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A Rumour of Adventure, by Kees M. Paling. Reviewed by David Emerson

David Emerson

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REVIEWS

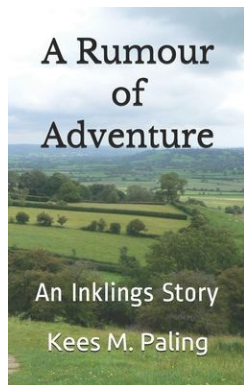
Kees M. Paling. *A Rumour of Adventure*. 2018. 101 pp. \$15.82.
Reviewed by David Emerson.

This slim volume contains a story of a fictional walking trip taken by four Inklings, based on what is known of actual walking tours enjoyed by Tolkien, Lewis, et al. This account uses a bit of hand-waving and creative license to have the walking party consist of Lewis, Tolkien, Owen Barfield, and Charles Williams – a combination which probably never occurred in actuality.

The author, a sociologist working as a communication consultant for the Dutch government, is familiar enough with the four featured Inklings to give each of these fictional characters a good resemblance to their actual personalities. For example, Tolkien's propensity for stopping and examining local flora is mentioned, and Williams's ill health is also highlighted.

In addition to the travelogue nature of the description of the physical environments through which the travelers move, Paling also includes several snatches of philosophical dialogue amongst the four, in various combinations. Readers familiar with these writers' non-fiction writings will recognize the ideas and attitudes presented.

In what appears to be an attempt to enliven an otherwise commonplace



sequence of events, the author includes a surprise guest appearance by Aleister Crowley, here portrayed as an antagonist to Williams in particular and the other three in general. This incident, and another which introduced a waitress named Arwen, seemed forced and out of place in an otherwise charming narrative.

In the frontispiece is a rough sketch map of the route of this imaginary trek, starting at Samuel Taylor Coleridge's home in the Somerset village of Nether Stowey, and ending at Porlock on the Bristol Channel. Although the story of this walking tour is fictional, the route is real, and is now an official footpath known as The Coleridge Way, about which Wikipedia says, "In 2008 [it] was selected by *The Times* as one of Britain's best autumn walks," so interested Inklings fans could retrace this very route in real life. It is to be hoped that there are still plenty of pubs along the way to refresh weary travelers, as described in *A Rumour of Adventure*.

This book was also reviewed in Mythprint #390.
