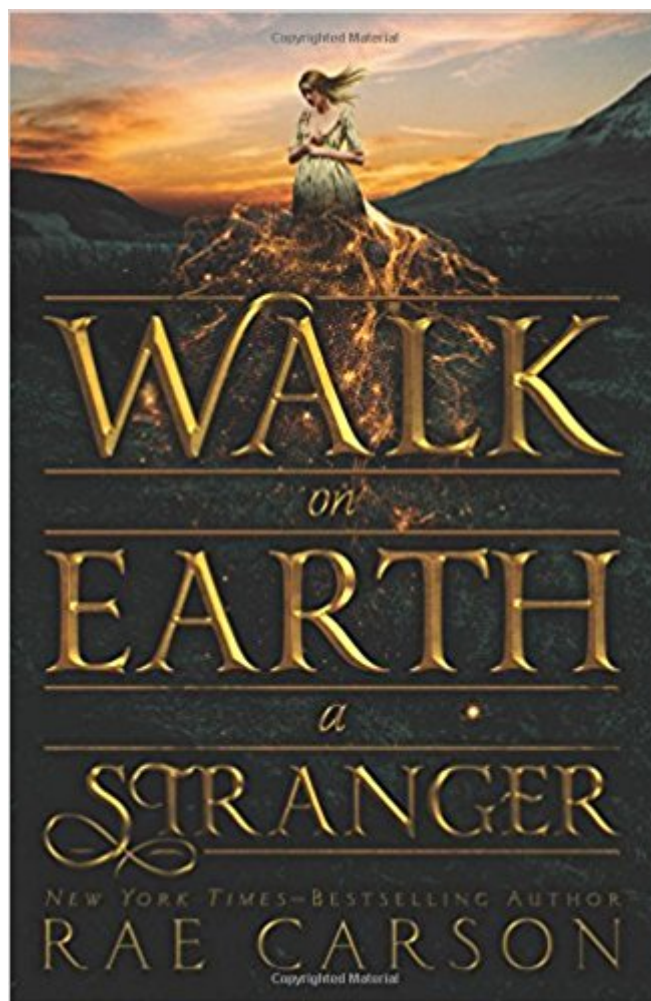


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# Walk On Earth A Stranger (Gold Seer Trilogy)



## Synopsis

A New York Times bestseller and National Book Award longlist selection  
The first book in a new trilogy from acclaimed New York Times bestselling author Rae Carson. A young woman with the magical ability to sense the presence of gold must flee her home, taking her on a sweeping and dangerous journey across Gold Rush-era America. *Walk on Earth a Stranger* begins an epic saga from one of the finest writers of young adult literature. Lee Westfall has a secret. She can sense the presence of gold in the world around her. Veins deep beneath the earth, pebbles in the river, nuggets dug up from the forest floor. The buzz of gold means warmth and life and home—until everything is ripped away by a man who wants to control her. Left with nothing, Lee disguises herself as a boy and takes to the trail across the country. Gold was discovered in California, and where else could such a magical girl find herself, find safety? Rae Carson, author of the acclaimed *Girl of Fire and Thorns* series, dazzles with the first book in the *Gold Seer* Trilogy, introducing a strong heroine, a perilous road, a fantastical twist, and a slow-burning romance, as only she can.

## Book Information

Series: *Gold Seer Trilogy* (Book 1)

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Historical Fiction > United States > 19th Century #552 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction

> Girls & Women #649 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Sword &

Sorcery

## Customer Reviews

Gr 6 Up—This riveting saga features 15-year-old tomboy Leah, who has an extraordinary talent, the ability to sense when gold is near. She uses this skill to provide for her ailing parents, who live in an isolated part of Dahlonega, GA, the site of the first major U.S. gold rush in the early

