



Strange Lands (Heroes of Distant Planets #1)

Anderson Atlas

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Ripped from his wheelchair by a massive flash flood, Allan drags himself through dense forest only to find himself surrounded by strange and ruthless creatures who are not from Earth. Allan can't run away and has no means to defend himself. Instinct overcomes his terror and his cleverness blossoms, which is all he needs to survive the dark jungles, poisonous plants, Shadic hunters and the vile slave trader Killian Crow.

Follow Allan's path of self-discovery, and watch him take back what he's lost. Surviving the Improbable Quest is a spine tingling adventure, with exciting twists & turns. A perfect and inspiring read for 10 and up.

Strange Lands (Heroes of Distant Planets #1) Details

Date : Published August 1st 2016 by Synesthesia Books (first published October 28th 2015)

ISBN : 9780997478877

Author : Anderson Atlas

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From Reader Review Strange Lands (Heroes of Distant Planets #1) for online ebook

Trista says

I received a copy of this book in return for a review.

This book is well-suited for middle grade readers. It has a lot of action perfect for those aged 9-12, but is lacking in real depth that would appeal to older readers. It reminds me of "I Am Number Four" by Pittacus Lore in that it was written in such an action-driven way as if a movie was playing in the author's mind, and it is described well enough that I could visually imagine the weird places and creatures. I liked the twist at the end, though I'm hoping further instalments in this series tie up some loose ends. The title suits the book, it is definitely strange, and I credit the author's imagination for the original content. There were a number of errors throughout the text -- mostly misplaced commas -- but nothing too serious that took away from my understanding of events. (view spoiler). Overall the book was a little ridiculous, but it's the perfect amount of ridiculous for a middle grade student.

Literary Classics Book Awards & Reviews says

Thirteen year old Allan was an incredibly talented swimmer. Unfortunately though, he was far less ambitious as a student. His mom and dad had pretty lofty expectations for him. But none of that matters any more because a tragic accident has taken the lives of Allan's parents, along with the use of his legs. Now he's a paraplegic. With his parents gone, and his dreams of being an Olympian shattered, severe depression renders him speechless.

While on a fishing trip with his uncle, Allan experiences a fantastic adventure. He is transported to another world where he must learn to work within, and beyond, his limitations. In rescuing the residents of this other world from the forces of evil he soon realizes just how capable he truly is.

Author Anderson Atlas offers an inspirational message of hope, reminding readers that our greatest limitations are the ones which we cling to in our mind. Positively uplifting moments abound within this story in which a boy, who basically believed his life was over, travels to another world where he becomes a hero. Surviving the Improbable Quest is an exhilarating tale full of frightening and wondrous creatures.

Dilsh Wijesinghe says

Whoa! I don't know what to say about this book. But my mind says **"You must say something about this."**

5 STARS ***** rating!

The story was built around the boy who named *Allan Westerfield* who got paralysis legs and lost his parents after met with a motor crash. After that, he started to live with his uncle *RUBIC*. Allan & Rubic met with another accident when they went to fishing. He was suddenly vanished from Earth to another world en route to find someone to get some help to his uncle whose situation was very bad.

He met really weird, terrible, startle, creepy & strange thing and creatures like **Jibbwak, Salamander-mens, Toxic rose plant, Bird-guards, Strange humans, Killian crow, Ratty-bird, Veskews, Etc...** Otherwise he also met few good creatures too like **Balloon creatures, Asantia girl, Small elephants, Mizzy, Lyllia bird-guard, Lithic fury Bink.**

The strange creatures can speak English. It made me shaky & it was funny to think how they really know to speak English? But I found the answer for that while I'm read the 18th chapter of the book.

This story was such a brilliant story. *I always feel muddle-headed with wrong guesses. Yeah..! I was always made wrong guesses about the story & that was a good thing. It made me excited & forced me to read the book till the end.*

And finally I must tell about how was the end of the story & the illustrations. Illustrations were help me to comprehend the story contents very well. It was terribly awesome how uncle Rubic met Allan eventually. I expected some miracle happens & may Allan could walk again with his legs. But it doesn't happen. **But the end of the story was SUPERB!**

Auburn says

Uplifting

An imaginative uplifting story for anyone who loves fantasy and characters who overcome the odds. Allan has a poor lot in life, living with his head in the clouds dreaming of adventure until a car accident. The accident leaves him without parents, the use of his legs, and a fear of the outside world. Through the story he enters another world and begins his healing process. Overcoming all of the odds to get home. I enjoyed this read and the obstacles Allan has thrown at him. The addition of pictures help you visualize the world better and really enhance the story. This is perfect for younger readers who want to read about other world's but also learn that with persistence anything is possible.

