The Milky Way Smells of Rum and Raspberries: And Other Amazing Cosmic Facts

Jillian Scudder
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The universe is strange and wonderful, as Jillian Scudder reveals in *The Milky Way Smells of Rum and Raspberries*, a book that balances its reverence for science with respect for its audience's intelligence.

Did you know that the moon once had lava lakes and fire fountains and that the galaxy is flatter than a credit card? Scudder's book reveals these among other whimsical facts, as well as the science behind them, as when it unpacks the precise composition of Saturn (which it introduces as less dense than water), from its rocky, metal core to the "tremendous swirl of gas" that makes up the rest of the planet, showing that while its composition is far from uniform, on average its density is low.

With tangible curiosity for the mysteries of space, the book pulls forth wonder, shares big questions, and solves mysteries from the far reaches of the solar system. Supported by casual illustrations of planets, black holes, and the volume of the galaxy, it is energetic and exciting. And it features moments of levity, as when Scudder declares that "space is weird, full of volcanoes, and it can kill you in many very creative ways." Her explanations of complex information—as about how black holes use jets of fast-moving energy to blow bubbles—are clear, following the step-by-step processes of discovery in easy-to-understand terms.

The book's biggest message is to be amazed, because the universe is an amazing place and its mysteries are endless. Aiming to intrigue general readerships about astrophysics, *The Milky Way Smells of Rum and Raspberries* is full of the energy and excitement of discovery.

MELISSA WUSKE (March / April 2023)

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