



Starry River of the Sky

Grace Lin

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From bestselling author Grace Lin comes the companion to the Newbery Honor winner *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* and the National Book Award finalist *When the Sea Turned to Silver*.

The moon is missing from the remote Village of Clear Sky, but only a young boy named Rendi seems to notice! Rendi has run away from home and is now working as a chore boy at the village inn. He can't help but notice the village's peculiar inhabitants and their problems.

But one day, a mysterious lady arrives at the Inn with the gift of storytelling, and slowly transforms the villagers and Rendi himself. As she tells more stories and the days pass in the Village of Clear Sky, Rendi begins to realize that perhaps it is his own story that holds the answers to all those questions.

Newbery Honor author Grace Lin brings readers another enthralling fantasy featuring her marvelous full-color illustrations. *Starry River of the Sky* is filled with Chinese folklore, fascinating characters, and exciting new adventures.

Starry River of the Sky Details

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ISBN : 9780316125970
Author : Grace Lin
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From Reader Review Starry River of the Sky for online ebook

Katherine Cowley says

A modern retelling of traditional Chinese stories, this book is set in the same story world as *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. It's not a sequel (it's set several hundred years before the other story), but it's not exactly a prequel either, though a few characters figure prominently in both books.

The things I love about this book and the first are the same: Chinese mythology retold, that it's a story about storytelling, that young people make choices that make a big difference in their world. I also like the differences; the first book is a journey story; this one is a story about stasis (the inciting incident is the interruption or halting of a journey).

Starry River of the Sky also features a character who is a bit less likable at the start, and the story shows him learning to interact in positive ways with others. What hooked me into the first story was the main character; what hooked me into this one was trying to figure out who the main character is and what he is running away from.

I also like that Grace Lin doesn't take a definitive stance on the mythology, even between the two books, leaving things open to interpretation by the characters in the story, based off of the times in which they live.

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon is a book about happiness and family. *Starry River of the Sky* is about forgiveness and responsibility. It's well worth the read. I'd definitely recommend it, and it's one I'll read with my children once they get a little older.

Luci De says

I rate this book a 3.5

Personally I found the book quite boring in the beginning. But as the story went on, it was pretty fun to figure out the small mysteries hidden into the story. The ending was my favorite part. :D

Laura (bbliophile) says

I got a little bit confused when it came to the character's and who's who in this one, but I still liked it a lot. And I loved seeing how all of these stories are interwoven with each other.

The Styling Librarian says

Feel so honored to read this book. Looking forward to sharing it with students and friends for years to come. Perfect stand-alone story with rich folktale mixture intertwined with the most beautiful story with rich character development. Cannot wait to read it again when it is officially published with all the illustrations richly in color as the treasure of *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*!

Ms. Yingling says

This is one of those books that makes me feel like an AWFUL librarian. All the cool kids like it, but I found it personally painful to read. I don't know why-- I usually adore books with an Asian theme even though they are a hard sell at my school. Most commenters say this is lyrical and beautifully written, which is true, but my students never ask for lyrical books. My problem, what made me take my glasses off and scrub my face in frustration, was that not much happened, and the minute it did, the story was interrupted with a bit of legend with Apparent Deep Meaning. I had to read the legend and try to interpret it while just wanting to find out what was going on. The only comment I had made about Where the Mountain Meets the Moon was that it seems to young for middle school, and maybe this is the case with this book. If this sort of book would circulate at my library, I would buy it, but I just don't see it doing well, and I found it so frustrating that I would find it hard to recommend.

Clearly, I am completely alone in this opinion.

Nu-Jahat-Jabin says

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Christina Pilkington says

Although not a direct sequel to *Where the Mountain meets the Moon*, *Starry River of the Sky* has enough overlapping elements that readers of Lin's early work will recognize and love.

Lin reimagines and reshapes Chinese folktales and combines them with gorgeous illustrations to create a beautifully written story of tales within tales. I **ADORED** the way this book was written! It's both simply written and extremely poetic at the same time. Its strong themes of revenge and forgiveness is perfectly captured in the story of a young boy who leaves his family and learns how to find both love and forgiveness in a small, remote village.

I highly recommend this book and Lin's writing in general. An wonderful middle grade novel.

Betsy says

I remember when Grace Lin first started writing chapter books for kids. She'd been doing picture books (mostly for others) for years and when at last she started creating small semi-fictionalized memoirs based on her own experiences she ended up tapping into a kind of 21st century need for books with a realistic "classic" (forgive the phrase) feel. The sideways shift into fully illustrated full-color folktale-based fiction felt simultaneously like a throwback to a long-forgotten era (particularly when you consider how few straight folktales are published these days) and a very hip and modern mix-and-meld of text and image and tale. The gamble paid off (they don't throw Newbery Awards at every book that meanders down the pike after all) and now, years later, Ms. Lin returns with yet another folktale/fiction retelling. She can no longer claim the small unnoticed status she once enjoyed. Not if she keeps writing books as good as this one anyway.

