



Below the Moon

Alexis Marie Chute

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Alexis Marie Chute's fantasy novel *Below the Moon* is as fast and bizarre as its prequel, with enough new elements to keep the imagination soaring.

Ella was supposed to be enjoying herself on a cruise before her inevitable death from cancer, but thanks to her grandpa Archie, she and a host of other survivors are stuck in the magical world of Jarr, where everything good is unraveling. More than just Ella are running out of time. In a desperate attempt to save both their worlds, humans and creatures alike must find a way to overcome their differences and fight against the looming darkness.

Told in alternating points of view, *Below the Moon* is refreshing. The constant shifts allow for different aspects of Chute's fantastical world to be enjoyed. Each character brings new light to the story: Ella has an eye for detail, Archie is protective, and Luggie wrestles with conflicting loyalties. Characters from the previous book continue to contribute: Lady Sofia still provides comic relief; Nate, charm. Each individual has to figure out what they'll fight for, and their continuing development is relatable and realistic, even when situations are anything but.

Fantastical elements are introduced with liberty, sometimes at such a rapid pace that it can be difficult to track what has just happened. Sudden plot twists, new rules, and strange enemies keep the story exciting, if somewhat hard to buy; there always seems to be a convenient magical solution available when things go wrong.

With never a dull moment, *Below the Moon* is an action-packed fantasy sure to excite and engage anyone willing to embrace its magic.

VIVIAN TURNBULL (November / December 2019)

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