



Between the Sea and Sky

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For as long as Esmerine can remember, she has longed to join her older sister, Dosinia, as a siren--the highest calling a mermaid can have. When Dosinia runs away to the mainland, Esmerine is sent to retrieve her. Using magic to transform her tail into legs, she makes her way unsteadily to the capital city. There she comes upon a friend she hasn't seen since childhood--a dashing young man named Alander, who belongs to a winged race of people. As Esmerine and Alander band together to search for Dosinia, they rekindle a friendship . . . and ignite the emotions for a love so great, it cannot be bound by sea, land, or air.

Between the Sea and Sky Details

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From Reader Review *Between the Sea and Sky* for online ebook

Steph Su says

BETWEEN THE SEA AND SKY is a mermaid book for those who are wary of books categorized by the particular creatures that inhabit the stories. Told in Jaclyn Dolamore's trademark writing style—straightforward narration that nevertheless paints a lush magical world—BETWEEN THE SEA AND SKY is a charming story that, while not perfect, is still a quick and enjoyable read.

Much like in her debut novel *Magic Under Glass*, Jaclyn Dolamore has the quiet but valuable ability of deftly portraying elaborate new worlds with no over-fanfare. The first few chapters pulled me completely into the unfamiliar mermaid world of Dolamore's creation, where magic lanterns are borrowed as a sign of status and being chosen as a siren is one of the highest honors a mermaid can receive. Mermaids, humans, winged people, and who knows what else exist in an unusual society that nevertheless seems to operate in a completely natural and self-contained manner—the mark, in my opinion, of a skilled world-building writer.

Where this book falters a bit is in plot and pacing. BETWEEN THE SEA AND SKY starts out so engagingly, with the introduction of this new mermaid world, and the somewhat uneasy dynamics between the different creatures. Unfortunately, I felt that the plot was rather uneven: for a great amount of time, Esmerine is simply waiting to hear of news about her sister, and then the next thing we know she and Alander are off on a confoundingly simple adventure to seek Dosia. I say “confounding” because, with such a wonderful beginning to a novel, I really wanted more from the plot.

That being said, BETWEEN THE SEA AND SKY is a humbly sparkling story that will make for a sweet read one quiet afternoon. If you are a fan of mermaids or *Magic Under Glass*, Jaclyn Dolamore's sophomore novel is not to be missed!

Jessie (Ageless Pages Reviews) says

Sadly, much like Cayla Kluver's *Legacy* or *Tris & Izzie* by Mette Ivie Harrison, this mermaid tale is another case of Beautiful Cover, Big Ol' Mess inside the alluring facade. Though this young-adult novel is technically not a retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's famous Little Mermaid, the story is obviously influenced by and similar to that long-loved tale. Both the pain of land, the belt/chastity allegory are all in tune with the familiar story - and very little is done by the author to differentiate her version. *Between the Sea and Sky* is the tale of a bookish teenage mermaid - though she is soon to be elevated into the exclusive and respected sirens - named Esmerine. Esmerine's tale is about her search for her sister Dosinia, a fellow siren disappeared from the sea abruptly. It's a simple story in a very simple style that somehow manages to still take quite a bit of effort to finish. I have been on the look out for a good mermaid story, but sadly for me, *Between the Sea and Sky* failed to deliver a well-rounded, interesting, or even wholly appropriate mermaid tale.

Esmerine is not a very well-rounded or even developed young-woman. Her personality seems too-perfect at best and mismatching or altered to appeal at worst. I never felt invested in the young mermaid; from her dialogue and her actions, she constantly came across as too young and too immature. As "the brain of the family" Esmerine sticks out from all other merfolk: she can read and write, and has even been friends with one of the detested and avoided "sky people". I can't say I really rooted for Esmerine during her search for

Dosia- it's a fairly boring trek that seems to consist of Esmerine sitting and waiting while another actually searches for her sister. The role of the sirens as well, that of luring men to their deaths using song/beauty/etc., also seem strangely out-of-tune with the almost MG tone and feel of this novel. *Between the Sea and the Sky* occasionally borders on uncomfortable side with the random mentions of (and fixation upon) breasts, in addition to the more mature themes randomly mixed into the story.

