



# Light from Other Stars

Written by Erika Swyler

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# Light from Other Stars

By Erika Swyler

## Light From Other Stars

From the author of national bestseller *The Book of Speculation*, a poignant, fantastical novel about the electric combination of ambition & wonder that keeps us reaching toward the heavens.

## Light From Other Stars Review

Eleven-year-old Nedda Papas is obsessed with becoming an astronaut. In 1986 in Easter, a small Florida Space Coast town, her dreams seem almost within reachâ€”if she can just grow up fast enough. Theo, the scientist father she idolizes, is consumed by his own obsessions. Laid off from his job at NASA and still reeling from the loss of Neddaâ€™s newborn brother several years before, Theo turns to the dangerous dream of extending his living daughter's childhood just a little longer. The result is an invention that alters the fabric of time.

## Light From Other Stars Book

Amidst the chaos that erupts, Nedda must confront her father and his secrets, the ramifications of which will irrevocably change her life, her community, and the entire world. But she finds an unexpected ally in Betheen, the mother she's never quite understood, who surprises Nedda by seeing her more clearly than anyone else.

## Light From Other Stars Bloomsbury

Decades later, Nedda has achieved her long-held dream, and as she floats in antigravity, far from earth, she and her crewmates face a serious crisis. Nedda may hold the key to the solution, if she can come to terms with her past and the future that awaits her.

## Light From Other Windows

Light from Other Stars is about fathers and daughters, women and the forces that hold them back, and the cost of meaningful work. It questions how our lives have changed, what progress looks like, and what it really means to sacrifice for the greater good.

Wow!!! .... I was left with a big lump in my throat as I turned the last few pages. I sat quietly just staring out the window.

Itâ€™s not a book one easily jumps away from and walks off quickly.

Itâ€™s a book that transforms us....one we continue to reflect.

It brims with heart - pleasures and pain between parents and their children. Itâ€™s a highly imaginable story - one that expands our horizons between earth and space.

This novel is wonderful - extraordinary - incredibly ambitious.....and as ambitious as its heroine: \*Nedda Papas\* Wow!!! .... I was left with a big lump in my throat as I turned the last few pages. I sat quietly just staring out the window.

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This novel is wonderful - extraordinary - incredibly ambitious.....and as ambitious as its heroine: \*Nedda Papas\*.

Eleven year old Nedda wanted to be an astronaut. She wanted to go to the moon, walk on its craters. She wanted her own space shuttle and to feel what weightlessness was like.

The story begins when Nedda has already been in outer space for two years. â€œAboard Chawlaâ€• . There are three years left before arrival.

Meet the other crewmates:

Evgeni - His eyesight was suffering. It was progressive astigmatism due to lack of gravity.

Amit Singh - Mission Commander

Louisa Marcanta - physician

Dr. Stein - psychologist

From Outer Space:

Nedda remembers â€˜homeâ€™ .....remembers her family - mom, dad, and close friend Denny....and others in her community.

Nedda remembers â€œrunning between rows of orange trees, bare feet against rough soil, the dusty yellow dirt, crabgrass where the trimmers couldnâ€™t reach, flies.â€•

â€œShe missed Denny. There are parts of his memory she would never be privy to. Yet they were tied together by the orange grove from a trauma as much as friendship. Yet they hadnâ€™t talked since she

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left for Mars.

Chawla has a heartbeat - listening in the dark to the sounds of the module helped her stop thinking of home, about Danny, and about her parents.

Chawla was the first ship to tie life support to an accelerated radioisotope thermoelectric generator. ( called Amadeus) Amadeus where is separate from the engines, powering the module when it served as shelter. Amadeus meant deep space travel for humans.

We follow Nedda during her childhood in Easter, a small Florida Space Coast town - and into outer space.

During Nedda's childhood - her scientist father, Theo, invented a time-altering machine. There are secrets her father has been keeping related to this machine. Nedda will discover her dad's secrets and have choices to make.

