



## Sojourn: The Wildlands

*B.D. Messick*

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In a dark future, follow seventeen year old Rayn Mirago as she leaves everything she knows behind, and embarks on a journey that will either prove her worth, or take her life.

Rayn Mirago's seventeenth birthday is tomorrow, but there will be no party, no gifts, and no celebration. Like every other child in this world where humanity is on the brink of extinction and resources are at a premium, she must make her Sojourn across the former United States to prove her worth. The human race has nearly been wiped due to overpopulation, global warming, and our own ignorance and conceit. The coastal cities of the U.S. have been reclaimed by the ocean and the Midwest is now a vast desert wasteland known as the Deadlands. The remaining fifty thousand or so survivors in the old United States now live in one of five walled cities, called Enclaves where they eek out a meager existence.

Rayn's Sojourn begins when she steps through the gates of the Vegas Enclave and into the vast wilderness between the old city and Deadlands, an area known as the Wildlands. She will face many struggles and dangers that will challenge her, make her doubt herself, and force her to realize that she is stronger than she ever imagined.

But first, she must overcome the burden of leaving her old life, everything and everyone she has ever known and loved behind.

## **Sojourn: The Wildlands Details**

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Author : B.D. Messick

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## From Reader Review Sojourn: The Wildlands for online ebook

### **Kimberly Arend says**

Awesome book!! The characters are endearing and the story is compelling.

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### **Larissa says**

#### 3.5 Stars

I was drawn to “Sojourn” because of its interesting post-apocalyptic premise and the survivalist aspect that reminded me of “The Hunger Games.” I really enjoyed the attention to detail this book put into the geography. In preparation for her sojourn, Rayn memorizes maps and follows old highway routes on her way to her final destination, so even though civilization as we know it has been wiped out, the characters’ location is always grounded in something familiar. The book also does a great job describing what the landscape looks like and how it has been changed by disaster, so I could really picture the scenes I was reading.

While I thought Rayn’s romance with Luk was really sweet, some of their scenes felt redundant. What I mean by that is that even though the fact that they are shown telling each other that they love one another and cuddling with each other almost every day of the story is realistic, it didn’t really move the story forward. Their relationship is solid from pretty early on and they don’t fight a lot, so after that each scene where they talk about how much they love each other and how glad they are to be together was reiterating something that was already pretty clear and did not change the dynamic between the two of them.

One thing that I missed in this book was a big, final climax. Yes, it is part of a series so there is more to the story, but it felt to me like the story just stopped. The plot has a series of challenges that Rayn and Luk had to overcome, but the challenges at the end were no more drastic than earlier in the book. I felt that if I turned the page I would have more chapters to read, and it would have been nice to have a big, dramatic finish instead.

All things considered, Sojourn is an exciting, immersive novel that leaves many questions and possibilities open for subsequent books. I would definitely recommend this book to fans of Young Adult literature, especially those who enjoy dystopia/post-apocalyptic.

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### **Rachella Baker says**

I loved those book,I picked it up and read over half before I stopped.can you imagine kids now a days going through what those kids did when they turned 17.this book is awesome,you gotta read it,would make a great movie.I received this book through goodreads give a way program.thank you so much for giving me the chance to read.

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### **Sharon says**

Very well written. Engaging story, I just wish it had less liberal propaganda.

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### **Linda says**

I had never heard of this series until I met the author at a library talk. This is the first book in a dystopian series set in the future- a United States that has been destroyed by war, internal strife, carelessness, and global warming. Only a few cities still exist and they are called Enclaves. The population that still exists mostly lives in one of these cities. When a child reaches the age of 17 that child must leave the Enclave where he or she resides and travel to another one. This ensures that the Enclaves always has new blood.

I was blown away with the story. There is a lot of romance in the story. My only criticism is that if Rayn, the protagonist, is traveling to a new Enclave with her boyfriend, Luk, why do they need to go away at all? They are obviously going to be together and are from the same Enclave. Regardless, I can't wait to read the rest of the series. I couldn't put this one down!

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### **Sue Potter says**

'Sojourn - The Wildlands: A Rayn Mirago Novel' by B.D. Messick has got to be one of the best debut novels I have read in a very long time and an author I look forward to following book by book.

While I have read several apocalyptic style novels, this one has several twists that make it an original take on the kind of world we may well be headed toward ourselves.