Melissa Sasina says

*****This review was written by my husband. We were asked for an honest review and he read the book. My husband doesn't not have a Goodreads account, so I am posting the review with his permission in his place.*****

Specifically a YA book, there is nothing in here that will make you raise an eyebrow knowing your kid read it.

That being said, here's where the star rating comes from.

Characters: are all believable, some are greed driven, some are in it for personal reasons, and others just want to get back to before things hit the strange part.

Story: Good ideas, at no point was it ever "It's magic, deal with it." There's an underlying scientific reason, even if it's not laid out in exacting detail, for how the world works. Potentially minus one bit, but I've seen

plenty of techno-fantasy talk about souls, so it gets a pass.

Writing: At no point did I have to go over and re-read a typo or a poorly worded sentence, I understood what was going on at all times. If there were errors they were small and infrequent enough that I saw none.

What cost a star:

Pacing at the beginning was rushed a bit, the reader is told there is a period of time that goes by, but there's not really any substance to it. There is no adjustment period, no working on anything, just *problem 1* and suddenly a period of time has gone by and we're getting hit with problem 2. A short scene about going to where the main ends up, and another about what is done between then and the day with a conversation with a nurse, in addition to what is there, would have made me feel like a more solid time went by. Maybe two or three pages tops.

All in, I could see reading more of the series, and giving it to my kid to read as well.

Spoiler:

Also, note to the author and a bit of a spoiler. The Hindenburg went down in flames because it was full of hydrogen, if it was full of helium there would have been a small fire where it originally started, and if it lost enough lift it would have landed rough.

Angel Leya says

In Strange Lands, Allan has his head in the clouds. He loves swimming, but his grades are slipping. As he goes into a championship meet, he finds out that his grades are bad enough to kick him out of the competition. When his parents find out, they're irate, and spend the ride home lecturing him on the importance of academics. But they don't make it home. A terrible accident kills his parents and leaves Allan without the use of his legs.

His voice also mysteriously disappears, as he works through the tragedy. Living with his Uncle isn't so bad, but it does nothing to soothe the wounds left by the accident.

When they take a camping trip far out in the mountains, Allan thinks it's going to be a drag. Instead, he finds himself in another life-and-death situation when a flood washes up the river they're fishing in. Allan goes for help, but finds he's not quite anywhere familiar. Strange creatures and talking lizards and birds have him convinced he's no longer on Earth. He has to find a way to get back and help his Uncle before he loses everything again.

This was a fun book of fantasy. The other world is kind of amazing, both beautiful and dangerous in nearly equal amounts. I love the struggle that Allan goes through, as all the bad that's been festering in him comes to the surface. I also found the bit of doubt the author casts on the whole experience to be just enough to make it interesting, but thankfully not so much as to become disappointing. I wish the description of the book highlighted the story as much as it highlights the good reviews.

The only thing I didn't quite find believable was that Allan seems to lose sight of the fact that his uncle could

be dying. He gets in the new world, and he wants to get back and save his uncle, but it feels like he forgets in light of his new situation on many occasions. I think after a few days had passed, I'd be out of my mind with worry, fearing the worst.

Regardless, it's a fun book, and I enjoyed reading it aloud to my toddler son.

Jessica Bronder says

Allan Westerfield's day goes from bad to worse when the principal tells him that his math score disqualifies him from competing in the state swim meet but if Allan wins he will not say anything. Then Allan wins the swim meet yet his math teacher explains how he can't compete and Allan is disqualified. On the way home, Allan's parents are clearly upset with him. They are arguing when they are in a car accident. Allan wakes up to learn that his parents died in the accident and he is now a paraplegic.

Allan is resentful of the situation and refuses to talk to anyone, even his uncle Rubic his caregiver. Rubic is trying his best but it's clear that both need a break so he sets up a fishing trip for Allan and himself. But a sudden flood has the trip taking a dangerous turn and it is up to Allan to get help for his trapped uncle. But on the way Allan notices strange creatures and finds himself about to be a slave and completing a quest.

