

Weariland

A Young Adult Novel

by Mary Shotwell



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About The Novel

Quick Pitch:

For fifteen-year-old Lason Davies, it all started with a text.

“HIDING PLACE.”

The last words of her murdered grandmother haunt Lason as she travels to England with her sheltering mother for the funeral. The crime is a sensation, but the clamoring reporters and news photographers aren't the only ones interested in their arrival.

As her mother's behavior borders on erratic (on a good day), Lason encounters a stranger from Weariland, a dreary world once known as Wonderland. He petitions Lason's help in finding a secret family heirloom, a key to saving his land—and to Lason's past. Lason is swept in an adventure through Weariland's unpredictable realm, encountering colorful, fantastical characters and discovering her family's elusive history. But if she isn't careful, she may never return...

Description:

For fifteen-year-old Lason Davies, it all started with a text.

“HIDING PLACE.”

Lason is haunted by the last words of her murdered relative as she and her mother fly to England for the funeral. The crime is a sensation, but the clamoring reporters and news photographers aren't the only ones interested in their arrival.

As Lason copes with the family loss, she encounters a mysterious stranger. He hails from Weariland, a dreary world once known as Wonderland. Lason wants to confide in her mother, whose long-repressed family demons have resurfaced, along with her erratic behavior. Convinced she'll find answers about her grandmother's death, Lason takes the leap to help the stranger, leaving her world behind.

Lason's mother wakes to find her biggest fear realized—Lason is missing. When the murder investigation turns up traces of unknown black goo and pictures of a giant creature, she believes in her gut something out of the ordinary truly is happening. And it's not the first time a loved one has disappeared.

As her mother confronts the past she so desperately tried to forget, Lason must navigate through an unpredictable realm, encountering colorful, fantastical characters and discovering her family's elusive history. Ultimately, she must rely on her courage to brave it alone when her guide is captured, along with her only chance to ever getting home.

About Mary Shotwell



SHORT BIO:

Mary grew up in northeast Ohio, so it was only natural for her to pursue a degree in marine biology. After studying dolphin behavior and estimating great white shark populations,

she earned her Ph.D. in Biostatistics in Charleston, South Carolina. It was there, during the arduous dissertation process, where she had the idea to write a book.

With Alice and the crazy characters from Wonderland staring her down from her bedroom poster, Mary envisioned what that fantasy realm would look like in current day. Creative writing served as a natural escape from technical writing, wedding planning, pregnancy, and job hunting.

Mary is excited to debut *Weariland* (Merge Publishing, 2016), a novel introducing Lason Davies, a teenager who learns about her family's past in a world once called Wonderland. She currently resides in Tennessee with her husband and three children.

LONG BIO:

As an avid reader, Mary always fantasized about writing a book. Throughout her childhood in northeast Ohio she wrote poems and short stories as a hobby, but ignored the calling of writing to pursue a career in science. She studied dolphin behavior in North Carolina and estimated great white shark populations while living in Cape Town, South Africa. She earned her Ph.D. in Biostatistics in Charleston, South Carolina, winning several regional and national outstanding student paper and presentation awards. It was during the arduous, laborious, grueling, “she-didn’t-know-she-could-learn-to-dislike-science-so-much” dissertation process when she had the idea to write a book. And the calling could not be suppressed.

With Alice and the crazy characters from Wonderland staring her down from her bedroom poster, Mary envisioned what that fantasy realm would look like in current day. She worked on the story to escape from technical writing, wedding planning, pregnancy, house hunting, and job searching. She hoped to have a book in the end for her teenage nieces to enjoy. With their enthusiasm, and support of friends and family, Mary was encouraged to publish the book for a wider audience to enjoy.

Mary is excited to debut *Weariland* (Merge Publishing, 2016), a Young Adult novel introducing Lason Davies, a teenager who learns about her family's past in a world once called Wonderland. She currently resides in Tennessee with her husband, three children, and perpetual desire to write.

F.A.Q.

Why did you write the story and what inspired you?

I was working on my doctoral dissertation, which can drive a person crazy. I had a poster on my wall of an artist's rendering of Alice and the characters in Wonderland that I purchased in my college years. I was a fan of Gregory Maguire and wondered if he would ever do a book focusing on Alice. As much as I was a fan of Mr. Maguire's work, his stories were literary and satirical, and I envisioned the book I wanted written to be more relaxed and fun. Then it hit me. "Why not me? Why don't I write it?" The seed was planted, and there was no way to hinder its development.

What is the genre of your story?

Weariland is a Young Adult book meshing light fantasy with adventure. Some would say it's a fairytale retelling, as those have taken off recently. I don't see it so much a retelling as it is a continuation in present day, decades after the original Alice's Adventures in Wonderland took place.

Describe Your Main Character

Lason Davies is a fifteen-year-old girl who has had to be self-sufficient for a good portion of her life. However, her controlling mother never lets her far out of her sight, and we meet Lason right when this issue comes to a head.

Who Should Read Your Novel?

Anyone that likes a fast pace, adventurous read and enjoys elements of fantasy should read this book. They do not have to be knowledgeable in or fans of Alice in Wonderland to be carried away in the fun. However, due to minor adult themes, I recommend parents use their discretion for those under 12.

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