The descriptions of the effects of the apocalypse on the United States are enough to get a good idea what has happened, but also leave out just enough detail to keep you reading. It leaves the frighteningly wide open as for how we, the victims, managed to destroy the planet.

Mr Messick has given some very creative names to the characters, which suggest that the earth and it's resources are not the only things to be pared down to a minimum.

With the Deadlands dividing the nation, and only 5 Enclaves remaining as a safehold for the survivors, the need to share the "genetic resources" of the strongest survivors has led to all seventeen year olds being forced to commit to a sojourn. A journey that the new schooling system has done it's best to prepare them for, and their parents sacrifice greatly for, to better the teens as they leave the only home they have ever known.

The first book, in what I hope will be far more than a trilogy, begin's with Rayn finishing her schooling, wondering about her friend Luk, and leaving her family as prepared for the sojourn as one can expect.

What follows her departure is a stark look into a world that is unforgiving at the same time as it is giving to those who use their wits and resources responsibly. (There is a huge lesson for readers in this.) We follow along as Rayn and a small cast of unexpected characters, make their way to a favored Enclave, so far away that the walk is daunting even to the reader.

There is only one element I would like to see added to this novel - a hand drawn map of the United States, with some detail where prudent and Rayn's route suggested in some mysterious way.

Mr Messick keep on writing! You have a gift for it!

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### **Lauren says**

All children must come of age eventually. Whether it is quietly without causing attention, or through a fantastical story of action and adventure, coming-of-age stories are enjoyed by readers of all ages and offer something everyone can relate to. This coming-of-age story is no exception.

Sojourn-The Wildlands is B.D. Messick's first science-fiction book for young adults. Set in the post-apocalyptic United States, the main character, Rayn Mirago, prepares for her seventeenth birthday, and her Sojourn. The United States now consists of just five cities, called Enclaves: Vegas, Spokane, Chicago, Atlanta, and Dallas. On every citizen's seventeenth birthday they must leave their city and journey to another one across what is left of America. The journey serves a dual purpose: first, it is dangerous and only the strongest survive and second, it allows "new blood" to enter the isolated enclaves.

Rayn has been taught for this her whole life by her father and the community school. She leaves all those she loves behind, including her best-friend and secret crush, Luk Teeral, in a heartbreakng goodbye, "A few moments later I turn one final time and look back at my parents framed in the small opening" and then begins her journey. She faces multiple, if not predictable, obstacles, not the least being alone for the first time and no longer protected by the enclave. The reader journeys along with Rayn through the wildlands of America on her way to her new destination, and life in Atlanta.

The story follows a conventional route of other post-apocalyptic novels with each chapter ending at the end of the day, leaving no space for cliffhangers or edge-of-your-seat suspense. Each obstacle is met and then overcome in expected fashion. There are a few twists, but even those can be foreseen by the subtle foreshadowing throughout the book. The dialogue is easy to follow and the plot is clear for the reader to understand. Young-adult readers will be able to relate to the first love and emotions portrayed by both Rayn and Luk throughout the story. While the writing style is simplistic, the story line makes for great adventure and can be enjoyed by all. It is a good first book from a new writer and I look forward to reading more from him.

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### **Dianne Jones says**

Would def recommend for my teen age niece to read - strong female lead character and a good story line. looking forward to book 2 and seeing what happens next!

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### **Wulfwyn says**

I loved this book. Rayn, 17, is the main character in this post-apocalyptic thriller. I love that we have a strong female telling us the story. Her story. She sets off to walk across the country. Not because she wants to but because when you turn 17 you are sent out on your sojourn. It is most likely the last time you will see your loved ones. No one knows if you will make it or not, including you. The first few chapters had me running out of Kleenex! All I could imagine is that happening to my daughter. Terrifying! I like Rayn and Luc, (her love interest). I care way too much about them. So much so that I had to call my brother after midnight to

express my worries and fears for Rayn. He started to comfort me and dry my tears long distance when all of a sudden he said, "wait. Is this a book?" I responded affirmatively. He then asked, "you do know that Rayn lives inside the authors mind?" Wretched man! I still don't know if I will remain his sister. I tried to explain how she was going off on her own in a world that had been destroyed and who knew what, (or who!), she was going to come across. I didn't even know if she would have enough food and water! He responded, "should I call 911 or will you be able to make the trek to the mental ward by yourself? Do you have food and water?" Horrid man! I thought it best to just say good bye. I needed to go check on Rayn anyway.