The "winged people" that Esmerine knows and talks to are the Fandarsee - winged humans that are essentially Mercurys - they transport messages. One reason (among many) that this novel irritated me: the merfolk and Fandarsee resent/avoid/hate the other but no real reason is provided for the animosity between the races. So naturally, when Esmerine has feelings for a 'darsee, they cannot be together because. . . of an obvious plot device by the author. It's obvious, unreasonable and needed better plotting. Alander or "Alan Dare" is the male love-interest for Esmerine; a friend from her childhood she has since (6 years) not seen. Speaking of which, Alandare reminds me of my second quibble: humans/their normal world are mentioned often throughout the story, but no information is given as to if the mermaids/Fandarsee are known outside of those encountered personally by humans. It just felt like a glaring error: I never knew what the status of the characters were and the worldbuilding suffered. And when I say worldbuilding, I'm being a tad sarcastic. There's barely any time devoted during the narrative to describe or enliven the underwater realm, which seemed by far the most interesting and with the most unique possibilities of all the places in the novel.

To read the rest of this review, just [click here](#).

Cassi aka Snow White Haggard says

I'm always drawn to mermaid fiction and generally speaking disappointed. I don't know why this subgenre is so hard to master. Maybe it's that Ariel is always peaking over our shoulder as only Disney movies can. Or maybe a world of fish and fins is somehow too foreign, more foreign than land-based fantasy tales and outer space adventures.

Between the Sea and Sky is better than most mermaid stories. I suspect a lot of people will really like this book. Especially if you like star-crossed love stories. But for me, it's just not quite there.

First I want to talk about what this book did right

1. Esmerine was a likable and believable main character. I know that seems like it should be a given, but the last mermaid book I read I didn't like any of the characters. She's the type of person you could root for. Esmerine is smart, caring and loves her family.
2. Consequences for magic - So often magic has no consequences. Mermaids in this story feel pain whenever they walk on land. I know where it comes from in mermaid lore (I may have done some research on the topic lately). It's a nice touch.
3. Not a love at first sight story. I was worried about this but there's actually a friendship first.
4. Not one species is "evil" or the bad guy. The story doesn't oversimplify things. There are good mermaids, good humans and good flying people.

Unfortunately I must also talk about what didn't work in this book for me. For me, the main flaw was that the stakes didn't seem high enough. Either she stayed on land or she didn't. Neither choice seemed drastically better than the other. I wasn't invested. Partially I think this is because the enchantment of the siren's belt wasn't very well explained. I didn't (and don't) understand the consequences of giving someone her belt. It

stops the pain and there's some kind of enchantment involved but what that entails I don't know.

Another problem I have with this book is that apparently a underwater society didn't have any of the problems of our world on land. In the beginning we're introduced to a world where people have different jobs, the main character's family seems distinctly lower middle-class (they talk about things they can't afford), but then Esmerine is aghast at all the problems of land based society. There's poverty, beggars, cripples and she doesn't understand this at all. I find it unrealistic that an underworld world with some kind of economic system could exist entirely without poverty or flaws. To me this felt like a continuity error.

This book is well enough to read. I have no major issues with it (like I do with a lot of paranormal YA) but at the end of the day I felt pretty ambiguous towards it. I just didn't care enough. But I suspect a lot of people will enjoy the romance and skim over the flaws but I just expected more.

Rebecca says

For years, Esmerine has longed for the day when she can join her older sister, Dosia, as a siren, and now that day has come. Becoming a siren is a great honor for a mermaid and her family. But the very next day, Dosia disappears. Esmerine's worst fears come true when she learns that her sister has gone to the surface world and married a human. Esmerine fears her sister was taken against her will and is desperate to find her, even though it is unlikely she can save her.

Unable to make her way on the surface world alone, Esmerine seeks out the help of Alan, a young man from a winged race of people called the Fandarsee. As children, Esmerine and Alan played together on an island, but she hasn't seen him in several years, since he left to study. After reuniting, their feelings of friendship begin to grow into something more, but a love between them seems impossible, for Alan cannot live in the sea, and Esmerine cannot live on land without terrible pain, unless she permanently gives up her ability to return to the sea.