I really enjoyed this story. Allan just wants to have an adventure and is not ready to apply himself to school. Then when he loses his parents you can completely understand how he is resentful about the whole situation. He really needed the retreat and the subsequent adventure to kick him in gear. I loved watching him grow stronger as the story went on. Although Allan was difficult at the start I can to care for him at the end.

This is a great story and the first in a series. I can't wait to see what Anderson Atlas come up with next.

I received Strange Lands from the author for free. This has in no way influenced my opinion of this book.

Sruti says

Anderson Atlas's 'Surviving the Improbable Quest' is an adventure alright. But, it is a mystery too and a lot more. It could have been one of sentimentality, considering that it is about regaining what the protagonist has lost. Or it could be about forests in space, and the creatures there.

Coming back to the main focus of this story, who is Allan Westerfield. Allan, a 13 year old boy, is all set to go into the Olympics, when fate strikes a drastic hand. This was at an odd time, when he was getting scolded by his parents, who want him to get into an Ivy League school, but this is not all his problem.

His angry parents were driving him back from school, when out of nowhere, another vehicle strikes theirs. Allan, finds himself in a hospital, and now a paraplegic, who cannot speak after the accident. He is left under the care of his uncle, Rubic. What with both his parents dead plus the paraplegia, which has left him unable to speak or swim.

Eight months after the accident, Allan is at a campfire, with his uncle, where his uncle tells him a scary story.

A flash flood occurs where his uncle goes missing and suddenly, Allan is transported into a weird world, way into the galaxy.

The new planet has a thing in common with the story, Allan was hearing from his uncle. All about a monster, called the Jibbawk. He has to escape it and the Killian Crow and go on an quest with Lithic Furies, with the help of Mitzi and Astania, who turned out to be the creatures with compassion.

Miscellaneous aliens, weird adventures draw him into fantastic incidents, one after the other, where he must face near deadly characters and near death situations, all in search of his uncle. Rubic, who, himself is having an adventure all his own on earth. He ends it by walking through the story.

This fantasy, mixed with adventure has its own style. Allan does find his voice, somewhere amidst, all these emotions mashed into the exploration plus mysterious story. It is all in there, you just have to have the hero's zeal to read on, inside of the story. There would be two more parts to this story. The illustrations are kind of cool too, done by the author himself and they will have you wanting and reading more.

Little Bee says

Goodreads Rating: 4 stars

Actual Rating: 3.5 stars

I received a copy of Strange Lands in exchange for an honest review.

Allan is in the 8th grade when he is in a terrible car accident that killed both of his parents and left him wheel chair bound. His uncle, Rubic, comes to take care of him, but Allan struggles to get through the loss of not only his parents, but his ability to move. As such, he feels extremely helpless and useless.

One day, Rubic decides to take them camping because he believes fresh air and wilderness will do Allan some good, though Allan is not a fan of the camping idea. They were getting ready to go fishing, and a storm was coming and they were told to clear out by a Ranger. They didn't, and went fishing anyway when boulders and large amounts of water come crashing through the lake. The water barrels over Rubic, who was trying to carry Allan to safety. Allan builds a small dam around Rubic to keep him safe and begins crawling to search for help, only he sees he is not in what looks like Earth anymore. From there he goes on an adventure through a land called Lan Darr.

It took me a while to finish this book. I won't say it is slow, but it took a while to really capture my attention, so I would stop for a while and then go back to it. Once my attention was grabbed, though, I finished it rather quickly. The issue was primarily that, while I have an active imagination, I had a hard time visualizing what I was reading.

There are some pictures in the book, however, I find that they didn't line up in sync with the story. Pictures were occurring prior to the part in the book that explains what is going on in that picture.

In regards to Allan's disability, I liked that it shows how he starts out depressed and struggling to cope, but by the end, and every trial he faced, he found his worth.

I also liked how, at the end, even as the reader, I questioned if it actually happened or not. I think that is a good way to entice the reader to pick up the next book.

