



A Nearer Moon

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In a small river village where the water is cursed, a girl's bravery—and the existence of magic—could mean the difference between life and death in this elegant, luminous tale from the author of *Parched* and *Audacity*.

Along a lively river, in a village raised on stilts, lives a girl named Luna. All her life she has heard tales of the time before the dam appeared, when sprites danced in the currents and no one got the mysterious wasting illness from a mouthful of river water. These are just stories, though—no sensible person would believe in such things.

Beneath the waves is someone who might disagree. Perdita is a young water sprite, delighting in the wet splash and sparkle, and sad about the day her people will finally finish building their door to another world, in search of a place that humans have not yet discovered.

But when Luna's little sister falls ill with the river sickness, everyone knows she has only three weeks to live. Luna is determined to find a cure for her beloved sister, no matter what it takes. Even if that means believing in magic. . . .

A Nearer Moon Details

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Author : Melanie Crowder

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From Reader Review A Nearer Moon for online ebook

Fran says

I picked this book off the shelf on a whim and I'm so glad I did!

Becca says

Loved the cover, not so the tale inside. Though well imagined, it felt to me as though the author was trying too hard. It just didn't flow. Some of the dialogue was a bit jarring, such as the use of the term "OK." This and a few other expressions did not match the tone of the rest of the work.

Ella Zegarra says

Original de: El Blog del Gato - El Extraño Gato del Cuento

Te recomiendo A Nearer Moon si te gusta la fantasía y la narración que se toma su buen tiempo en contarte la historia. Soy millennial así que necesito satisfacción instantánea (?)

En alguna de mis versiones en mundos paralelos, una Ella quedó encantada con esta historia, pero la Ella de este mundo se aburrió horriblemente.

La Ella del mundo paralelo obviamente es muchísimo más inteligente que yo

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Jonathan Peto says

I often love the abbreviated plots of intermediate reader novels, and this one built up in an interesting way. Chapters alternate between a human and a sprite, so of course there's suspense as you anticipate the two characters meeting. Before the narration by the human and the sprite begins, the story opens with a brief, omniscient voice that introduces a malevolent, magic swamp creature, which I sensed was some kind of Grinch or Grendel. That cued the suspense too.

The descriptive writing - lots of ornate language describing nature - was often a feast. Despite that detail though, somehow, the overall setting felt lost or vague. Perhaps it just did not appeal to me. The people, including those in a nearby city, live on the water, but I was unable to vividly visualise their city when Luna traveled there, unlike say, Dale, in the The Hobbit.

Luna, the human girl, has a boat and a younger sister. They live on a swamp. The sprite also has a sister she

loves, so their narratives mirror each other from the start. I wish the sister theme ended on a stronger note, but something spoiled it for me and explaining it would be a spoiler. I hope some of my students read it, because I'm curious if it works for them. I also want you to give it a try, so I'm not even going to describe and hide the spoiler.

A simple yet shocking event gets things off with a bang, the middle kept my interest, and the ending was a fine idea. However, the ending finished too quickly. I'm not exactly sure how the author could have elaborated at the end to draw it out, but I needed something. The climatic event raced by too fast to really affect me as much as the characters and I deserved, and that's a shame.

Beth says

This is a sweet, very simple story. It's straightforward and ultimately predictable, but it's about sisterhood, so I can't be *that* negative about it.

Though frankly, the fact that no one has ever read an herbal lore book and tried the very easy cure for "soured waters" strikes me as completely ludicrous.

Susana says

2.5 Stars

Arc provided by Atheneum Books For Young Readers Through Edelweiss

Release Date: September 8 th

First of all: cover love!

This cover is so beautiful and so accurate to the story, that it is impossible for me not to love it.

As for the story, I actually found it good: This is mostly a story about bonds.

Family and friendship bonds. Did I like the way it was done?

I did.

The relationship between the sisters _ both of them _ was lovely to read.

