



The Cloud Hunters

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Journeys offer so many opportunities for romance and adventure, and which of us living in the British isles has not dreamed of sailing beyond the sunset. The young hero of Alex Shearer's **The Cloud Hunters** certainly has.

Christien, along with the rest of the human race, lives in the sky, on floating islands orbiting thousands of miles above the sun. Earth is uninhabitable, too polluted. Up in the sky you can swim in the atmosphere, it's so thick and heavy, though panic, lose your nerve and you'll fall to your death. Water is precious ? not enough falls on the islands as rain, so people rely on Cloud Hunters, nomads who chase down the clouds and take the water. When a young Cloud Hunter, Jenine, joins his class at school, Christien is fascinated. He finds her very beautiful, to him she's an embodiment of freedom. They become friends and eventually Christien persuades her to let him join her on a cloud-hunting trip.

The skies, like our oceans, are full of creatures, some beautiful, some deadly: they swim through the sky with a languid grace, and the book has a rare sense of silence, though various sky battles and perilous encounters will keep young readers engrossed.

The sky society is as divided as our own, isolated communities setting their own strange and often oppressive laws. Christien's final journey with the Cloud Hunters takes him to the isles of Dissent, where Jenine's father is held prisoner, and it reaches its climax with a daring rescue raid.

Part **Gulliver's Travels**, part **Hitchiker's Guide to the Galaxy**, part **Pilgrim's Progress**, this is thoroughly original and full of ideas. If it doesn't quite succeed in everything it sets out to do, and the dreamy pace will not be for everyone, it's still thought-provoking, involving, and exciting, and a true romance.

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