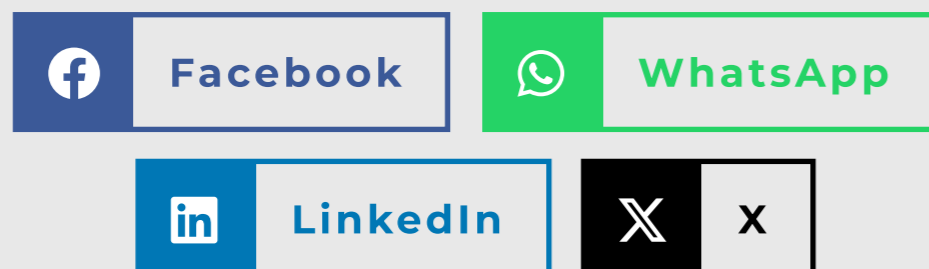


Tales Of Weirderland, By Kyle Steenblik—Book Review

By [Maria Ashford](#) [December 12, 2024](#)



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Book Review



“Tales of Weirderland” is a charming and thoughtfully put-together collection of six interconnected stories that follows the adventures of royal siblings Iris and Cael Wilding. While the first volume presents more traditional children’s fantasy quests, as the stories go on they approach deeper themes of identity and growing up without coming across as patronising. Fans of C.S. Lewis will find much to enjoy in this highly creative story anthology.

The first three tales establish the magical kingdom of Weirderland through classic quest yarns – the siblings rescue a flying horse, recover a magical ruby from merfolk, and help restore an important fairy fire. These stories showcase Steenblik’s talent for creating whimsical characters and imaginative scenarios while building a rich fantasy world filled with fairies, dragons and various magical items. The humor is gentle and character-driven, particularly through the entertaining dynamic between the practical Iris and the more impulsive Cael.

However, it’s in the second volume where the collection truly shines. “The Hopeless Quest” deals with grief and loss as the siblings try to help their dying grandfather. Rather than offering easy answers, the story thoughtfully explores how families cope with loss. “The Luck of the Eyelash” provides a lesson about consequences and making amends through Cael’s encounter with a mysterious mage. The final tale, “The Nameless Quest,” stands out as a sensitive exploration of gender identity as Iris discovers their true self as Harbard.

Steenblik handles these weightier themes with remarkable grace, never losing the series’ sense of wonder and warmth while tackling complex emotional territory. The stories will send a positive message to kids, emphasizing the importance of acceptance and understanding. The parents, King Joseph and Queen Elspeth, are particularly well-drawn as loving, eccentric figures who support their children unconditionally. The writing style is accessible but not simplistic, with enough sophistication to engage older readers while remaining designed for younger audiences. Steenblik excels at worldbuilding through small details and creates a diverse cast of memorable characters from talking dragons to bureaucratic bookkeepers.

While one could argue the tales occasionally rely on familiar fantasy tropes, particularly the early ones, they serve as a solid foundation for the more nuanced later stories. The collection’s greatest strength is how the stories grow in depth alongside their protagonists, becoming more complex and thoughtful while maintaining their sense of magic and possibility. This is certainly a book that will captivate many children at bedtime.

“Tales of Weirderland” is ultimately a celebration of family, self-discovery, and acceptance wrapped in an engaging fantasy package. It manages to be both entertaining and meaningful, offering valuable lessons about identity, loss, and growth while never forgetting to tell a good story. This collection would be particularly valuable for families looking to discuss complex themes with younger readers through an accessible and magical lens.