The reaction to the events that end up happening, and the way family and friends react to it, all felt very real to me.

However I can not ignore the fact that the story didn't touch me, as I thought it would.

(The fact that I have read about two thousand books so far in my life, may have something to do with it, but things are the way they are.)

As such, part of the blame can be placed on me : I may have not been in the proper state of mind to read it... although I do tend to read many middle grade books...and love them.

I wasn't crazy about the writing. Also I can't help feeling that the intended audience will probably have a hard time with it.

Basically I thought this would be much more adventure oriented that it turned out to be.

As for the middle grade label, I don't know but there moments in which the writing style rubbed me the wrong way: there were times in which I felt that it sounded more "juvenile" than actually "middle grade".

Middle grade for me, most of the times tends to have more complex stories than ninety percent of so called YA/NA/Adult books out there.

Basically for the first time in my life, I wish I had a kid of my own so I could ask him/her, his/her thoughts regarding this book. --

Like I said, it may be a case of me being too old for this book, so give it a try!

Andrea Cox says

I love a good fantasy book, though I don't read them as often as I would like. This fantasy for young readers was delightful. I adored that it was about sisters and friendship and hope and new beginnings.

The faith in the book seemed to not be able to make up its mind. One line indicated the Big Bang Theory, while others leaned more toward Catholicism. Both were handled lightly enough that young readers might miss them, but they'd be great conversation starters if the book is read with an adult. I can imagine great discussions could spark from this story.

Content:

- * Big Bang Theory (one line)
- * Catholicism (several lines about prayer beads and such)
- * magic (light; what I would expect in a children's fantasy story)

Rating: 4 stars

I was not compensated for my honest review.

Brandy Painter says

Originally posted here at Random Musings of a Bibliophile.

The cover of A Nearer Moon captured me the moment I saw it. That the book is written by Melanie Crowder whose release, Audacity, earlier this year completely captivated me guaranteed that I would want to read it.

It is a brilliant work of fantasy with an amazing heart.

Luna lives in a village on stilts in a swamp. Luna has grown up on her grandmother's stories of the time when she was a child before the great trees fell creating the dam that turned their beautiful river into a swamp with foul water. Even one mouthful of the swamp's water brings on a wasting sickness with no cure. Three weeks to the day the unfortunate person swallows the water they die. When Luna's sister, who is the joy and spirit of her family, gets a mouthful of the water one day, Luna is determined to do anything to save her. Luna has never believed in magic or curses, but when the doctor in the floating city says she can do nothing to help an illness caused by magic, Luna becomes even more desperate and is willing to consider everything and offer anything for the life of her sister.

A Nearer Moon has so many aspects I adore in a good fantasy: faerie lore, strong determined characters, a community working to overcome harsh odds. At its heart and core, A Nearer Moon is a story about sisterhood. It's strength, bond, and love. Interwoven with the story of Luna and her sister is the story of twin water sprites, Perdita and Pergia. The sprites are part of the story of Luna's village too, the magical history she doesn't believe in. Sibling stories are a favorite of mine no matter what, but I particularly enjoy stories of sisters. In each case here, the sister are very different from each other, but they balance each other out. The thought of or reality of one losing the other is impossible to bear. It is a fantastical window onto a very real grief and sadness that so many experience. Luna's story in particular is a very real look at what grief can do to a family.

Luna is a brave and determined heroine. She is stubborn and unwilling to back down from a challenge. She is deeply frustrated by her mother's resignation to the situation. Many of her ideas and actions are reckless, but her motivation is so heartfelt. The sacrifices she is willing to make for Willow show a courage and devotion that is beautiful in every way. In contrast, Perdita's story is almost a cautionary tale in what can happen if you allow grief, anger, and rage to consume you. It shows how interconnected the world and everyone in it is.

