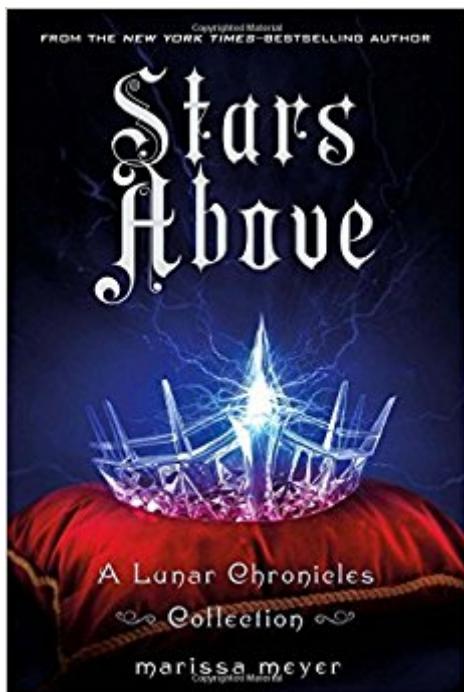


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Stars Above



Synopsis

The #1 New York Times Bestselling Series! The enchantment continues. . . . The universe of the Lunar Chronicles holds stories - and secrets - that are wondrous, vicious, and romantic. How did Cinder first arrive in New Beijing? How did the brooding soldier Wolf transform from young man to killer? When did Princess Winter and the palace guard Jacin realize their destinies? With nine stories - five of which have never before been published - and an exclusive never-before-seen excerpt from Marissa Meyer's novel, *Heartless*, about the Queen of Hearts from *Alice in Wonderland*, *Stars Above* is essential for fans of the bestselling and beloved *Lunar Chronicles*.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up  In this short story collection, recommended to those who have already read the author's *Cinder*, *Scarlet*, *Cress*, and *Winter*, readers will be delighted to learn more about the history of their favorite "Lunar Chronicles" characters. Each of the nine entries provides further context, characterization, and world-building to the popular, best-selling series. The introductory stories show how baby Princess Selene ends up in the care of Scarlet's grandmother and describe her early life with the Linh family. From there, readers witness Z taken from his Lunar home as a child to fight in

Queen Levana's wolf army, and then peek into Carswell's childhood as he uses his charm to persuade his classmate to tutor him in math. Readers will sympathize with Cress and the shells who are forced to donate blood for Lunar research, and then cheer Princess Winter on in her battle to keep her sanity while refusing to use her gift. The final tale takes place two years after Winter and begins with the group reuniting in France for Scarlet and Wolf's wedding. With the monarchy abolished on Luna and peace between Luna and Earth on its way, this collection ends with a happily ever after for everyone. VERDICT This companion title will not disappoint fans and will make a worthy addition to libraries where the "Lunar Chronicles" are popular. —Marissa Lieberman, East Orange Public Library, NJ

"Rebecca Soler once again lends her considerable talents to the series...Series fans will be delighted to have expanded backstories, and they will be trilled to hear about happy endings in store for their favorite characters."--School Library Journal --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

The Lunar Chronicles are a series with lots of complexity and history -- whether the characters are from Earth or Luna, they have a lot going on in their lives. So it only seems natural that Marissa Meyer expanded her science-fiction fairy-tale series with "Stars Above," a collection of her short stories that fill in all the gaps of the characters' pasts -- and though readers of her series will know where each story goes, every one is a gripping little tale that fleshes out the wider story. Each of the stories focuses on a character -- some major, some supporting -- in the Lunar Chronicles universe, but several years before the events of the main series. They're in roughly chronological order, beginning with "The Keeper," and Michelle's struggle to care for and hide the Lunar princess in the basement of her farmhouse. Then there is "Glitches," where a small cyborg child is brought to live with her new stepfamily, only to be stranded with a cruel, bitter stepmother and bratty stepsister. And then there are stories for other characters -- Z, a boy torn from his family and forever altered into an elite, wolfish soldier for the Lunar Queen; Carswell, a wealthy young boy whose schemes and con games are interrupted by compassion; Cress, a young "shell" whose ingenuity causes her to be exiled into space; Winter's regret over the use of her gift prompts her to vow not to use it again, with terrible results; and Kai brings his beloved android to a simple mechanic's shop, with life-changing results. There is also "The Little Android," a bittersweet tale based on "The Little Mermaid," where a robot falls in love with a human. And there is a new novella called "Something Old, Something New," a tale taking place after the end of the series. Cinder and her friends reunite on Scarlet's farm for a very romantic occasion, and the cyborg has the chance to finally come full circle to where her