I really enjoyed Jaclyn Dolamore's debut novel, *Magic Under Glass*, so I have been looking forward to reading *Between the Sea and Sky*, and I am happy to say I enjoyed it even more than her first book. I loved the two worlds she created, the underwater world, and the surface world, which seems inspired by southern Europe in the early nineteenth century. And the romance was adorable! Highly recommended for readers who enjoy fairytales and historical fantasy.

Disclosure: Review copy provided by publisher.

Nerissa Ayala Lesko says

If this book really happens, I will be the happiest person!! Love mermaids, even is the are sirens = /

Mundie Moms & Mundie Kids says

4.5 stars

This is a magical, fascinating historical fantasy that reads like a classic fairytale with its rich lore, sweet romance and exciting adventure. I fell in love with Jaclyn's writing after reading her debut *Magic Under Glass* and I really loved the magical world of sirens and winged people she introduced me to with *Between the Sea and Sky*. Jaclyn's writing is whimsical, magical and completely intriguing to me. True to her creative writing style, she has a richly detailed setting, and an adoring romance that's simple, sweet, and innocent.

The story follows Esmerine, main character who's just become a Siren, an honor that only her and her older sister Dosia share within their family. Having been close and yearning for a sense of adventure, Dosia goes missing after telling her sister she's visited with humans before in their world, a dangerous thing to do for any mermaid. Fearing for her sister's life, Esmerine enters the human world to find her sister and an old childhood crush in Alan, the winged boy she used to play with as a child. What ensues is an adventure into a new world, a beautiful country side, and a rekindled romance. I really liked how these two love interests were re-introduced to each other and how their feelings for one another grew over the course of Esmerine's search for her sister.

Aside from the sweet love story, I loved the story's unique, richly detailed mermaid lore. I was really fascinated with the way Jaclyn coupled the siren mythology with that of the winged people, also known as Fandarsee, which Alan is. I loved the two different worlds Jaclyn created both under water and above, and the way she merged them together. I never would have thought to merge these two distinct lore together and the way Jaclyn did it was brilliant.

I like it when a story's setting isn't dated, and it has an appealing early turn of the century feel, which this story has. For me, it makes the story feel ageless and it has a fairytale quality to it. I thoroughly enjoy Jaclyn's writing. I know I can sit down and I'll instantly be whisked away into her story. *Between the Sea and Sky* is one of those charming, delightful, quick reads and that I sat down and enjoyed one sunny afternoon. My only complaint is that the ending felt a little too rushed. I wish it had been a little more drawn out. I highly recommend picking this book up if you enjoy a simple love story, mermaids and a story that reads like a fairytale. It's a clean cut, wonderful read.

Tanja Voosen says

Typischer Fall von: What the Fuck did i just read?!

Gemecker: <http://tanjaisaddictedto.blogspot.de/...>

Stephanie says

I've seen this book's cover and it is so so gorgeous!

Wendy Darling says

Ten (Unfulfilled) Wishes for this Book:

1. If this is was supposed to be a YA book, **I wish that the story was more complex**, the characters more

fully developed, and the dialogue less juvenile.

2. If this was supposed to be a middle grade book, I wish there were ~~no~~ fewer mentions of breasts and men looking at them, fewer mentions of drunken sailors making suggestive remarks, and less focus on the rather insipid romance. Such **random lascivious behavior inserts an ugly note into the story** for no reason whatsoever.

3. I wish mermaids didn't eat olives and nuts and other decidedly human foods; it just doesn't sit well with me. I also wish mermaids didn't eat fish. While I understand that fish *do* eat other fish in the wild, **there's a certain cannibalism about this scenario** that I would think the human part of the merpeople might be uncomfortable with. But okay, if it is absolutely necessary, please give me a reason why this is happening, because in my opinion, it's a little weird.

4. **I wish there were more descriptions of underwater life.** There are a couple of nice scenes at the beginning, but they're very short and don't really do enough to set the mood. And I feel like you need a good dose of MOOD to set the scene in a mermaid book.

5. **I wish Esmerine were a more interesting character.** Or that we had at least one interesting character to fall in love with and root for. Sadly, this is not the case.