This wasn't part of the plan. Not the way he envisioned it, anyway. When Rendi hid in the wine merchant's traveling cart he naturally assumed it would take him somewhere big and populated. The last thing he expected was to be dumped in the middle-of-nowhere Village of Clear Sky. Now a chore boy in the only inn in the vicinity, Rendi takes his frustrations out on the inhabitants. It isn't until a mysterious and beautiful lady appears telling strange tales that he finds himself wrapped up in a mystery that may answer a twin problems: The location of the moon that disappeared several nights ago and the reason that only Rendi can hear unknown groans and moans on the night wind.

Though I knew walking in that the book wasn't going to be a sequel to Lin's Newbery Honor winning title *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* I wasn't prepared for the overlapping elements that connect the two books. Interestingly both books have the same villain, though as before he is seen off-screen and mostly in retrospect. Magistrate Tiger isn't your standard stock villain, though. He has his moments of softness, if not goodness. These moments serve to make him far more interesting than the countless two-dimensional baddies that populate so many of our children's books. Other connections exist as well. The old man of the mountain with his book who was so sought after in "*Where the Mountain*" may indeed make an appearance in the second as well. And then there's a certain killer tiger . . .

As with *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* (and even her works of realistic fiction, for that matter) Lin peppers her tale with classic Chinese folktales, adapted and reconstructed to serve the story. Yet unlike her other book Ms. Lin's stories here are becoming increasingly sophisticated. They all engage in a cyclical pattern. Seemingly unconnected at the start, every tale refers back to its teller in some way, and some even

double back to tell stories that lead directly into tales already heard. By the time you reach the end you realize that no tale exists entirely by itself and that the key to the mystery and the solution to the story lies in remembering each tale. The crazy thing is that even as the book does this it appears on the outset to just be this sweet and simple children's story. Fair play to Lin's mad plotting skills then.

With its subdued cover and literary title, this is probably going to have to be one of those books that need to be talked up to get kids interested. The already existing Lin converts who ate up all her Pacy titles and devoured *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* will naturally gravitate to the book anyway. For the others, it may take a little finagling. Fortunately a booktalk for this title basically writes itself. All you have to do is mention a boy with a mysterious path on the run, magic toads, bandits and kidnap attempts, thwarted lovers, tricking people into eating snails, and a mysterious being that moans in misery and pain but can only be heard by our hero and voila! Instant if not interest then curiosity.

When an author for children is good from the get-go it can sound like a bit of backhanded praise to say that they've improved over the years. Ms. Lin has always been an accomplished author and her plots have certainly always worked. Yet with *Starry River of the Sky* she cranks up the quality an additional notch or two. Perfectly planned and wholly original, she delivers her best novel for kids yet. It just works.

Pari Zad says

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Bookishrealm says

Okay so this one was my third book for #diverseathon and I really enjoyed it! It has so many great elements to it specifically the inclusion of Chinese folklore. Here's what I specifically liked about the novel:

- Learning stories and legends associated with Chinese culture. I'm a huge fanatic of mythology and folklore so this book was definitely right up my alley.
- I enjoyed the characters. The main character Rendi was easy to relate to and although he had a tough time learning about himself and others, the reader is really given the opportunity to see him grow and appreciate those around him.
- I like that the folklore was infused around the main parts of the story, yet it had everything to do with how the story ended.
- The authors writing was clear, concise, and to the point and it was relatively easy to get through.
- This book contains full color illustrations which are absolutely beautiful.
- This is a good story for children who are learning what it means to heal through forgiveness. The main character is only comfortable with his life and those people in his life when he learns the importance of forgiveness.

Overall, I thought that this was a great book. I really really enjoyed the folklore associated with the book and I also really love the fact that the author provides the reader with additional reading about where she discovered these tales and how she adapted them. This is a great book if you looking to add a little diversity

to your reading.

Jenny says

I love Lin's writing. I love the beautiful stories woven together and the themes that feature in her work. My children loved noticing the connections between *Starry River of the Sky* and *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. We listened to this on CD, and the reader does a great job. Lessons to remember: the way to peace is forgiveness. You can choose to be fierce like a tiger or calm and kind...no matter who your parent is or what your background.

A few great quotes: "If a listener truly understands, he can hear what others cannot."

"It is better to light a lantern than to bemoan the darkness."

"Sometimes the best decision is a painful one, but it is never made out of anger."

"Instead of losing his unhappiness, he lost himself and the things he held dearest."