As you can tell, this was a hard book to put down. While away from it, thoughts of what was happening kept wandering through my mind. I held back from calling my brother though. Let him suffer not knowing her fate! Okay I did send a text to let him know she was alive at the end of the book but who knows for how long because she was entering The Deadlands. He texted back asking if the walls were really padded in the mental hospital. I have a good mind to leave him in the dark about her fate in the Deadlands! That will teach him. Most of my post-apocalyptic reads involve zombies. This book had none of those but there were other creatures. Those scenes are not often nor long but they were intense. I was picturing everything as I read which probably helped with the intensity. There is a romance going on. Normally I am bothered by that, (unless it truly fits the story, I just don't understand). This is one of those rare books where it fits. So far there has been no sex. I like the relationship between Rayn and Luc. It gives each chances at being the strong and weak one. The message I kept getting was that teamwork was important for survival. I would say it is good for teens and up. I have already been telling people to get this book.

I would like to thank BookTasters on Twitter for introducing me to this book. I would like to thank the author for providing me an ebook for review purposes. All opinions and experiences were mine.

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### **Candra Hodge says**

Very good dystopian fiction novel mainly due to the fact that the apocalyptic world that is described seems like it could possibly happen. The survivors came up with an, although slightly cruel, mainly logical way to continue civilization in these new circumstances. I highly recommend this novel to those who like to read post apocalypse novels.

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### **David Bruns says**

"Sojourn - The Wildlands" by BD Messick starts with a post-apocalyptic premise. In a future United States, the combined forces of climate change, pollution and disease overwhelm mankind, reducing population dramatically and forcing us away from the coasts and into five Enclaves: the former cities of Dallas, Chicago, Spokane, Las Vegas and Atlanta. Realizing the gene pool of each Enclave would suffer over time, the remaining leaders create a rite of passage called Sojourning. When a child reaches the age of 17, he (or she) is randomly assigned a new Enclave. The Sojourner must leave the safety of their home Enclave and transit the Wildlands to their new home. As you might expect, the Wildlands are filled with nasty creatures of the two- and four-legged variety, and many Sojourners never make their new destination.

We meet the female protagonist, Rayn Mirago, on the eve of her 17th birthday and the start of her Sojourn. She is preoccupied with Luk, an almost boyfriend and a few months younger. Rayn is a tomboy and well-equipped to deal with her Sojourn, but not so skillful in matters of the heart.

When Rayn departs on her Sojourn, she leaves her relationship with Luk so on the fence that Luk leaves on

his Sojourn early just to be with her. What follows is "The Road" by Cormac McCarthy crossed with a teenage love story. (For those of you who might worry about the nocturnal goings-on of two unsupervised teenage lovers in a stressful life situation, Messick keeps it PG.)

Messick has thought through the setting in great detail, almost turning the landscape into another character. He puts a lot of effort into the development of Rayn and Luk as well. The book clocks in at over 400 pages and (spoiler alert) that leaves them on the edge of the Deadlands, only half-way to Altanta.

I'll be waiting for the sequel.

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### **Krista (CubicleBlindness Reviews) says**

The summary does lead us to believe that Rayn goes on her Sojourn alone. Only after a few days of traveling, Rayn is joined by her best friend and love interest for the rest of the book. There is more romance to the story than I expected going in and for a survival story it is a very tame read.

As the story progresses the two always seem to have enough to keep them comfortable. The struggles they do have with encounters with others are very short scenes. They overcome the majority of their situations with more ease than I was hoping for in the story. The book is pretty tame read and more romance than survival story in my opinion.

Throughout the story the two seem to be in a honeymoon mode. They are always admiring each other, both physically as well as abilities. Food, shelter and medicine are all easily gained at the time of need. Making this story tamer than most and good for young readers. Especially those that enjoy romance stories.

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### **Judith A Maugeri says**

WHAT a great book. Couldn't put it down. Suspense fill and what an ending. Can't wait to read the next book. I could picture every character and every scene.

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### **Martha says**

Love this book.... What an adventure!

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### **Christopher says**

OK. I marked this book as finished but honestly, I just could not handle any more past chapter 23. Should have stopped at chapter 6!. Sorry, but anyone who thinks that Ryan is a "Strong" character should re-read this book. Poor kid can't get past 3 paragraphs without crying. And if she is not crying she is constantly

touching, kissing, holding Luk. How they ever made is out of Nevada is beyond me. Sorry for the poor review, but not as sorry as I am that I tried to finish this book.

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