1800s. They lead a fairly frugal existence so as not to arouse local suspicions. When her parents are robbed and murdered and her best (and only) friend, a half-white, half-Cherokee boy named Jefferson, leaves Georgia for a new gold rush in California, her world is turned upside down. To make matters worse, a nefarious uncle comes to claim her parents' property and use her gold-seeking skills for ill intent. Disguised as a boy, she leaves the only home she's ever known to reunite with Jefferson and join a wagon train. Lee, as she calls herself, is a smart, feisty, and likable protagonist who encounters all the hardships one would expect on the arduous journey West—illness, injury, hunger, exposure to extreme weather, and buffalo stampedes. All the while, she knows her uncle will stop at nothing to hunt her down. At the crux of the story is Leah's dilemma of keeping her gender and talent a secret from those to whom she becomes close. The time period rings true through Carson's skillful use of language and attention to detail. VERDICT Though the wagon train adventure is slightly cliché, the fast-paced plot, a hint of mild romance, and the added element of fantasy make this stand out from your average Gold Rush story. —Madeline J. Bryant, Los Angeles Public Library --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Simply terrific—tense and exciting, while gently and honestly addressing the brutal hardships of the westward migration. [Leah] takes center stage as a smart, resourceful, determined, and realistic heroine who embodies the age-old philosophy that it isn't what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.” (Publishers Weekly (starred review)) “Lee is a smart, feisty, and likable protagonist who encounters all the hardships one would expect on the arduous journey West—the fast-paced plot, a hint of mild romance, and the added element of fantasy make this stand out.” (School Library Journal) “Carson is known for her world-building and strong female characters and she handles everything with carefully constructed, well-researched aplomb. It's a book that illuminates an important segment of American history—sustaining YA interest through adventure, fantasy, and romance.” (Booklist (starred review)) “With an organically diverse cast, three-dimensional characters, a vividly evoked setting, and the lightest touch of romance, Carson's novel captures the trepidation and exhilaration of journeying into the unknown.” (The Horn Book) “An empowering and powerful read perfect for one who enjoyed history and adventure. Carson takes us on a wild wagon journey peppered with drama and mystery.” (Romantic Times BOOKclub) “Pure storytelling gold. The author capably crosses genres and breaks stereotypes, and the result is an absorbing

adventure that only hints at the thrills that will surely come in the next two books. (The Daily Summit) “Carson’s world-building skills are extraordinary” The author paints an early America that is teeming with people from an array of backgrounds and beliefs-the diversity of the characters is as integral to the plot of the book as it was to shaping the United States. (Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)) “Lee is an ambitious, generous, kind and scrappy character” Fans of Carson’s work will enjoy this road-trip-turned-Western, and newcomers will love the flair she brings to her characters and settings. (Deseret News) “Carson does nice work adding nuance to her side characters, showing minor evolutions that challenge the racism, sexism, and classism deeply rooted in most of the people Leah encounters” Fantasy readers will likely find Leah and her gold-sensing core to be intriguingly different than the usual heroine. (Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books)

I am a 33-year-old who is often drawn to the stories in the YA genre, but tries to avoid anything that waters down the plot or speaks down to the reader. I’ve had enough experiences with highly rated but disappointing YA books that I always think twice before buying from that genre. However, the thought of a historical fantasy set in the American gold rush era is so unique that I couldn’t pass it up, and am so glad I didn’t. The author takes the first few chapters to set the scene before getting into the adventure. She absolutely researched the wild frontier and the story was so much richer for it. The novel really hits its stride when Lee joins the wagon train to go West, and we see all the hard work and risk that choice required of anyone who chose it. Towards the end we even get to see a stark contrast of gender roles of the era, and I felt this section of the story was the most intriguing. It was perfect to leave on that high point. Can’t wait to read the next one!