journey began. It goes without saying that "Stars Above" is a collection that should only be read after one has finished the rest of the Lunar Chronicles, because it effectively gives away half the twists that take place in the series -- including the ending. While the novels are a complete story unto themselves, these short stories allow Meyer to fill in the cracks between her stories, exploring the characters at pivotal, life-changing points in their lives. For some, it's simply finding a new place in life. For others, it's being physically transformed into something new -- a cyborg or a wolf-man. One or two of the stories are a bit lightweight ("The Mechanic" is simply Kai and Cinder's first meeting from HIS point of view), but most of them have a wrenching quality at their heart. Most of these tales -- except for Carswell's, and the series' coda -- are stories of loss, pain, death, alienation and the cruelty of Queen Levana, in one way or another -- and Meyer's sleek, detailed writing creates some scenes of true horror (Winter being forced to carve up her own face) or spellbinding beauty ("But she was already vast and bright and endless"). And it does help flesh out the characters even more, especially when they focus on a character who is either very internalized (Ze'ev) or doesn't appear much in the flesh (Michelle, Scar's grandmother). Cinder in particular is explored as a clumsy, amnesiac child who is offered little but scorn, slowly growing from her initial depressed blankness into a clever child who finds a niche where she belongs -- and her brief appearances throughout the stories allow us to see her grow in strength and confidence. This collection also has a few sample chapters from Meyer's forthcoming book "Heartless," which is based on Lewis Carroll's Wonderland books. It follows Catherine, the daughter of a bombastic Marchioness, who bakes a set of lemon tarts shortly before a royal ball. Best read after the rest of the series, "Stars Above: A Lunar Chronicles Collection" expands the characters' backstories, adding new richness and depth -- and providing a solid, satisfying coda to the series. Clever, bittersweet and beautifully written.

So I really liked this collection. The Keeper was one of the ones I was most interested in: the story of how Scarlet's grandmother came to be in care of wee Cinder. Glitches picked up right after, and told of how Cinder came to live with the Linhs, how Peony was lovely from the beginning (tears!), how Adri was awful from the start (not surprised) and how Cinder rebuilt Iko. Then came The Queen's Army, which omg the FEELS. I loved Wolf and his story was heart-wrenching but I still enjoyed it. Carswell's Guide to Being Lucky - I shamelessly love Thorne. Like if I knew him IRL I'd punch him many times, but I love him as a character. And I loved seeing him as a smart-ass 13 year old, already much like the man he was going to be. After Sunshine Passes By - Wee Cress! This story was also sad, especially at the end, but considering you knew where it was going, and you know how it ends up, it's bearable! The Princess and the Guard - Oh, Winter and Jacin's dynamic is

wonderful. This one was cute and sad at the same time, much like Winter's whole story, but again, knowing how things turn out really helps. The Little Android - MY HEART. This story is all brand new characters and holds true to the original Little Mermaid story. Meaning, it's sad. The Mechanic - LOVED seeing the meeting between Cinder and Kai from Kai's POV. It gave a little more insight into Kai's early motivations, and more into his personality. Something Old, Something New - the wedding of the century! Except not the wedding I was expecting? Cute moment between all the couples, as well as wonderful friendships throughout. Loved this last bit. Overall, like I said, I really enjoyed this, even though it was one hell of an emotional rollercoaster ride.

Marissa Meyer's Lunar Chronicles became one of my favorite series of the past few years. I loved the sci-fi twist on classic fairy tales, how the author showcased her four heroines, and the way that the complicated plot was slowly revealed. I finished Winter with happiness, but also wanted to keep hanging out with these great characters. So I was ecstatic to read Stars Above, which encompasses nine different short stories in this world, and it was as wonderful as I was hoping it would be. Here is my ranking of the stories (with my notes):

1. Something Old, Something NewAn epilogue for the entire series which focuses on one of the couple's upcoming nuptials. I loved that Cinder was once again the narrator and that it showcased friendship as much as romance. A great way to tie everything together.
2. The MechanicWhat Kai was thinking when he met Cinder for the first time. I'm not usually into reverse POV's stories, but I adore Kai and thought this was very well-done. I liked the insight into his desire to help his country, no matter what he had to deal with personally.
3. The Little AndroidThe most loosely connected story that is a retelling of The Little Mermaid. Very interesting information about androids and cyborgs. This one had me tearing up the most.
4. After Sunshine Passes ByCress is my favorite of all the heroines and I thought the story of how she was placed on the satellite was heartbreaking. It just made me so mad to see how the Lunars treated the shells.
5. GlitchesCinder arrives in New Beijing and meets the Linh family including Iko! This one was sad due to how alone Cinder felt and what happens when the plague hits the household.
6. The Queen's ArmyMore about Ze'ev's family on Luna and how he was turned into one of Queen Levana's supersoldiers. What I liked most about this story was the determination Ze'ev showed throughout his ordeal and how that foreshadowed his storyline.
7. The KeeperA quick look at how Scarlet's grandmother became involved in the whole situation when her former lover arrives on Earth with the severely injured Princess Selene. The sacrifices Michelle made was difficult to fathom though I enjoyed the little tidbits we got about Scarlet's childhood.
8. The Princess and the GuardWinter and Jacin's early years as friends. This is one of the longer stories and it was an

enjoyable look into characters that I felt like I knew the least. These two just don't interest me as much as the others.9. Carswell's Guide to Being LuckyThis was funny and surprisingly poignant especially considering it was about a young Thorne. I liked seeing what his family was like and how they helped shape his seemingly carefree attitude towards life. It was also interesting to see that his type of girl was the same even back then.These novellas provide tons of fun to readers who already fans of the series. I definitely wouldn't suggest reading these before the other Lunar Chronicles books even though, chronologically, most of them happen before the full-length novels. They are full of insight into characters and secrets that I think would be spoiled if read beforehand. But, if you love these characters, this is definitely a book you will enjoy and is a great addition to an already fabulous series.

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