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Ventures



Synopsis

The young inventor Nicolette Lampton is living her own fairy-tale happy ending. She's free of her horrible stepfamily, running a successful business, and is uninterested in marrying the handsome prince, Fin. Instead, she, Fin, and their friend Caro venture to the lush land of Faerie, where they seek to put an end to the bloody war their kingdom is waging. Mechanical armies and dark magic await them as they uncover devastating secrets about the past and fight for a real, lasting happily-ever-after for two troubled countries—and for themselves.

Smart and unconventional, this novel will appeal to readers of romance and adventure alike.

Book Information

Hardcover: 320 pages

Publisher: Clarion Books (August 1, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0544319273

ISBN-13: 978-0544319271

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.2 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #116,354 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #59 in Books > Teens >

Romance > LGBT #68 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction >

Steampunk #153 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Gay & Lesbian

Customer Reviews

"As clever as the heroine's invented boot polishers and sewing machines, as appealing as the dresses designed by her coal-powered automaton horse." Kirkus, starred review "Fans of the first book will enjoy the more deeply developed characters in this book, and new readers can begin here easily as there is sufficient backstory provided. Steampunk fans will find much to love here, particularly the regal metal flying horse named Jules that gives the book its most heartbreakingly reflective moment." VOYA "This thought-provoking blend of genres deserves a spot in most middle and high school collections." SLJ

Betsy Cornwell is the New York Times best-selling author of *Tides*, *Mechanica*, and *Venture*. She graduated from Smith College and was a columnist and editor at Teen Ink

before receiving an MFA in creative writing from Notre Dame, where she also taught fiction. After grad school, she ran away to Ireland to live with the fairies, and she now resides in a small cottage on the west coast with her horse-trainer spouse. To learn more, visit her at www.betsycornwell.com, on Twitter at @Betsy_Cornwell, and on Instagram at @BetsyCornwell.

This book is the sequel to *Mechanica* and I really think you should read them in order to get the full background of the characters. This book starts approximately a year after the end of *Mechanica* and picks up the story of Nicolette (Nick), Fin, Caro and the kingdom of Esting from then. One of the things I loved about *Mechanica* is that Nick loves Fin but she didn't take the easy "happily ever after" route of marrying the prince. She works to make her own happy ending with her inventions. Readers from very conservative belief systems may be upset by the main characters' fluid relationships. Nick, Fin & Caro love each other in a way that is not defined as romantic but is not defined as other than romantic. And Caro also loves a female character named Bex. In any event, this love is non-sexual so readers have some freedom to define it for themselves. Throughout the book they think of themselves as family. I enjoyed this book as if ventured farther from the Cinderella-like story of *Mechanica* and into a more adventure-type story. As with the first book, this story has an open ending, leaving me to hope there will be more books in this series.

Nicolette Lampton finally moves away from her stepmother and her stepsisters to open up her own workshop. While everything seems like a happily ever after for Nicolette, everything doesn't seem how it looks. King Corsin is not faring well as his health declines. Fin ends up getting injured while Fitz plots a plan for the people of Esting to fight against the Fey in Faerie. Nicolette ends up embarking on a journey to Faerie with Caro and Fin in order to save both worlds from rampage and war. The friendship between Nicolette, Caro and Fin is perfect. They are three peas in a pod. Betsy Cornwell extends *Mechanica*, which is a retelling of Cinderella, into something more! She transports readers to a magical world of Faerie. However, I wish readers explore the world of Faerie more before the war broke out. Just like *Mechanica*, Cornwell focuses on the friendship between the trio instead of focusing on romantic relationships. Jules, the mechanical horse, makes an reappearance and readers are introduced to new characters such as Captain Wheelock and Talis, the Fey leader. Nicolette is a strong woman and doesn't follow the norms. She is independent and doesn't need anyone to help her be who she is. She finds the value of pants while other fashionable ladies would not be caught dead in something so practical. Two thirds into the novel, readers will run into a

plot twist which definitely caught me off guard. Also, Venturess answered my question from *Mechanica* about what the Ashes are. Readers get a better understanding of the Faerie world even if it's slightly unpleasant. *Venturess* is a dazzling story fusing steampunk and fairytales. If you haven't read *Mechanica* yet, pick it up as soon as you can. Dive into *Venturess* right after and enjoy the magic!

This was the second book in the *Mechanica* series and it was okay. This is one of those series I want to love, but am always a bit disappointed in. In this book *Mechanica* and Finn end up journeying to Faerie in a desperate attempt to keep the two countries from war. The story was a bit simplistic and I had some trouble staying engaged in it. I also had some trouble understanding the three-way relationship that went on between Finn, Nic, and Caro. It was just kind of confusing. I did enjoy Nic's devices, although there wasn't much of that in this book. I also enjoyed the mystery behind the Ashes and that all being explained. Overall this was a good read but not great. I felt like the story was a bit too short and simple and struggled to stay engaged in it. If you loved *Mechanica* you will probably enjoy this book as well; otherwise I would skip it.

Actually 4.5, it nearly got to a full five stars. It's been a while since I read *Mechanica*, since I read it whenever it came out, but I remembered liking it so I was anticipating the sequel. And I really really enjoyed *Venturess*! I'll be honest and say that the queerplatonic relationship between Nic, Caro and Finn is what really sold the book for me. I've never read a fantasy book with a QPR in it and after reading this book I feel like I'm really missing out! The three of them were so cute together and all their interactions made me smile. *Venturess* was more of a fantasy book than a steampunk book like *Mechanica*, since Nic and co make the trip to Faerie in order to broker a peace treaty. I wish we had spent more time in Faerie, exploring their culture and magic to a fuller extent. In this aspect I felt the book was a little rushed, and I would've definitely liked to have seen more. Some of the twists are pretty easy to see, others more shocking, so it's a nice balance. I just wish the book was a little longer and delved a little deeper into the worldbuilding. The best character in *Venturess* is without a doubt Jules the horse. I think Jules is the most unique and impactful character in this series, and he has some really wonderful moments in this story with Nic. This sequel was good! I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Straight up? I liked the first book better. First, you need to read the first book in order to really understand this one. There's a tiny bit of backstory, but it really doesn't explain much. Readers new

to the series will especially be confused by the relationship in the book. It was one of the things in the first book that surprised and delighted me - it was a bold choice. But without that background, you would just be confused. Second, I just needed more mechanicals, more inventions, more steampunk, more...more. The plot in this one simply didn't capture my attention like the first one and Fin seemed...anemic. Truthfully, so did Nic a bit, though I loved Caro. It's an acceptable read and I did finish it. I just wasn't as delighted with it as I was with the first.

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