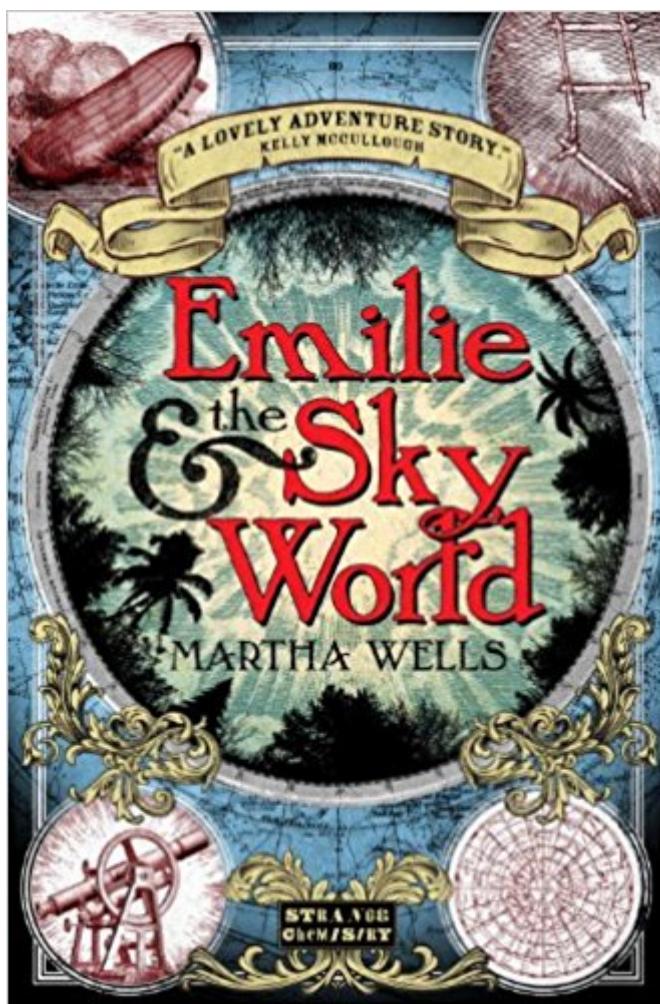


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Emilie And The Sky World (Strange Chemistry)



Synopsis

When Emilie and Daniel arrive in Silk Harbor, Professor Abindon, an old colleague of the Marlendes, warns them that she's observed something strange and potentially deadly in the sky, a disruption in an upper air aether current. But as the Marlendes investigate further, they realize it's a ship from another aetheric plane. It may be just a friendly explorer, or something far more sinister, but they will have to take an airship into the dangerous air currents to find out. Emilie joins the expedition and finds herself deep in personal entanglements, with an angry uncle, an interfering brother, and an estranged mother to worry about – not to mention a lost family of explorers, the strange landscapes of the upper air, and the deadly menace that inhabits the sky world.

Book Information

Series: Strange Chemistry

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Strange Chemistry (March 4, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1908844523

ISBN-13: 978-1908844521

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.9 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 18 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,659,128 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #74 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Exploration & Discovery #18835 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy #20815 in Books > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy & Magic

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

"A rollicking adventure yarn with plenty of heart - Emilie & the Hollow World shouldn't be missed." - Ann Aguirre, USA Today bestselling author of the Razorland and Beauty books. "Emilie is the best kind of adventurer - curious, courageous, stubborn, resourceful, and quick to make friends. I can't wait to see where she goes exploring next." - Sharon Shinn --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Martha Wells is the author of several fantasy novels that have been published by Tor and HarperCollins, including *Death of a Necromancer*, which was a 1999 Nebula Nominee. Publishers Weekly has said of her work: "Wells continues to demonstrate an impressive gift for creating finely detailed fantasy worlds rife with many-layered intrigues and immensely personable characters." And she has been lauded by authors such as Anne McCaffrey and Robin Hobb. Her books have been published in eight languages, including French, Spanish, German, Russian, and Dutch. Her most recent novel, *The Cloud Roads* was released by Night Shade Books in 2011. The sequel *The Serpent Sea* is forthcoming in 2012.

There are many different kinds of adventure stories, and just as many variations to make them stand apart. In *Emilie & the Sky World*, Martha Wells presents a young female protagonist striking out to make her own way in life. This book is a sequel to *Emilie & the Hollow World*, so readers who have read that book will already know the steps that Emilie has taken toward independence. She has left the oppression of an overbearing uncle to find excitement and freedom working with a team of explorers. Through her previous adventure, she has discovered her self worth. She knows she's capable and trustworthy, a travelling companion her fellow adventurers can rely on. But this time around, they are taking to the sky to travel to a realm plagued by mysterious, malevolent creatures, and along the way, Emilie must deal with the sibling rift between her and her brother. Through exploration, sibling rivalry and dangerous foes, Martha Wells weaves a tale that brings female adventurers to the forefront. Now as a male reader myself, I really enjoy diving into a story where the leading characters are females. The sci-fi and fantasy stories I read are typically dominated by male casts or male leads, so it's refreshing to see something different, especially when it's well done. Emilie is the type of protagonist I find easy to get behind. She's likeable, capable and courageous in just the right amounts that you can see yourself as the character. None of us are perfect, but an overly flawed character can often be too much of a hurdle to surpass. Through Emilie's story, readers get to experience her wonder and accomplishment as she explores new realms and relationships. While this story revolves around exploration, the core of it is the relationships of the characters. Emilie must deal with the strained relationship she has with her brother Efrain. Reflecting that conflict, Emilie also notices the strained relationship between her fellow explorers. Miss Marlende and Professor Abindon quickly reveal a rift between them that mimics the one between Emilie and Efrain. Both pairs of characters notice the issues between each other which helps them recognize