Leah Westfall has a secret the she and her parents have kept hidden from everyone they know in Georgia. Lee can sense gold whether it’s a piece of jewelry, a stray nugget, or veins of gold deep in the earth. Lee’s parents have always feared Lee’s magic could lead to trouble for her and their family. They were right. In January 1849 Lee’s life changes forever and, for the first time, she is completely alone in the world. Even her best friend, Jefferson, has left her behind to chase the promise of gold and a fresh start in California. With nothing left to keep her in Georgia and every reason to leave, Lee disguises herself as a boy and sets out to make her own way west and hopefully find her best friend along the way. The road to California won’t be easy. With so many people hoping to find gold and security, Lee is sure her witchy ways will give her an edge. If she can

make it that far. After losing so much, and with so long to go, Lee will have to decide who she can trust and who she wants to be in *Walk on Earth a Stranger* (2015) by Rae Carson. *Walk on Earth a Stranger* is the first book in Carson's Gold Seer Trilogy. Because this book focuses heavily on Lee's journey to California it does offer a contained story and can easily be read on its own. While *Walk on Earth a Stranger* is very much in the same vein as traditional westerns, it does not offer a sanitized or romanticized version of the west as characters grapple with racism, sexism, and the physical dangers on the trail while also beginning to grasp the enormous change this great movement of people will bring to the western territories of the United States. Although Lee has a magical ability to find gold, *Walk on Earth a Stranger* is a historical novel at its core, and extremely well-done at that. Carson has surpassed herself in this well-researched and nuanced novel that covers so many details and perspectives of the 1849 gold rush. Lee falls in with a ragtag cast of characters on her travels west. This varied and diverse group add a lot of dimension to what is already a very rich story. Lee's first person narration brings the landscape and the era to life as she makes her long trek from Georgia to California. Against the vivid backdrop of her travels, Lee's story is often quite introspective as she ponders her own place in the world and her future out west. Lee's journey to find herself while also finding her way to a new life is riveting and empowering. *Walk on Earth a Stranger* perfectly captures the freedom and possibility that can come with following gold west at a time when picking a new identity was as easy as adopting a new name. *Walk on Earth a Stranger* also returns, again and again, to the idea of choice as Lee is left to choose who she wants to be, and also who she wants beside her, on the long road ahead. A stunning start to a series that is sure to be gold for many readers. I can't recommend this book highly enough.

A girl who can sense gold nearby like a dowsing rod. A growing country coming into its own, and the promises of riches ripe for the taking. Leah can sense magic, she's always been able to and her family knows it. Only her best friend Jefferson doesn't. When her parents are brutally murdered leaving Leah alone in this world, she realizes it was the price of her gift. *Walk on Earth a Stranger* was a good read, however much of this book can be summed up by the reader howling "Are we there yet!? Are we!?" like kids on a road trip. Most of it takes place on the trail from Georgia to California where the gold rush is at its peak. On the way Leah experiences hardships like she's never known. She encounters bandits and Native Americans, good and bad people alike. The author does not shy away from death in many of its ugly forms. I got very teary eyed a few times. This is the first of Rae Carson's books that I've picked up and her writing is descriptive and full of imagery. You experience Rae's grief and it's not easily forgotten. Characters grow, friends are

made and enemies established. This book is very true to the manner of human spirit. The reason I gave it three stars is because it reads like a starter book to me. Many things happen in this fantastical western, but the pace is very slow and I felt like a lot more could have been added to this at the end. Still, I'll be picking up the next book. This series shows a lot of promise.

As with her other series, *The Girl of Fire and Thorns*, this book is filled with incredible introspection and internal dialogue. And as much as we are thrust into the gold rush with incredible setting and authentic language, even more so we are thrust into the mind of a girl who is different and wishes anything but to be alone. She forces this loneliness on herself because of her abilities; she can divine gold with a thought. But eventually, as her mother tells her, she is going to need to trust someone. I read this book in a little more than a week, grabbing onto it at every small moment and letting my TV shows go by the wayside. And within minutes of finishing it, I've already bought the sequel. I very much recommend this series to anyone who loves excellent writing and characters.

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