Amber Scaife says

A boy runs away from home and finds ends up as a helper boy at the town of Clear Sky's inn. But something's not right here - the moon is gone from the sky, Rendi can hear someone moaning every night, and everyone seems to be hiding something about their true identity.

Lin's storytelling abilities are spectacular, and her way of spinning stories within stories and connecting them all together is wonderful. Definitely recommended, as the writing is as magical as the stories themselves.

Isabel Carter says

I think this book was very interesting, but it wouldn't be my first choice. The overall story was touching and deep.

Barb Middleton says

Taiwanese workers have been fixing the leaking hot water pipes in our apartment. Custom is to not wear shoes inside apartments, but I cringe thinking they will slice open their foot on the shards of bricks, concrete and tiles scattered on the floor. I point to the tennis shoes I'm walking around in and say, "Okay... shoes." Then I give the thumbs up. They laugh and I noticed over the course of a week them eventually wearing shoes inside the apartment. While I like this custom of removing shoes, I think exceptions are okay too. The joy of living overseas is this sharing of cultures and I love how Grace Lin mixes Asian customs and blends cultures in a seamless way in her novels. This story takes Chinese folklore and weaves it into a storyline so masterfully that if you aren't familiar with them, you would think Lin made the stories up.

Rendi has run away from home and ends up in a remote village as a chore boy at an Inn. He is horribly angry with his father's choices. At the village Inn Rendi meets people who care about each other and who are also dealing with their own problems. Peiyi's mom has died. Master Chao fights with his neighbor, Widow Yang, and his son left after they had a horrible argument. MeiLan, Widow Yang's daughter, must secretly be friends with Peiyi and is in love with Master Chao's son. Mr. Shan is an old man who eats at the Inn every day and is getting more and more confused as the days go by. Worst of all the moon is missing and Rendi hears the night wind moaning and groaning so he can't sleep. When the mysterious Madame Chang arrives at the Inn she tells stories that not only entertain the guests but help heal their troubles. When Rendi joins in with his own stories he finds healing in a way he didn't expect.

Grace Lin's use of images such as prayer beads, dragon's pearl, lychees, peach symbol of longevity, and more, creates a setting rooted in Asian culture. Yet the themes are universal and abundant. Characters are searching for peace, acceptance, family, wisdom, belonging, and forgiveness. While this is mainly Rendi's story, she entangles all the stories in such a way that I found myself going back to reread what happened in a previous story because it applied to a future story. The complexity of how Lin interconnects these stories and characters makes for a terrific plot.

Those who read Lin's book, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, will recognize Magistrate Tiger, the White tiger, and the old sage, but this story seemed more complex because of the plotting. Lin's character's are engaging and interesting from the tension caused by their internal changes. Rendi has to make choices on his attitude toward others, the way he wants to live his life, and decision to forgive others, and what it means to "return home." Rendi grows into a better person from his experiences and I can't help but think of my own life of living overseas, growing as an individual, and eventually "returning home."

There's a lot of Newbery buzz around this one. I can see why.

Reading level 5.8

Kidsmomo says

Review by Karen, intended for young readers:

I have a very important tip for you: the next time you have a cross-country flight and you're looking for the perfect book to keep you entertained — make you chuckle, make your eyes well up with tears, make the time pass ridiculously quickly — choose *Starry River of the Sky* by Grace Lin.

Of course, it's always a risk to pack just one book for a long plane ride because what if you hate it from the first chapter and you're stuck reading the Skymall magazine in your seatback pocket instead? Not to worry, in this case! I started reading the book as we sat on the runway and I was hooked right away. And once I started, I read it straight through until I finished. I couldn't even put it down during the take-off when I usually close my eyes because I get a headache from the plane going at an angle!

The book tells the story of Rendi, a runaway boy who gets stuck in a teeny village, working alongside a family that owns the local inn. While he plots his departure, he gets to know the village residents and the mysterious woman staying at the inn — and so do you. And you'll probably get to wondering: Could they all be connected to the fact that the moon is missing and the sky seems to cry? What in their history is coming back to haunt them? What secrets are they hiding? And what are they revealing in the stories they tell to pass the time?

Variations on Chinese folk tales play a big role in this book, but the story never feels dull OR overly fantastical. There's an element of magic, but it's really a story about the human heart — and how one boy

changes the lives of everyone in the town.

So, what makes this book so good? That's actually kind of hard to explain, because the book is a quiet sort of book and sneaks up on you. Maybe that's part of it — it's not loud and big and in-your-face, so it affects you in a much gentler way. Since I lurve food, I'd say it's like a complex blended soup: comforting and easy to eat, but the more you consume, the more you start tasting and enjoying all the hidden flavors from the ingredients you can't see.

This review also appears on Kismomo.com.