Nedda's mom, Bethen, could bake like nobodies business.... Champagne Water cake? , anyone? Customers often asked why her baking was better than anybody else..... because I'm a chemist, asshole , The words always threaten escape!

We meet several unforgettable characters in Easter, Florida.

The town is small. There are personal tragedies - the kind that leave permanent scars.....the kind that no matter how far into outer space one goes - those tragic memories don't get erased.

And there was The Challenger memory:

On Jan 28, 1986....the NASA space shuttle Challenger exploded after liftoff killing 7 astronauts. Nedda was in her 5th grade class at school. Her teacher, Mrs. Wheeler, turned on the classroom television for the kids to watch the shuttle launch. She and her classmates watched 7 people die. Judy Resnik, school teacher, heroine to many children, was gone.

I'm reminded of watching myself. It's hard to believe that it's been 30 years.

Filled with dreams, passion, challenges, empathy, grief, love, loss, with insightful prose that is simply luminescent.

Thank you Nicole and Bloomsbury Publishing. And many thanks to Erika Swyler...who captured a world so internal an intimate - that these characters ( especially Nedda), will be etched in my memory for a long time.

...more



## Light From Other Suns

\*\*\*NOW AVAILABLE\*\*\*

This was a 4 star read for me.

This is my second book by Ms. Swyler and it is really quite different. I believe that "The Book of Speculation" was more magical realism and this one is science fiction. I think it might be important for readers to know that. I do not read science fiction and some parts of this novel were just plain frustrating for me. The believability factor was a problem for me at first but then I thought I would just sort of turn myself over to the book and j

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We are thrown into the future right at the beginning of the book as Nedda Papas is waking up on the spaceship *Crawla*, to the sound of birdsong from her now long ago childhood. She and her crewmates are on a several years journey to another planet where they will build a base and determine whether this may be a planet suitable for human life since earth is slowly dying.

The science part of this section and a lot of the book is what dragged for me and some of the descriptions were quite long. It was in the frustrating scientific details that this book lost me a little, I just wanted to get on with the story! I however did learn, and you should know it now because it will appear many times in the book that : "Entropy is the measure of randomness or disorder in a system" . (wikipedia) or as Nedda had learned from her father, "Is it about entropy? . . . .He told me that's what the machine was for. To control it. To speed it up, or to stop it. It's heat loss, energy loss, but it's time too"

The setting for the dual timeline is 1986 in a small town around NASA's rocket and shuttle launching station. Nedda Papes was lying on the top of her dad's car waiting to catch a glimpse of Halley's Comet. We get to know Nedda very well, her love of all things space related, her obsession to someday be an astronaut. The absolute horror as she watched on the TV at school, The Challenger shuttle blow up with all of the astronaut's lives lost.

She is 11 years old and is brilliant in science but otherwise a typical pre-adolescent. She has a good friend, Denny, whose orange grove they like to hide in, they also like to stop in Pete's backyard, he

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collects old NASA equipment and just anything basically from all of the previous launches, he used to work there and if something interesting was being thrown away Pete would probably bring it home.

There are a lot of characters in this novel and I won't go through all of them, they are flawed, some likable, some not, but I found them believable. You have also read a blurb about where some of the story is going, but I think you will all be surprised. I'm not going to talk about the plot more in fear of spoiling your enjoyment of the book.

This novel I believe is about exploration and loss, fathers and daughters, mothers and how they are sometimes seen through their daughter's eyes. (Betheen told her daughter "Don't think for one second he's the only reason you're smart".)

At times I wasn't sure where the many threads of this story were leading but it was a fun and entertaining ride.

I received an ARC of this novel from the author and publisher through NetGalley ...more

4.5 stars

Science fiction is not a genre I typically read, but there was something about the description of this book that appealed to me. I am more than a little surprised at how much I loved it. Most of the sci-fi stuff was beyond me and while I didn't find most of it believable, the author did a fabulous job of helping me to imagine it.