Lora Shouse says

Allan Westerfield is having a very bad day. First of all, his principal informs him, as he is on his way to participate in the state swim meet, that he has failed his latest math test and is not actually eligible to participate in the meet. The principal offers to cover up for him if he beats the school's arch-rival, but threatens him with expulsion if he fails. Allan wins his race, but his math teacher shows up and refuses to avoid informing the officials. Allan's win is invalidated, he is not allowed to finish the meet, and is sent home with his parents who use the time to lecture him about his bad attitude.

Allan only wants to swim and have adventures.

Suddenly the car is struck by another vehicle, and then another. When Allan wakes up in the hospital some time later, his parents are dead, and he can no longer walk. When he is ready to go home, it is his father's brother, Rubic, who is there to take care of him.

Allan is a little resentful of Rubic, a little resentful of his whole situation. He either can't or won't talk. Finally, Rubic has the idea of taking him fishing in the mountains.

Allan is a little resentful of this too, but they go anyway. And while they are there, a flash flood comes up and washes them away. Allan's wheelchair is washed away, and when they come to rest,

Allan finds that Rubic has almost drowned. Allan tries to resuscitate Rubic, but has only limited success as he is pinned under a boulder. Allan knows he has to get help. He begins dragging himself back to their camp.

Something happens on the way, though. Allan begins seeing strange lizard people. Then a girl comes along who talks about selling him to the highest bidder. Eventually, Allan is rescued by a flock of flying balloon people who fly with him to another planet, where he actually does have some adventures – most of them dangerous. Most of the people there are hostile, but he manages to make a few friends.

Finally, Allan earns the right to come back to earth. Or perhaps the truth is that he never really went away after all. But in any case, he is talking again and has come to accept his situation. And he and Rubic are both safe (though it was a near thing for both of them) – at least for now.

Sarah Wilson says

I received a copy of this book from the author of this book in exchange for an honest review. When I was contacted about this book I was extremely intrigued by its premise: a young boy in a wheelchair is taken to another land and has to survive in order to get back. And it didn't disappoint as a middle grade novel. I read through this book in just one sitting as it was such a quick, enjoyable read.

The book was exciting and fast-paced, and I loved the cast of characters that came into the book, especially

Allan's Uncle, who was just a wonderful person (seriously, I couldn't have loved his character any more, he was just so selfless throughout). Despite the book being short, I felt like nearly all the characters were fleshed out enough although I would love to hear more about some of their backstories and more about the world they live in (but this is the first book in the series!).

The land that Allan ends up in was so imaginative and fantastical that it almost reminded be of and Alice in Wonderland-like place, where everything was a bit bizarre and also a little bit twisted on how we would expect the world to work. I also really liked how it tied the real world to this magical land and the idea behind it was very cleverly written. I have to say I did not see the twist at the end coming and it worked so well, adding some very tense moments to the last few chapters!

But, I think the main thing I loved about this book was the fact that we had a teenage boy having to deal with a lot of stress and tragedy in his life, and he didn't always deal with it well. It was very realistic in that respect and the author's treatment of PTSD and disabilities was handled wonderfully. Allen was such a relatable character for anyone who's suffered trauma and I can see hundreds of children feeling grateful that someone else has felt this way; knowing it's okay to be angry and sad, but also how to deal with that. I especially loved that the adventure was a way to help Allan come to terms with being unable to walk.

Overall, I felt like this book was a lovely middle-grade adventure book for both children and adults. I highly recommend this to anyone who enjoys fantasy/adventure books.

Cindy Mitchell *Kiss the Book* says

Atlas, Anderson Strange Lands, 231 pages. Synthesia Books, 2016. \$12.99. Language:G (0 swear, 0 “f”); Mature Content: G; Violence: G.

Allan loves to swim but has too low grades to stay on his school swim team. He wins the swimming championship for his school, but he wasn't supposed to compete they have to forfeit.. On the way home with his fuming, embarrassed parents, they get in a horrible car crash that will shape the rest of his life sending him on an adventure literally out of this world.

I loved how this book kept me on edge the whole time with it's adventure and good characters. I liked the overall concept even though it was out of the normal fiction flow which I love. The book had a great feel that made me want to keep reading even when I was falling asleep. It had great wording and was over all well put together.

EL - ADVISABLE; MS - OPTIONAL. SIO, Student Reviewer, 7th grade
<http://kissthebook.blogspot.com/2017/...>

Anderson Atlas says

READERS FAVORITE REVIEW!!

