



Seven Wild Sisters

Charles de Lint , Charles Vess (Illustrator)

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Seven Wild Sisters is a publishing event, a short novel by one of today's finest fantasy writers, Charles de Lint, profusely illustrated by the legendary Charles Vess.

Together, they have created a modern fairy tale about seven sisters growing up in backwoods hill country, and how one of them finds a mystery in the forest that both endangers and could save them all.

Seven Wild Sisters Details

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Author : Charles de Lint , Charles Vess (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Seven Wild Sisters for online ebook

Francesca says

3.5-4/5

Brian says

A bit more YA than de Lint's usual Newford books, but still an enjoyable read. 7 red-headed sisters get involved (by accident) in a war between Bee Fairies and Ginseng Fairies. Everything works out.

Loren says

Mart lent me this book back when we were talking about modern fairy tales. I loved the sense that fairy creatures had adapted or always existed in the hills and hollers, becoming bee fairies and sangmen rather than Sidhe and the Wild Hunt. But the story raised expectations that the Father of Cats -- or native panther -- might appear. While he was invoked, the story dodged around him. I was disappointed.

I also felt that for a book that's only 150 pages, it wasn't necessary to waste 40 pages before the story began. Especially since the characters of the sisters weren't introduced in any detail until after the story kicks in. The book read like the author was wandering around, waiting for the plot to reveal itself. I was tempted to put it down.

Final assessment: I enjoyed it, but it was slight. I have more de Lint borrowed. We'll see if I like it any better.

Nilsson says

I like big families, because they're really fun to talk to and play with. My family is boring, because there are only four kids in it. Too bad the author didn't really make them talk to each other that much, and just said what they liked to do. Their family sounded really interesting, I hope someday he writes a book about what they really act like. He doesn't even have to bother with the magic part if he wants, even though I like that part too. But I'm really interested about what their family does or what their personalities are like. Maybe it could get to that part if he made a sequel.

Melanti says

I originally read this a couple of years ago in the original Subterranean Press release. When it came up as a group read this month, I noticed that the new middle grade version is around 100 pages longer and decided to compare the two editions to see where the differences lay.

First, I've got to say that Vess's artwork - both the old art that now is colorized and the brand new art - is as gorgeous as usual.

In terms of the text, I was expecting to see at least a little new content but to my surprise, there's actually very little new content - there's a extra transitory paragraph here and there and a couple of sentences that cleared up minor continuity errors. Instead, there's quite a bit of content that was taken out.

I won't go into the full details here, though I've talked quite a bit about it in the spoiler filled group read thread but in general, enough content was taken out to lower it from a Young Adult level book to a Middle Grade level book.

Among some of the things that were removed were the girls' exact ages, any reference to current or future boyfriends, any hint of sexuality or puberty (including Aunt Lillian's sexuality), dropping out of school, and other random sentences the editors felt wasn't appropriate to a middle grade audience.

They've also simplified the language a little bit in places and I noticed the characters did more emoting - stomping of feet, bursting into tears, etc - so they ended up seeming a little younger than they were originally.

I think that it reads about the same, more or less, as a middle grade book as it did in the original version and any excuse to look at some more of Vess's artwork is a good one, but there are a few passages I really wish hadn't been removed. (Per de Lint's wife - they were removed at the editor's insistence, not at de Lint's wishes.)

My favorite of these is a passage about Aunt Lillian's relationship with the Apple Tree Man:

If they'd ever been a couple, I guess he'd been the one to end it. I already knew that Aunt Lillian wasn't too happy about it, but now I got the sense that maybe he wasn't either. I thought about some of the things he'd been saying, then looked at the pair of them.

Old as she was with her own wrinkles and all, Aunt Lillian was probably more like an apple tree fairy now than she'd probably ever been in all the time he'd known her. Maybe the reason he'd been seeing less of her now than he used to wasn't so much because of what fairies can wake in a human, but because year by year she grew more attractive to him and he didn't trust himself around her. Figured they'd be happy for a time, but then she'd be gone, seeing's how our lives are so fleeting, while theirs go on forever. Maybe he just knew he couldn't bear the heartbreak.

And maybe I was just being a hopeless romantic and there wasn't any such thing going on between the pair of them.

All that was left of this lovely passage was the first two sentences.

Margaret says

Very fun, very quick read about sisters and their visit to fairy land. I loved the voice, the characters, and really just about everything.

Hannah says

This book had all the characteristics that I loved in its predecessor, *The Cats of Tanglewood Forest*: a homey, folkloric atmosphere, a charming and skilled writing style, and distinct and memorable characters. The storyline is simple, but by no means boring, and the richness of de Lint's words and Vess's drawings pair together perfectly to create an immersive experience. I will be seeking out much more work by each of them in the future, and I can certainly see myself returning to this duology in the future.