Eleven year old Nedda loves space travel and astronauts and science and her heart is broken when The Challenger crashes. Nedda's love of space travel and her a 4.5 stars

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Eleven year old Nedda loves space travel and astronauts and science and her heart is broken when The Challenger crashes. Nedda's love of space travel and her ambition to go to space is realized in this dual time narrative. The story begins from her present on a spacecraft on a journey to a planet to explore whether it could be a safe haven as the earth slowly is destructing. It moves back and forth to 1986, when she is eleven, the time of an experiment that alters time, when so much changes. Her father, a professor who has lost his job at NASA has also had his heart broken by a loss that he and Nedda's mother have kept from her. Theo is on a mission to "extend her childhood". "What an incredible thing it would be to hold on to that precise moment where genius was born. what an incredible thing it would be to hold on to that precise moment." A well meaning and full of love desire, but his experiment turns into something that goes horribly wrong, affecting their entire town. The narratives connect in a way that is both beautiful and heartbreaking. This is a thought provoking story full of heart and the depth of love for one's children that every parent knows and

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this is reflected in both her father Theo and her mother Betheen. Thereâ€™s such humanity, the relationships and emotions are not hard to imagine at all . They are as real as they get.

While this book was on my radar and an arc already on my kindle, it was Elyseâ€™s beautifully convincing review that moved me to read this. Hereâ€™s her review :

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

I received an advanced copy of this book from Bloomsbury through NetGalley. ...more

## Light From Other Days

Eleven year old Nedda Papas wants to be an astronaut. Her father once worked for NASA (was laid off) and she is devastated when she watched the Challenger Catastrophe at her school. I could relate to this part of the book as I also watched the Challenger break apart 73 seconds into its flight live in my science class. But that is not where the book begins, the book begins when an adult Nedda is in space aboard the Chawla. She has been in space for two years and has several more to go before they land. Eleven year old Nedda Papas wants to be an astronaut. Her father once worked for NASA (was laid off) and she is devastated when she watched the Challenger Catastrophe at her school. I could relate to this part of the book as I also watched the Challenger break apart 73 seconds into its flight live in my science class. But that is not where the book begins, the book begins when an adult Nedda is in space aboard the Chawla. She has been in space for two years and has several more to go before they land. The crew is in search of a new place to live as Earth is slowly dying. While in space she is looking back at her childhood, her parents, her father's experiment, her friend, Denny, the Challenger explosion, her school and community.

This book was a bit of a struggle for me and there were times that I thought of putting the book down and not finishing. But I pushed through. I am on the fence with Science fiction- I either love of or just can't connect with it. As I stated I struggled with this one. The science parts really slowed this book down for me and I found that as always, it was the human relationships which worked. I did appreciate how the Author tried to give the reader various perspectives through the people in the town about Nedda's father's experiment and his reason for the experiment. I typically do not have an issue with suspending belief but for some reason this just didn't work for me here. Consider me an outlier. The dual time lines didn't bother me however, as I mentioned I just struggled through this entire book. I believe this is more of a case of it is me and not the book. Read other reviews and read the book synopsis. I believe most science fiction fans will really enjoy this book.

Thank you to Bloomsbury Publishing and NetGalley who provided me with a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. All the thoughts and opinions are my own.

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Intriguing premise but ineffective execution. Would recommend Light from Other Stars to fans of The Sunlight Pilgrims by Jenni Fagan or Borne by Jeff Vandermeer. She'd been little when he'd told her about the beginning of the universe and how the solar system was born. How the sun was like an island, and the planets were ships sailing around it. He'd said, "Pluto is our far star sailor," the way other people said Once upon a time. His words opened a door inside her.

## Light Other Words

This review has been hidden because it contains spoilers. To view it, [click here](#).