I really enjoyed the way Crowder wove the two stories together and how the histories of the two sets of sisters are all tangled up together as is their hope for the future. The prose Crowder uses are perfect for the story she is telling. With few words she builds and creates a complex layered world with a fascinating history and interesting characters. The story is beautifully told and the language lyrical. The contents match the gorgeous cover. This is one of my favorite reads of the year.

I read an ARC made available by the publisher, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, via Edelweiss. A Nearer Moon goes on sale September 8th.

Jen (Book Den) says

I loved this book. My plan was to read A Nearer Moon over the weekend, but once I opened it Friday night, I didn't move until I had read the entire thing.

Luna and Willow live in the swamp. For good reason, their mother has strict rules regarding where the girls are allowed to go.

Don't go past the bend in the river.

Don't go below the dam.
Steer far away from the slick.

The villagers know the swamp is cursed. The villagers know a creature lives beneath the slick. Luna followed all the rules, and Willow still fell sick to the swamp's waters. Maybe Luna needs to break those rules to save her.

A Nearer Moon is a gorgeous middle grade fantasy about the love between sisters. It's imaginative and heartbreaking, and it's brilliant.

Simply put, A Nearer Moon is one of my favorite fairy tales of all time.

Jasmine says

A beautiful, slight, resilient story. No wasted space. Nothing in here that doesn't need to be for this tale of family and loss. I read it forward and backwards and it still made sense.

Not sure that I LIKE this story, mind you, but goodness it's well done.

Sarah Briel says

This book is magnificent. I was a bit worried coming into it, that due to its slimness it'd be too young for me, but this is the type of book that one can read their whole life and never get bored with. The plot makes me so happy; my emotions were so overflowing when I finished it.

It starts out with a short prologue which tells you in beautiful description a little about where the book is placed. (Okay ... I just made it sound bad. Trust me, it's not) Then comes upon one of the main characters, Luna. The book switches back and forth between the heart wrenching stories of two pairs of sisters who love each other more than life.

The writing is perfect and sweet; just easy enough for anyone to read, but still eloquent enough to catch the eye of any reader.

The story is truly as beautiful as the cover.

Read more of my review here at [Penumbra Reviews](#)

Barb Middleton says

Some writers make every word count. They are so succinct and efficient at the craft that what would leave others scrambling for extra sheets of paper, they can wallop a manuscript out in fewer words. Melanie Crowder does that in 150 pages. Her poetic prose is rich with meaning, characterization, and plot that makes for a satisfying read. Two sisters are playing together when an accident happens and one becomes ill with a

wasting disease while the other does everything in her power to heal her out of love and guilt. This story looks at grief, disease, community and sisterhood and what it means to be resilient in the face of terrible odds.

Luna lives on a swamp where the water is dangerous. It wasn't always that way. Luna's grandma recalls when the river flowed clear and was swimmable until the day the earth shook and trees fell forming a dam that created an inky sludge of backwaters. The villagers put their homes on stilts and created swinging bridges as sidewalks to get around and used boats for transportation. Any villagers that accidentally got swamp water in their mouths became infected with a wasting sickness and died three weeks from the day. Rumor is that the swamp is cursed and a creature lives below the waters, but Luna doesn't believe it.

Luna loves to pole through the waters on her boat with her younger, joyful sister Willow. One day the two are having a hey-ho time with Willow laughing hysterically as Luna spins the boat. Out of nowhere the boat dips down into the water and Willow gets the murky swamp water in her mouth. Sure enough, symptoms of the wasting sickness appear and Luna does everything in her power to cure Willow. While the reader knows what pulled the boat down, Luna does not and the reader is not sure why Willow was a target. The answers are slowly revealed and paralleled with two points of view.

Luna's story alternates with Perdita's, a sprite who loves to wander and adores her twin sister, Gia. The magical world of sprites is disappearing as more humans appear and dig metals out of the earth. Most metals poison sprites and they can no longer coexist with the humans so they portal to other worlds. The world of magic and make-believe exists in the vast imaginations of children. As they grow up they lose this to some extent as they gain scientific knowledge and explanations. In this story the adults no longer believe in magic and they can't help cure their sickness because they lack the imagination to realize a sprite lives beneath the waters.