Betsy says

With the beauty of its storytelling, art, characters, and setting, it truly is a hard place to leave.

Tasha Robinson says

Sweet, simple, and with beautiful Charles Vess illustrations. The last act felt pretty rushed, as though this was planned as a longer book, and I could have used more of an idea of why L'il Pater helped the characters, and what he got out of it in a world that seemed to be otherwise pretty self-absorbed. (And he's a cat. Cats aren't exactly known for their altruistic nature.) This feels a bit like the opening chapters to a longer DeLint novel, but it's enjoyable for what it is.

Tamra says

In Charles De Lint's *Seven Wild Sisters* we meet Sarah-Jane Dillard, and her six sisters growing up someplace in Appalachia and their adventures with the faeries living in the hills. Sarah-Jane is the companion of Lily Kindred, an elderly spinster living on a homestead near the Dillard's farm. Lily teaches Sarah all about the faeries, and how to respectfully treat them, and leads her to choose the homesteading life for herself. She is constantly helping Lilly and learning from her, but one day, Sarah finds herself in her own fairy story, accidentally involving her other red-haired sisters in the adventure of a lifetime.

The faeries in *Seven Wild Sisters* are *not* Tinkerbell. They closely resemble their European counterparts, they are unpredictable, and some, like the antagonistic bee fairies, can be dangerous. The only truly trustworthy faerie is the Apple Tree Man, who has loved Lily for a long time. This version of the faeries is unfamiliar to Americans, and maybe frightening, but children who have previously read traditional fairy tales will soon adapt. The Bee Fairy Queen is much like the Queen of Hearts, screaming and pouting when she doesn't get her way, even killing her own people when they dare question her, and disowning her own daughters when they marry into the Ginseng Fairy royal family. She is ultimately made to pay for her crimes as a longstanding feud comes to an end.

Sarah-Jane and her sisters love each other and stand together when faced with the dangerous Bee Fairies, demonstrating that love is stronger than hatred. The Apple Tree Man goes out on a limb (pun totally intended) for the Dillard girls and Lily in getting himself involved in the feud between the Bees and the

Ginseng. He does this out of love for Lily, and is truly an honorable being. It is clear that he loves Lily enough to stay away from her, as he is nigh-immortal and cannot watch her age and die in her world or watch her pine for home in his. In the end, Lily decides that she had enough of his games and chooses to stay with him.

There is some violence involved in this faerie feud, starting with one of the Ginseng men getting filled with bee-arrows. There is some blood and threats of death toward the girls. Additionally, the book does describe a bit of the folk magic involved with thanking the faeries for letting people take from their realm. Sarah also discusses her discomfort with God's omniscience, and some children may need to be guided through this. Also, one of the older sister's hijinks involves running away with a boy.

All in all, *Seven Wild Sisters* is a great girl-centric adventure story. The details of the world draw you in, making you believe in faeries so long as the book is open. I know it inspired me... maybe it will inspire you too!

Kristen says

I was going through my personal wish list on Amazon (versus the library list that I keep on there), and thought that I should see if the library had it or not. Hey, they did. (Obviously) It's CdL, so I knew I'd enjoy it. I've read nearly all of his books (and own about three-quarters of them) It's relatively short, just under 150 pages, which include a few with art from Charles Vess, and while the story could easily be fleshed out to be a full-length novel, it fits perfectly with its length. It's just a sweet story, with great characters and imagery.

Also, the copy that I have in front of me? I noticed when I opened the cover, it said 'Signed hardcover edition - \$35', and just figured it was a promo or an error. Nope. It's actually signed by CdL. I've never been so tempted to keep a library book before. Don't worry, I'm a good girl, but I'd be lying if I said I hadn't considered asking the library if I could buy it. ;)

La Coccinelle says

A few years ago, over a number of years, I read more than a few of Charles de Lint's books. While I quite like some of his adult novels -- *Trader* and *Yarrow* are a couple of my favourites -- I've had mixed results with his books for younger readers. *The Blue Girl* was good. *Dingo*... not so much. And then there's *Seven Wild Sisters*... which again fell a bit short. It's listed as a Newford book on Goodreads, but all that really means is that it takes place in de Lint's fictional city and surrounding areas. From what I can tell, this book wasn't a sequel or a prequel; you don't need to have read anything else to make sense of this particular story.

The edition that I read was released recently, but it's based on an older edition from 2002. That one had illustrations that were black and white and fewer in number. I could take or leave the illustrations, really. I didn't think they were that special. A couple were cute. A couple more were downright creepy...