Light from Other Stars is certainly not an easy book to review. It holds a lot of meaning and very deep emotion, and the idea behind it is definitely interesting â€” a science experiment gone wrong that sends the whole town into a temporal bubble and makes it effectively disappear for some 50 years, after which it surfaces like some real life nostalgia in a futuristic world of our day. So while it's a great premise, it's just... So, so sad. Light from Other Stars is largely about the trauma the main character went through in losing her dad, her childish innocence, her best friend and the tether to a safe, carefree reality â€” something we all lose sooner or later, as we grow up. Those kinds of topics are no walk in the park, so I kept stopping as I was reading because it would just keep bringing me down.

Light from Other Stars is told through two perspectives, the past and the present for the same character, Nedda. She witnesses the deaths of a group of astronauts during a NASA launch, but more than that â€” the very next day something terrible happens in her town and her father is to blame. It's also something really, really weird and nobody will even believe her at first, and she has to deal with it both physically as well as emotionally. The other perspective is also Nedda, but years later, on a colonizing ship to Mars, trying to not die with complications of the trip. Things on Earth also don't seem to be going that well. So none of these storylines are by any means cheerful. However, the biggest problem with the Light from Other Stars for me wasn't that it was sad, but the fact that it dragged. I only became invested way past the halfway point, so if I was a quicker DNF'er, I would have never read on.

Light from Other Stars is about loss, love, pain and regret, lost time. But it's also about science, the future and building a new life somewhere else. It's about parents and children, loners and friends. It's about growing up, growing apart and moving on. These emotional concepts are presented through a temporal anomaly and this makes them even more real. How would it be if you could see your parents as children or meet them young? Or if you lost them for reasons other than old age? What if you could talk to your child before they were born to you? What would your feelings become and how would you deal with the loss, the grief, the confusion? Light from Other Stars deals with these questions and more, and the pain explored is profound, but so is the growth and understanding gained.

I thank the publisher for giving me a free copy for review through NetGalley in exchange to my honest review. This has not affected my opinion.

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Light from Other Stars

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I loved the premise of Light From Other Stars when I read it. The story lost me, unfortunately. It's not a bad story or badly written. I got lost somewhere in the scientific stuff, and I just couldn't maintain interest enough. I skimmed through probably half of the story. If scientific stuff is your thing, you'll like it. Thanks to NetGalley for an arc in exchange for an honest review.

## Light Other Languages

This is a deeply beautiful book (more like a 4.5 for me), although it has a promotional pitch that is perhaps misleading.

Indeed this book consists of two parallel stories: Nedda's father's science experiment going array when she is a child and flash forward scenes aboard a space ship when Nedda is older and an astronaut. What I think you DON'T get from the promotional copy is that this book is sci-fi and those elements will figure prominently into one (and ultimately both) of these plot lines.

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I only mention this because when this book first went into that sci-fi direction, it threw me for a loop. Nedda and her friend Denny have an exceptional morning (as many kids in my generation did) watching the Challenge disaster on TV at school. Being that this is a story about a girl who ultimately becomes an astronaut (who adorable muses to herself as a child, "it was stupid to send grown men into space when a girl would be a better fit"), it feels like this desire to go to outer space will be the main narrative thrust of the plot.

However, after the crash the kids encounter a small monkey that's captured in a kind of space/time bubble and things get decidedly weird very fast. If you're down with that sort of thing, then buckle up...you're in for a fascinating ride. If however, you were expecting more of a family drama with space themes, you may be disappointed.

In some ways, reading this book requires a level of trust in the author. The plot spirals out in all sorts of unexpected directions that might have some readers pausing to ask themselves, "Wait, what?" But, if you stick with it, all of these points ultimately connect to each other and fit together seamlessly by the book's conclusion to create something beautiful.

I'm also giving this book bonus point for having an incredibly kick-ass mom character in Betheen. Would that all of us had the skills to handle a huge life/existential crisis so gracefully and parent so smoothly. "Be scared" she says to her daughter at one point, "But don't let being scared keep you from doing something. Important things are always frightening. We can be scared, and we can work scared." (Can someone make Betheen our next President?)