At first Luna embraces science and tries to get a doctor to heal Willow. When the doctor says there is nothing he can do, Luna tries to drain the swamp. She goes through all the steps that others have tried and that have not worked. Sometimes science fails with curing or diagnosing diseases and a loved one dies. Luna faces this dilemma but it doesn't stop her. When she embraces the fact that something magical might be happening then she gets results. Unexpected results. Reading fantasy stories means believing in that which is unbelievable, but that can point to truths in everyday life.

Luna learns the satisfaction of trying to do everything she can and that alone gives her peace at the end. It is not the goal so much as the process that is important. When playing soccer the teams that do the best are the ones that don't think about the score but focus on doing what they can and working together as a unit. The same happens in this book except Luna has to work with her best friend, Berry, and less so with the rest of her family. Her uncle gives her a book with a tip on dealing with magic, but people don't really believe in magic anymore. Her mother is so absorbed in her grief and anger that she cannot see how Luna is hurting or her harshness. Luna's grandma refers to moon charts hoping for a cure. In their own way, the family is trying to deal with the hurt and grief but Luna takes the most action out of everyone. She tries the hardest and that is a message we all need to hear over and over again.

Luna's mother has already lost her husband and the thought of losing another family member has put her over the edge. She spends her days in the chapel and has given up hope. Unlike Luna who feels guilty that Willow got sick on her boat, she takes action while the mother seeks comfort in religion. One poignant line shows the difficulty of grief: "Mama had left early that morning taking her frightened fury up to the chapel where it wouldn't lash out like a bent branch and strike Luna's already bowed back." Paralleled to Mama's grief is Perdita's or Perdy's. She has let sorrow turn her into something ugly. She can't stand to see joy in

others so she snuffs it out of their lives.

The heart of the story is the bond between sisters. The alternate story strengthens Luna's as it shows how Gia did everything in her power to create a link between herself and her sister so that she could call her home whenever she was wandering. This metaphor reminded me of the parable of the lost son a bit as Perdy is lost but redeems herself when found again. The powerful bond of families and siblings is another theme. Just talk to a grieving person as they talk about going "home" to see the loved ones that have died before them. Just like Gia and Perdy are separated by worlds, so are humans by death from those they love.

Members of the community didn't leave when the river changed, because it was home where their grandparents and "...great-great grandparents had first taken a felled tree and carved a boat to winnow through the streams." Luna's community came together during the river crisis and they helped each other and cared for each other. They still do. I feel a bit like Perdy. A wanderer. One that uses Skype as my magical locket to see those I love. Home for me will always be where I grew up; where my great-great grandparents first migrated to the United States. But home is changing now. My daughter lives in a different state with my grandson. I've lived in different countries. But the one constant has always been my family and that is ultimately what this story is about - being loved, having a home, and doing your best.

Carla *Jen7waters* says

My goodness, that's a beautiful cover *O*

Lucy Jade says

Absolutely beautiful. The description in this book makes my heart full. I almost wished myself there with the characters. Really enjoyed this

Zaz says

A nice story about sisters, with a pleasant paranormal touch, but lacking flesh.

Luna and Willow are two sisters living near a swamp. Perdita and Pelagia are twin sisters, but also small water sprites. Things turn badly for all of them, leaving Luna and Perdita desperate and lonely. With the help of her friend Benny, Luna will try to save the day.

The two stories intertwined nicely, giving a pleasant fantastical vibe to this short book. I enjoyed the swamp atmosphere and the young characters were likable enough. However, the story was a little too simple and easy for my tastes and not very entertaining. The last part felt a bit rushed, I would have preferred a more developed encounter to have the time to deal with the events and appreciate the outcome.
