning it may be hard to keep track of each character, and their journeys can be quite slow, but half way through the book it picks right up and is very difficult to put down. Now, when I mention that the story can be slow, I don't mean boring. William Horwood's writing is so absolutely breathtakingly beautiful that one must slow down and really savour the lush descriptions and immerse oneself in the settings. I would describe reading this novel as an experience, it really feels like you are a part of the wolves journey. This is not a fast read but is certainly a gem and definitely among the best wolf/animal fiction available.

Deborah Pickstone says

I was riveted by this book. BUT I only gave it 4 stars in the end for 3 reasons:

It was too obviously part of a series and couldn't properly stand alone.

The ending was contrived and corny - I could hear Jarvis Cocker singing 'Happy Ending'! Hahahaha!

Why, oh why did he have to use the terms 'Mennen' and 'Mann' as - apparently - Wolvish language for 'people'? It interrupted my reading and at a couple of points almost drove me to abandon the book, it was so intrusive! As the whole book took place in English, I find it hard to understand (or perhaps I do not WANT to understand) why WH placed such emphasis on the Teutonic - and why was such terminology ascribed to Wolvish as well as the human characters all having Teutonic/Germanic identifiers?

How can one be so enthralled and yet so aggravated by the same book? Tut!

annoyed and irritated of Port Albert

Geoff Battle says

William Horwood's work can be tough going at times, however his words bring a sadness and poignancy. The story follows a diverse set of wolves from across Europe, each grieving for loss of love, relations or times past. They hope to form a pack and regain lost territory: The Heartland. The story meanders somewhat, although pulls together at enough points throughout to ensure you keep reading. It feels at times padded, and if you can make it through those chapters, then you'll be content at a well wrapped up conclusion, and probably pick up the second book if you're out of first choice material.

Daniel says

This was, by far, one of the worst-- if not the worst, novel I have ever read. The premise is decent, but the characters are flat and imaginary. The description is laughable and the attempts at sly dialogue and humor come off dry and forgettable. This is a piece of work in all the negative ways possible.

Study this if you want to learn how NOT to write.

Utter trite trash.

Marc says

In the beginning, it was, in one word, boring. Once the wolves meet each other, the story starts going finally, but the word 'wolf' is overused when they address each other. And there are of course the (luckily, just a few) chapters where not the wolves but some Mann is central, and have, in my opinion, absolutely *nothing* to do with the rest of the story. Or at least they didn't add anything valuable.

There is also quite some violence, just a bit too much for my liking, but most importantly: at moments WAY too graphical and cruel.

Add to that the fact that no matter where in the book, I could have easily put it down and not ever reopen it. As the story progresses, you get a liking for some of the characters, but not enough to hold my interest, and too late in the story.

Overall, it just wasn't that great a story I hoped it would have been. Still, someday I might just read the second volume...