The story is very simple, a fairytale about seven sisters who find themselves swept up into the middle of a fairy feud. The whole thing pretty much takes place over the course of one day, so the story itself isn't that complicated. In fact, I found it a little *too* simple. I realize that it's supposed to be a book for middle-grade readers, but I had problems with that. The writing style is... well, it's de Lint's style. And I don't think it

translates very well for younger readers. At times, the syntax seems too adult; at other times -- perhaps to compensate -- it almost seems dumbed down to the point of being condescending.

The other problem I had with this particular syntax was that it made it very difficult to tell the girls apart. There are seven of them, ranging in age from sixteen to... ten? (I'm not sure if we were ever told the youngest twins' age.) That's a lot of characters to keep track of. The narrative switches back and forth between pairs of them (Adie and Elsie, Laurel and Bess, Ruth and Grace) and Sarah Jane, the thirteen-year-old middle daughter (whose sections are narrated in the first person). Sarah Jane's sections were the only ones that were really any different. With any of the other girls, it was difficult to remember which section I was reading, or even who was speaking in each section, because they all sounded alike. There wasn't a lot of difference between the speech patterns of Adie, the eldest, and Ruth and Grace, the youngest twins -- and I thought there should have been.

There was some action in this book, but it fell really flat for me. I didn't ever feel worried for the characters or think that they might not come out of their predicament alive (even though there were a few threats of death throughout the story). Some of the inter-character conflict seemed like it was there just for the sake of conflict. The whole thing wrapped up a little too easily and neatly... and while it was sort of fairytale-esque in its simplicity, I was hoping for more. And when I say "more", I don't mean that bit of teenaged romance tacked on at the end. That was completely unnecessary.

And there was one more thing in particular that really drove me to distraction. The archers in this story always "notched" their arrows. The word was spelled wrong in every instance. It's "nocked"... not "notched". If you're going to write a story with fairies shooting arrows, at least get the terminology right!

Overall, I was not too impressed. I guess I should stick to de Lint's adult fare. I haven't had very good luck with his books for younger readers.

Quotable moment:

"I like my familiar woods, watching the changes settle on them, season after season. I don't feel like a visitor anymore. I'm a neighbor now. I belong. And pretty as this place is, I don't belong here. I feel it like a buzz just under my skin. It's saying, 'You've got another home.'"

<http://theladybugreads.blogspot.ca/20...>

Leah says

Maybe I'm a bit like Sarah Jane Dillard in that I too "like to know the long history of a thing, not just where and what it might be now...(44-45)" because, having first read *The Cats of Tanglewood Forest*, I felt more *connected* to the tale of Seven Wild Sisters than its prequel/companion novel.

What I loved most, about both books, was the relationship between women, especially a young female with her elderly counterpart. That tradition of the two living close together, and the old telling stories to the young who, in listening to those stories, discovers a place and purpose - a sense of belonging, from someone who's already walked the different paths, who believes the wild tales no one else would believe. I think that type of

relationship is important and I really enjoy how de Lint honored it in both books.

4.5 stars

Becky says

Seven Wild Sisters is a charming fantasy novel set in the modern world. The novel begins by focusing on the middle daughter, Sarah Jane, but by the end of the novel, all seven sisters have played a role in this delightful fairy fantasy adventure. The story begins, well, one could choose a dozen different "real" beginnings for this one, so I'll merely say the STORY FOR SARAH JANE begins when she befriends "Aunt Lillian." Aunt Lillian lives alone, secluded, near the woods. No electricity, no running water, no "modern" conveniences. No easy life for her. She wouldn't want to really slow down. She lives off the land; she lives for the land. She has almost seen it all. And by all, I mean she has had ENCOUNTERS with faeries and such. She is definitely different and in a way extraordinary. Sarah Jane, of course, LOVES her once she gets to know her, and from the start, Sarah Jane WANTS to get to know her. Sarah Jane's sisters are more reluctant perhaps, but, enter into this big adventure they will nevertheless! The other sisters include: Adie, Laurel and Bess, Elsie, Ruth and Grace.

Sarah Jane's adventures start when despite Aunt Lillian's advice, she finds herself getting involved in "a war" between different faeries. She sees an injured 'Sang man--100 poisoned arrows piercing him--and helps him. The bee faeries are "the enemy" depending on which "side" you find yourself. Lillian KNOWS Sarah Jane put herself--and her family--at risk. But she'll do everything she can to help her out of the mess and into a big adventure she'll never forget.

I liked this one very much. I'm not sure I LOVED it.

Steph Myers says

The images were what caught my attention and had me checking out this book. Unfortunately, despite sweet graphics that are very retro, the story fell flat. It felt like a whole lot of detail was left out. I'm guessing the book was targeted to 5th graders (ish) and that it has been awhile since the author was around young readers. Could have been a great story, but there was no world-building which is kind of crucial for fantasy fiction.