6. I wish so many YA authors wouldn't make their heroines booklovers. I understand why this is such a prevalent trend, as obviously the books are written by and for girls who like books themselves. But more often than not, it feels forced (Hello Mara Dyer!) and lacking in any real depth or appreciation or breadth of knowledge. Here, **the bookloving agenda was pushed so hard that it became somewhat annoying**, especially because I kept thinking about the impracticalities of transporting books from the human world to mermaids in a way that wasn't going to damage them. (Silly, but it's true!) The books that are briefly mentioned don't even have any real significance to the story or the characters.

7. I wish there were some sense of urgency to this novel. The quest to find Esmerine's sister doesn't appear to have any sort of deadline and **there's never any real danger to any of the characters.** Apparently she can take all the time in the world, just so long as she doesn't give up her ~~hasty~~ magic siren's belt.

8. **I wish the characters behaved in a way that seemed genuine** or interesting or showed an emotional connection between them. Why do Esmerine and Alander fall in love? Why does Dosia fall in love? Beats me.

9. **I wish this book lived up to the lovely little fairy tale that was the author's first book**, *Magic Under Glass*. This one doesn't have one bit of that story's charm, and contains none of the imaginative details that made *Glass* so entertaining.

10. And lastly, **I wish the author's Acknowledgements page didn't contain the following passage**, which is most unfortunate when the story feels so slight:

I'm sure I wasn't the only young writer who had the Lord of the Rings movie soundtrack on repeat and decided I needed to write a huge fantasy epic with war and tragic death and many points of view. One of the approximately forty plot threads in my attempt was the love story between a mermaid and a winged boy. (This is why you always keep your lousy older writings!)

I think with a little more development and a lot more depth and detail, this might have turned out to be an

interesting story. But sadly, in this current format, it's a pretty disappointing read. And the search for a great YA mermaid novel goes on...

This review also appears in The Midnight Garden. And advance copy was provided by the publisher.

ILoveBooks says

This is the perfect love story between a winged boy and a mermaid. The reader can expect to be transported into a different land where many things are possible. Who knows? Mermaids can even read books!

Esmerine is a great character to read about. She is inquisitive, almost reminiscent of Disney's Ariel, as well as compassionate and has a capacity for bravery and stoicism that is amazing for a mermaid. Alandare is far more staid, slightly too intellectual, and sometimes tries to become something he is not. They used to be friends when they were children, but Alandare left Esmerine when he believed that a winged boy and mermaid could never remain friends.

Esmerine must leave the ocean to search for her sister not long after her sirens' induction. She was looking towards a life of being a siren, slightly boring, but expected. Now she has the chance to discover more of the world and get back in touch with one of her lovely books.

I really enjoyed this story. I loved Esmerine's character, she really held my attention. Alandare was a good character, a little too stuffy, but he needed Esmerine to loosen him up. I enjoyed watching their relationship grow and develop. The events were exciting, the reader never knows quite what to expect. The author writes very fluidly, the transitions are smooth. This book is highly recommended to anyone who is young at heart.

Alanna (The Flashlight Reader) says

If Hans Christian Andersen were still alive, this is a story he would write. I loved the world created by Jaclyn Dolamore in *Between the Sea and Sky*. Esmerine, a mermaid who befriends a "winged boy", is a little different from all the other mermaids. She has learned how to read and write; a thing most mermaids find impractical. She has also learned how to transform into a human and walk on land. Alander-- the "winged boy"-- is a Fandarsee. Like Esmerine, he is also different from the others of his kind. Instead of being content as a messenger, he enjoys reading and studying philosophy.

When Esmerine's sister (Dosinia) goes missing, Esmerine travels to the human world to find her. She knows that her sister has been visiting with humans, and she fears that she has been captured. Once on land, Esmerine finds her old friend, Alander, and begins her search for Dosinia. But Esmerine is not just looking for her lost sister. She is also searching for her own place in the world and the bonds that unite her heart with Alander's.

One of my all-time favorite fairy tales is The Little Mermaid, even Hans Christian Andersen's tragic version. The mystery and beauty of living under the water has always enchanted me. This book did not disappoint me. I still managed to get the tingly feeling while reading about Esmerine's life under the sea. Above all that, though, I think I liked the fact that the created world was so different from any mermaid story I have ever read. In this book, mermaids and Fandarsee are a well known fact, not a hidden secret. The humans are not surprised to see the mystical creatures walking and living among them on land. In fact, merpeople, Fandarsee and humans interact daily and conduct business together. That alone is fascinating and unique.

