



# The Way Past Winter

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

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From the opening page of this ambitious novel it is clear that Kiran Hargrave is a born writer. Her prose is packed with energy and her imagination commands instant belief. Set in an indeterminate time in an unspecified part of the frozen North, her story describes how teenage Mila and her six-year old sister Pipa set out along with a young mage named Rune to rescue Oskar. He is her older brother, kidnapped by a fearsome bear in the shape of a pitiless man.

So far so captivating. But as their journey grows more dangerous, descriptions of atmosphere start giving way to an over-abundance of plot-driven explanation. One near disaster follows on another as Mila and her sister get colder, hungrier and increasingly desperate. Keeping the tension going during all this occasionally repetitive fare is quite a challenge, with the final over-delayed outcome not quite the climax it should be. But there are still many good moments along the way, with the author delving into folklore and myth to enrich her already glowing prose. Fans of Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman could well enjoy this story. Others might wish that so talented an author had taken on less familiar territory where wolves and eagles continue to threaten and winter never lets up until the very end.

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