

Fantasy By Briton

Tribute To Animals

Steve Hall

May 15, 1982

“QUEST FOR THE FARADAWN.” By Richard Ford. New York: Delacorte Press/
Eleanor Friede. 310 pages. \$14.95

“Quest for the Faradawn” is one of the better fantasy novels released recently.

Richard Ford has written a richly descriptive tale full of elves, goblins, courageous animals and a quest — the search for the Faradawn, the three magical symbols of the mountains, the seas and -the forests kept by the Elflords.

The Faradawn is necessary to save the world from the destructive ways of man, part of a continuing struggle against Dreagg, Ruler of Evil, and Ashgarbth, Lord of Good. The battle is partly between magic, which Ashgaroth has given the animals and the elves, and logic, which Dreagg has bestowed on man.

As evil men and goblins wreak havoc upon other creatures. Nab, a small boy, is left in Silver Wood. Brock, a sensitive badger, and his mate, Tara, raise the boy, and the other animals — Warrigal the owl. Perryfoot the hare, Rufus the fox and Sam the dog — all teach him the ways of the forest.

After men brutally destroy Silver Wood, an Elflord tells Nab he is a savior, in whom both magic and logic reside. Once he gathers the Faradawn together, Ashgaroth will show him the way to rescue the world from its troubles.

Ford is an advisor to the British Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and his entertaining tale is strongly influenced by his environmental concerns.

The animals — particularly Brock — are the most sharply drawn characters. He makes them noble heroes who sacrifice their homes, their mates and sometimes their lives to help Nab achieve his quest.

At times Ford becomes too preachy about man’s destruction of the earth, but his talent at description will probably make most readers forgive him the indiscretion. He writes of the sea, the mountains and the forest as only one who is mesmerized by them can.

This description and the strong characterization make the novel’s ending an anti-climax by contrast. Despite Ford’s attempt at a story twist, the weak ending remains the major, but thankfully the sole, fault of “Quest for the Faradawn.”

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These books will feature novella-length adaptations of operas written by contemporary writers. Among the first books will be "Der Rosenkavalier," by Anthony Burgess, and "La Traviata," by Mary McCarthy.

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The Indianapolis News, May 15, 1982, page 49.
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