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My only quibble with the book (and it's a small one) is that I would have loved to gotten to know more about the townspeople in Easter. But I think if we did this would have been very a different book--a book about a strange event in a small town. And ultimately this book has bigger goals--examining loss and fear, family and survival. I'm thankful to the author and NetGalley for granting me the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review. ...more

Just... wow. I'm speechless.

There's not much you can say about this book but that it truly understands loneliness... but it makes you feel seen and understood in it. It's hopeful, ambitious, and full of life and love.

Be aware that this might not be for everyone, and that's okay, speculative fiction rarely is. But this is a story that's ambitious, large in scope, and never talks down to the reader. This is quite heavy in science and engineering, but even a person like me, who's no closer to an ex Just... wow. I'm speechless.

There's not much you can say about this book but that it truly understands loneliness... but it makes you feel seen and understood in it. It's hopeful, ambitious, and full of life and love.

Be aware that this might not be for everyone, and that's okay, speculative fiction rarely is. But this is a story that's ambitious, large in scope, and never talks down to the reader. This is quite heavy in science and engineering, but even a person like me, who's no closer to an expert than the next person, had no problem understanding the gist of things.

It also needs to be said: If it wasn't for the fact that I was reading these scenes in public, I would've been moved to tears twice by this book. It's tender and heartbreaking, but large-hearted. Such a delicate story done so well. Erika Swyler is an author that I need to keep watch of in the future.

I received a pre-publication copy from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. ...more



## Light Others

5/5 stars

Content includes depictions of child death, depression, family violence, psoriatic arthritis and vision loss  
This book is dedicated to the Hubble Space Telescope, which opened the universe to me. It is also dedicated to the teachers who did not believe a fifth-grade girl could speak knowledgeably about the Hubble Space Telescope. You remain embarrassingly wrong. I feel the need to start my review by thanking Carla (Carla's Book Bits), since it was her review that made me request this bo 5/5 stars  
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This book is dedicated to the Hubble Space Telescope, which opened the universe to me. It is also dedicated to the teachers who did not believe a fifth-grade girl could speak knowledgeably about the Hubble Space Telescope. You remain embarrassingly wrong. I feel the need to start my review by thanking Carla (Carla's Book Bits), since it was her review that made me request this book from NetGalley as well immediately. I was never gladder to add another book to my already stressfully big pile of unread eARCs, because long story short, Light from Other Stars is one of my new favourite books and one I will keep thinking about for a while!

The story follows Nedda Papas. In the first timeline she's a space-obsessed eleven years old, living in a Space Coast town (Florida, USA) who can't wait to grow up to become an astronaut herself. In the second timeline, decades later, she achieved her long-held dream, living and working aboard a space shuttle with three crewmates. Their mission is to colonize another planet by the end of the decade, because earth is increasingly uninhabitable.

When the crew faces a serious crisis, it's Nedda who may know how to solve it, if she's able to let her mind wander back in time to bring back weighty memories about her idealistic father she idolized, her brilliant and determined mother and her childhood friend who quite literally lived a life worth many lifetimes.

It's an ambitious story full of obsession and passion, loss, grief, love and empathy, hope, curiosity and humanity. The characters and relationships they have to one another are complicated, multilayered, but also profound and intricately evolving throughout.

The plot is very science heavy and I don't pretend to have understood it all, but the descriptions and explanations made it seem genuinely possible within this story's realm.

As it is with Speculative Fiction, this won't be for everyone, so I don't give Light from Other Stars a generalized recommendation. The themes of time, space and human connections reminded me about the movies *Interstellar* (2014) and *Annihilation* (2018) though and if those are movies you enjoyed, then definitely give this book a try!

Personally I know, I will be rereading this book at some point and I have to check out Erika Swyler's previous and future works for sure.

Thank you to NetGalley and Bloomsbury USA for giving me the opportunity to read this in exchange for

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Light from Other Stars

an honest review. ...more

This is one of those "find a quiet place" books. The intricate vocabulary and in depth story needs your undivided attention. It is a wonderful story and Swyler is an amazing author that causes you to fall into the world like Alice. I definitely recommend this read!