The characters are delightful. Esmerine is different from the other merpeople. She's described as "practical" and snubbed by her peers. She has learned how to read and write from Alander, but the other sea-dwellers don't find that fascinating. How typical of people to disregard the things that they do not personally understand? Alander also deals with the same struggles on land. His father wants him to follow in the family's footsteps and become a great scientist. Alander, however, has no desire to "discover" things; instead, he wants to educate people and spread knowledge. It's no wonder that Esmerine and Alander feel like two parts of the same whole.

If I had to pick one thing that I liked the best in this book, I would have to say the descriptions. The vivid details helped bring to life the setting. When the story was taking place under water, I could picture the living quarters and imagine the class rankings (Yes, social classes under the sea!). The subtle snobbery of the "rich" merpeople was felt in every word and action. I didn't feel like the human world was described in as much detail as the ocean, but you still got a good sense of the setting. I feel like there should have been a little more detail and perception given to the human experiences since Esmerine was experiencing this land for the first time in human form.

Overall, this is a good read. It didn't take long to read--I finished in one sitting. If you like Hans Christian Andersen's version of The Little Mermaid, you will enjoy this story. There are elements that resonate in his version that continue in Dolamore's story. Between the Sea and Sky is romantic enough to earn a YA label, but clean enough for Disney. There are no graphic scenes--just a drunk and a few kisses. I enjoyed this one, but then again, it's hard to disappoint me with a mermaid story.

Kirsty (Amethyst Bookworm) says

All Esmerine, a mermaid, wants to do is to become a Siren and work with her sister, Dosinia. When Dosinia is believed trapped on the land by a human, Esmerine decides to rescue her, but changing her tail into legs means that every step is painful. In the capital city Esmerine meets a friend who she has not seen for years Alander who belongs to a winged race of people called Fandarsee, and together they search for Dosinia. As they get closer to Dosinia there rekindle their friendship but is it able to develop into more with them being from different worlds.

Between the Sea and Sky is an enjoyable, sweet fantasy novel with a fairytale feel to it. It is a bit slow paced and while it is predictable it is a nice romantic book.

Esmerine is a sweet and naïve girl but she never gives up and a likeable character. Alan is distant and cold to begin with but he does get better but I still struggled to connect with his character.

Between the Sea and Sky is a cute book and I would recommend it to people who enjoy light fantasy novels

and the other book by Jaclyn Dolamore.

This and my other reviews can be found at Amethyst Bookwyrms

Jaclyn says

About eight years ago, I was working on this big epic mess of a never-finished novel. I wasn't very good back then at outlining or understanding what the core of the story was, but in hindsight, the core was the story of a mermaid and a winged boy who were childhood friends that met again later in life. Now I finally have a chance to tell that story, and though the players have changed (for the better), it still feels like an old story I've been dying to share.

Ceilidh says

I found Dolamore's debut "Magic Under Glass" to be a charming and creative book that could have benefited from some tighter plotting and characterisation. It certainly sparked my interest for her next book, a standalone mermaid story, especially after Dolamore mentioned how she wrote the book to the scores of Studio Ghibli films (indeed, I noted in my earlier review how her creative worlds would be ideal for Hayao Miyazaki's next film.) While the mermaid craze never quite took off the way that many bloggers and publishers thought it would, there is still a gap in the market for a strong mermaid YA to join the myriad of vampires, werewolves, angels and other assorted creatures of mythology already so well known to readers. Unfortunately this book did not meet my expectations.

I found that many of the same problems I had with Dolamore's previous novel appeared in "Between the Sea and the Sky". Wonderfully imaginative elements of world-building, including the mermaid-siren hierarchy, the relations between each of the species and the world of the winged creatures, the Fandarsee, were introduced to us but never fully developed. In "Magic Under Glass", Dolamore introduced the strands of political and cultural complexities that I was desperate to know more about, yet such elements never came to fruition, and the exact same thing happens here. While there were moments of vivid descriptive scenes throughout her consistently strong prose, I never felt fully immersed in the world-building. To be honest, much of it felt very underdeveloped. I have a feeling this book may be marketed to a younger, more middle-grade audience. The prose and story-telling feels more suited to pre-teen readers, although it's very readable for all ages. I did find that the frequent dumping of exposition began to grate extremely quickly, especially since this is such a short book with very little action and a highly predictable plot.