<https://readersfavorite.com/book-revi...>

Completed on:

12/13/2015

Review Rating:

5 stars!

Reviewed By Jack Magnus for Readers' Favorite

Allan Westerfield Off-World: Allan Westerfield Series, Book 1 is a young adult contemporary fantasy written by Anderson Atlas. When Allan qualified for the Nationals and broke his best freestyle record, he felt on top of the world -- that is, until he saw his mother's face. There was neither pride nor excitement in her expression, only a grim and angry glare accompanied by his latest report card bearing two F's. His parents were not in the least impressed by his talent for swimming or interest in adventuring; they were already focused upon his getting into an Ivy League college even though he was only 13. Allan's heart sank even further when he saw his father waiting outside the school in the car. They were both furious, and then the unthinkable happened. Their car was struck by another vehicle, and only Allan survived the impact, but he was left a paraplegic and unable to speak.

Anderson Atlas's young adult contemporary fantasy, Allan Westerfield Off-World: Allan Westerfield Series, Book 1, starts off with a campfire scene some eight months after the accident. Allan and his uncle and guardian, Rubic, are on a fishing trip, and Rubic's just told a spooky story about a mythical monster called the Jibbawk that eats human flesh and leaves bleeding X's carved in trees. And if that doesn't whet your curiosity, keep on reading, because it just gets better. Atlas' young hero has a lot to cope with -- feelings of guilt over surviving the accident and despair over the loss of family, his dreams of athletic accomplishments and a future filled with adventure. Everything he's taken for granted, however, will change as a result of this camping trip and in ways he could never have imagined -- and it's fabulous following along with him. Allan and Rubic are marvelous characters, and Atlas' plot is well-crafted, original and imaginative. I'm looking forward to the next Allan Westerfield adventure. Allan Westerfield Off-World: Allan Westerfield Series, Book 1 is highly recommended.

Valicity Garris says

If you give this book a chance you will have just found your new favorite series. Atlas presents us with a one of a kind adventure for adults and children alike. This is riveting and wonderfully original. I really can't say much except that it is awesome and deserves to be read around the world.

The first note of awesome is the fact that the main character is a paraplegic. Someone who has lost total control of his limbs. So there are two battles this character faces, three if you include the initial tragedy that left him that way. I don't think I ever imagined I would see the day where someone who couldn't use his legs would be the main character in an adventure novel. Yes, he does fight and he actually manages to hold his own in most cases!

Allan is definitely a character you will love. I can't personally relate to his struggle as someone bound to a wheelchair but I can relate to his feelings of betrayal. He describes how everyone would smile at him and then say rude things about him or his family behind his back. Probably every young person on earth could identify with that to some extent. But this little tidbit of information opens the door for relatability which really helped form a connection between myself as a reader and him as a character.

The present tense is amazing. That is my very favorite style of narration so I was more than pleased to see it in such an amazing story and especially pleased to see it done right. More than that, I was pleased with the vivid descriptions and wild creativity demonstrated in this book. The creatures, the world, the characters, the adventures, everything was take-your-breath-away good and I loved it. The flow was great and the rhythm of the story melted everything together. Atlas's style of writing is very old fashioned, paired with the excellent illustrations it makes this book look and feel like an old classic.

I truly have no complaints about this story and I applaud the author for giving us something we have never seen before. Atlas has opened the door for diverse characters of all standing—or not! I love, love, LOVE the fact that Allan is different and I hope this book paves the way for many more to come and have success.

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review

Victoria says

First off, it's my first time to encounter an adventure novel with a paraplegic teen as a protagonist, and that just opens up an entire world of possibilities for me as a reader. Allan Westerfield Off-World by Anderson Atlas is, in a word, innovative.

Allan Westerfield is riveting and extraordinary tale of courage and adventure. The chapters flow easily from one to another, creating a nice narrative that is gripping from start to finish. I also have to comment Atlas' command of the language because he was able to paint a very vivid world with salamander-people, a balloon-like creature, bird guards that look both regal and ominous, and so many other interesting characters.

The book has a wonderful story and a lot of heart to boot—something that not a lot of its contemporaries can achieve at the same time. I think that Anderson Atlas did an extremely great job in creating an alternate world for Allan Westerfield and I highly recommend this book to everyone.