their own issues and overcome them. It adds a nice intricacy to the plot. Adding some flavor to the book is exploration element of the story. While the familiar aspects of family rifts and finding your own self-worth ground the book with something readers can relate to, it's the introduction of the strange and bizarre that makes it all fun. Their trip to the sky world reveals weird flying vessels inhabited by fantastical beings. One of them turns into a major character in the book. Made of plants, roots and flower blooms, I couldn't help but picture the character as Groot from Guardians of the Galaxy. The coincidental characteristics really added to the fun of the character. Together, Emilie and the plant being are able to help out when things turn most dire. Now at the risk of revealing too much, the villains of this story deserve some attention. To maintain some level of secrecy and mystery, I'll refer to them as the ghost pirates, which is what Emilie ends up calling them in the book. The ghost pirates are used to maximum effect, disrupting the journey, throwing everyone into peril, and forcing Emilie to rise above and beyond to help her friends. It is in her pursuit to help those she cares for that she becomes the hero. She proves to her brother that she is not a helpless girl, but a fully capable and courageous adventurer. In turn, she also earns her right to be among the Marlene's in their strange voyage. And hopefully all her hard work and accomplishments will pay off for another adventure yet to come. As a young adult novel, Emilie & the Sky World is a book that appeals to a much broader audience. It can be enjoyed by readers of all ages. Yet it's also a book backed by a very diverse cast. With its cast of determined, capable women, it lends itself to the female audience. For those looking for people of color, almost all of the characters are non-white. Even sexual diversity is touched upon. Thus, at the end of the day, you get a story that not only explores new worlds, but the diversity of our own world without being heavy handed about it. It's a great way to do it. For readers looking for a fun exploration novel with a lead female character, Emilie & the Sky World is a great book to check out. The story delves into issues we can all relate to while also diving into the unknown and forcing us to wonder what we might do in such a situation. By creating such grounded, believable characters, Martha Wells makes it easy to slip into the shoes of the characters and see the situations through their eyes. As such, it's a book that delivers entertainment and escapism, adventure and self-reflection. I give it a five out of five.

Emilie's been back from her adventure in the Hollow World for only a short time before the uncle whose home she fled shows up with her brother to take her back. But bigger things are in store. Something has shown up in the aetheric current -- a ship unlike any seen before. It can only mean

that the Hollow World isn't the only one that can be reached by means of the currents. Are the ship's occupants friendly, or do they mean trouble? There's only one way to find out, and so it's off into the aether again for Emilie and her companions from the earlier book, along with her stowaway brother. When they reach the other ship, it appears to be deserted, and the first party that goes to investigate disappears. What could have happened to them? I'm not going to tell, but I have two words for you: ghost pirates. If that doesn't sell you, well, you just don't think like I do. Let me add that there are several twists and turns to the narrative before things are settled and that there's more than just adventure going on. Emilie and her brother have a few issues, and their evolving relationship is one of the things that makes the book entertaining. As in the first book, Emilie proves herself clever, resourceful, and ready to take risks for her friends. If you're looking for a fast-moving YA adventure with interesting characters and a vivid setting, this is it. Check it out.

My first thought on reading the Emilie books was "This is what would result from Joan Aiken taking a vacation in the worlds of Edgar Rice Burroughs." Wells has a gift for writing detailed fantasy settings which are at the same time wildly imaginative and well realized. Without going into spoilers, this is a fun adventure story with a likeable and well realized character. As the second book, there is somewhat less sense of immediate wonder, as we've seen the universe and the characters before. The character arc was more internal, and handled with a very light touch. As an adult reader I appreciate this; I think I would have liked it better as a child reader as well. The book does not insult the reader's intelligence with cardboard cutout secondary characters, something I look for. If I were to point out one flaw, the story seemed a little shorter than it could have been as the characters become more detailed. I'd like to see them given more text in which to shine - but as the parent of a fast reader I may be tolerant of longer YA books than is rational. This book can be read on its own, but the first in the series is also quite good and I would recommend reading them in order if you're getting both. (H. K.'s husband. doesn't seem to know we read the same books, so reviewing from her account.)

Martha Wells writes some of my favorite fantasy, and always does a splendid job with world building. This series is a little simpler writing and plotting-wise, aimed at about middle school/early high school level, but is still charming to an adult reader. Emilie is plucky without being obnoxious, optimistic without being pollyannaish. She has her moments of failure and makes mistakes, but picks herself up and figures out another way to get the job done. I think a lot of 12-14 year olds

would enjoy her uncritically, and even adults will find themselves cheering for her, although they will probably figure out most of the plot before she does.

I really enjoyed Emilie and the Sky World. Emilie is a smart, practical, determined character who puts all her intelligence and skills to use as she faces extraordinary events and circumstances. To say anything more about what those events and circumstances are would give too much away. Many of the supporting characters from Emilie and the Hollow World have returned, and we meet several interesting new characters. If you like good and fantastical adventure, strong and well-defined characters, and exemplary and detailed world-building, this is a book for you.

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