

Kaimira: Sky Village

Monk and Nigel Ashland

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Kaimira: Sky Village, by brothers Monk and Nigel Ashland, is the first establishment in their five-book series. It is set in the futuristic world in which humans, beasts, and meks—robot-like forms of life—are turned against each other in battles for survival. Mei, whose mother had been taken prisoner by meks, is forced to leave her life in the land to join her mother's Sky Village of China, a civilization composed of floating hot-air balloons connected to each other. Her father hands her a book before he leaves off in order to save his wife; he instructs her to never open this Tree Book. Likewise, a boy named Rom, in the ruins of Las Vegas discovers an identical book in his father's secret lair. He and his sister Riley enter a world beyond the caves, where demons are pitted together in gladiator-esque fights. Mei and Rom discover that they can communicate through this mysterious book, and both resort to consulting each other when they reach hard times. The Tree Book's prisoner, Animus, demands that he be freed, and he asserts that he is the solution to their hopeless cases. Their naïve experience and helplessness eventually cause them to free Animus as their last hope; the result: catastrophic destruction.

Kaimira has a mixture of fantasy, adventure, and thriller scenes that is filled with action and scenery. The Ashland brothers' collaboration clearly showed on the pages; the chapters are intense and easy to picture in a reader's mind. The characterization is excellent, for the Mei and Rom show their growth as characters, and it is clear that they will continue to grow in the next few sequels. The flow of the plot is very natural, although a younger reader may get confused due to the constant switch of narrator from chapter to chapter. The overall style of the book is very similar to the bestseller *Fablehaven* series. The recommended age group would be from ages 7 to 14, with regards to its content and the difficulty.