I did not find Esmerine to be as interesting or well developed as Nimira in "Magic Under Glass." The idea of the young beautiful mermaid dissatisfied with her lot in life and yearning for more on the surface is nothing new. In fact, it's a staple of the great mermaid tales going back as far as Hans Christian Andersen, maybe even further. I can understand the harking back to influential tales but so little is developed from that point onwards that it can't help but feel stagnant and unsatisfying. This applies to pretty much every supporting character in the book, although nobody is ever really given any real time to shine or become more three-dimensional. Of course, this doesn't bode well for the romantic element, which felt too heavily reliant on the childhood friends trope to explain Esmerine and Alandare's relationship. One part of the book that really left me scratching my head was the depiction of humans. While mermaids and the Fandarsee are granted some variety of characterisation, pretty much every human is seen as selfish, rude or extremely ignorant of other

species aside from themselves. They seem to view all others as a side-show novelty. I could understand this possibly for one or two characters from more isolated parts of the country, but these interactions and knowledge of other creatures are well known, so it didn't make much sense to have every human act like a fool when in the presence of a mermaid (whom they are especially susceptible to falling under their charms) or Fandarsee.

While "Between the Sea and the Sky" possesses much of the charm and imagination of Dolamore's debut work, the same flaws are also still present and overwhelm the positive elements. Wonderfully creative elements and ideas are introduced but left to flounder instead of being given their deserved attention, while the characters and romantic element are pretty stock for the genre for the most part. The readability of its prose and short length make it ideally suited to younger readers, although the book itself is not without merit for readers of all ages. Once again, it's an ideal framework for a Ghibli film, but also hints at Dolamore's possible strengths as a short story writer.

2.5/5.

Sasha says

Between Sea and Sky

Book Completed: 10/25/2012

Book Rating: ★★

Ten Things that Disappointed:

10. The story had so much potential. A love between a sky creature and a sea creature. **Had the plot actually had a plot and been further developed**, I think this book had the makings of a series and a good one at that. However, alas.. it did not. The plot was boring and rather uneventful and felt like it was written for a 10 year old.

9. **There were mermaids called sirens.** Cool concept, very different but I was not a fan. I personally think Sirens and Mermaids are two entirely different creatures and so when authors merge them, it makes me wanna tear my hair out.

8. **The protagonist, Esmerine was so whiny.** She wanted to save her sister but she really couldn't do anything and never really thought anything through. Like if her sister was actually in trouble or how she would accomplish saving her. The only feat she had was she could read and walk out of water slightly better than the other merpeeps.

7. **Esmerine was so boring and Alander was too!** Seriously, no time or extra effort went into developing these two. They were a snooze fest.

6. BOOM! We're in love. **There was no connection or chemistry** or even a segway into the romance other than their briefly mentioned past which was utterly dull.

5. **The sister irritated the hell out of me.** As did most of the characters in the book for that matter.

4. **"Oh my goodness, I need to save my sister." Oh but look**, a book, fireworks, a wall, this bed, these shoes, this guy, this room, this food, my feet hurt.. There was no urgency to save that said sister. It was like the plot of the whole novel fell through in the middle. I understand you need to develop your characters and their romance (none of which happened anyways) but there are better ways of going about this.

3. **What the heck just happened with the collar/belt thing?** Uh.. I dunno because it was utter chaos and **not developed!** Surprise, surprise.

2. The climax of the book was so utterly pointless. Like, **did I just spend so much time reading this to get that?** Really? No, shut up, really? For reals?

1. And finally **the romance** sucked. Like literally. When did they fall in love? Why did they fall in love? What's going to happen (oh wait, you explained that but I still don't effin get how)? The two had no chemistry. It was like two ice cubes rubbing up against each other, a slippery slope. I don't even know what I'm talking about anymore. I mean, they had no friction, no chemistry.

Le sigh!
