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Ten-year-old Emma doesn't believe in faerie tales or monsters that secret children away in the night--until she meets one.

She lives in a quiet village at the edge of Widowswood with her parents, her Nan, and her little brother, Tam. Ready to abandon the whimsy of childhood, she finds the boredom of chores comforting and Nan's fanciful bedtime stories silly.

One morning, a wan and weary older girl staggers out of the woods and sets the entire town aflutter with whispers of a child-stealing monster lurking in the forest. Nan tells her of the Banderwigh: a dark soul who feeds on sorrow and drains the life from children's tears.

Darkness comes calling on Emma's happy home, threatening the reality to which she desperately clings. The impossible becomes more and more real, forcing Emma to reach inside herself for the ability to believe. Her family depends on it.

Emma and the Banderwigh Details

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Author : Matthew S. Cox

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From Reader Review Emma and the Banderwigh for online ebook

***?az?? - th? ?ock C?ick ?airy* says**

4.5

This book is a clash between a dark fairy tale world and an RPG world.

What do you do when the things you never believed in came to life?

Gosh! Prepare for the adventure!

Emma didn't believe. She was a logical girl. She always had an explanation for everything. If you ask me, her attitude is that of a late teenager than that of a kid. Her view of life is kind of advanced. She's a very observant girl. I love that about her. She's also a good daughter, a very dutiful sister and a concerned friend. She's always thinking of other people. She doesn't even want to change her dress because of the person who gave it to her. She's a good kid really.

Her story revolves around a story that is feared by many. It's like the dark side of a fairy tale. She doesn't believe in it of course, but fate decides when to turn her into a believer. What happened to her... it's scary. It's traumatic. However, she stood strong. She did cry, but not as much as I expected her to. I imagined myself in her place and it wasn't pretty. She did better and she ended the nightmare all on her own.

However...

It isn't over yet.

That's what you have to look forward to. How does she end it?

Her family is awesome all throughout. I love Mom and Nan. They're truly amazing. I don't know what would happen to this story without them.

This story is a scary, mysterious story of magic. Just how dark can magic go?

I want to have sequel for this. Emma deserves it. :)

C.J. Milbrandt says

Emma, age ten, is far too sensible to believe in the tales of fairies, dragons, and monsters spun by her old Nan, but that doesn't prevent them from being true. A tense and vivid fantasy. Cox's story resonates with a deep love and fierce protectiveness for home and family. Nature magic and druids. Shapeshifters and spirit animals. Potions and spells.

Descriptions of violence may be too graphic for more sensitive readers. Hardier souls will enjoy the blend of familiar and fantastic story elements. I'm quite looking forward to this story's sequel!

Andrew Buckley says

Emma is a delightful protagonist who's logical world is upended, first by superstition, and then by the realization that her superstitions are actually real. Cox weaves a world that will send chills up and down your spine. Beautifully written with an atmospheric tension that draws the reader in. If you're looking for a creepy fairytale-esque adventure, I'd heartily recommend it.

Emily says

My only complaint is that it's somewhat longer than it needs to be. A little too much repetition of the same kind of event or description. Other than that, an enjoyable adventure.

Darlene says

I received a free electronic copy of Emma and the Banderwigh from the author Matthew Cox in exchange for an honest review. The story is a middle grade fantasy adventure story about 10 year old Emma who thinks she's too old for fairy tales and skeptical about the superstitions of her grandmother. However, Emma learns that her Nan's stories aren't stories at all, and she must save her family from a cursed being haunting the widowswood near her home. Because Emma is no ordinary girl, she is from a line of powerful druids/woods witches and possesses the gift of nature magic. It's a cute tale for those interested in adventure, fantasy, re-imagined fairy tales, and the middle grade genre. I hope to read more in this series.

Jessica Cowgill says

Great read

this is a real good book that I actually had to put away twice because I was reading it at night and it scared me..lol. I have told my friends to read this book. Really really good.

Patricia says

What do you do when you are only ten and don't believe in fairy tales that is what is happening to Emma . She lives with her family outside the small village. and one day a young girl comes out of the woods talking of a child stealing monster lurking monster . When the darkness comes calling what is Emma to do . She needs to reach deep inside herself to save her family , I really like the characters in this story, Emma is a sweet character trying to grow up . But you see her grow up and become more . She is strong and sweet and really wants to help others . She is a great problem solver for others and really likes to help . Nan is a fun

character too she tries to keep Emma from growing up too fast and her stories The author takes us on epic fantasy journey that anyone from middle grade to adults . The story is well written and the characters are complex. This is a story of growing up and becoming more then just a child . The story starts a little slow but with all the twists and turns the author takes us on an epic adventure . I truly love this authors way of writing and the stories he tells . This would be a great series for a snowy night by the fire . Both adults and kids would love it . Check it out

Montzalee Wittmann says

Emma and the Banderwigh (Tales of Widowswood #1) by Matthew S. Cox is another wonderful tale by one of the best fantasy writers out there. Not once, while reading this, did I think this was book was for children. This is a book that will cross all age levels. I was so wrapped up in the adventure, the family, the village, the monsters, that I felt I was part of the story! Cox can do that to a person! I felt I was an invisible part of this family and I loved it. Great fantasy, imaginative creatures, magic, and something in the writing that is not describable, it has to be felt by the reader. This is an excellent book for kids of all ages 10 to 100. Loved it, 10 stars!

Fiza says

I had requested this one on Netgalley, I thought it sounded so cute and fairytale like. And I was happy when I got notice that they accepted my request. since I'm from the Netherlands it seems I'm excluded from lots of books.

Any way, when I started reading this book I saw I was right. It really was like a fairy tale, a dark one at that. Which is right up my alley! I can't say that it immediately drew me in, I had to get used to the writing style first. If you think about it, it's only natural because it is a children's book. But once I got into the rhythm of it I finished it in no time.

Emma, who sounds much older and wiser than her age, is so adorable and brave. Reading from her POV I kind of feel like a bum. I mean she does so much, she's like a mini mom at times. I tip my hat to you, little lady.

Her view is very practical in the beginning, it's kind of like "I can see, I can touch then it's real". But along the way that changes, as she encounters a being that terrifies many. A being that she believed was nothing but a scary story.

What happens next is a dark, magical ride in which Emma rediscovers herself. Discovers that not all can be trusted and others despite their nature can. Her beliefs are torn apart and then mended together even more strongly.

This book is a very mature children's read, at least that's what it feels like to me. That is why I'm convinced

that not only children will enjoy it, heck I haven't been a child for a long time and I liked it.

Afterwards I even went looking for mentions of a sequel. Why? Well, I think Emma still has a lot of work cut out for her....plus I want to know if certain promises are upheld...

I'm going to give it 4 stars....what can I say, I'm a sucker for a well written fairy tale...

***I've received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review, thank you publisher & author**

Dave Higgins says

Weaving fast-paced fairytale action with more mundane challenges, Cox creates a story that is as accessible as a great bedtime story underpinned with the depth of a fantasy novel.

Emma has lived on the edge of the Widowswood her entire life. A sensible child, she devotes herself to her chores and treats the stories that her grandmother tells at bedtime as fancy. And when a girl staggers from the forest years after she disappeared, her empty expression matching the tales of a monster that feeds on the fear and sorrow of children, Emma shares her father's belief the girl escaped from bandits who'd been holding her prisoner. But then someone, or something, comes for Emma and her brother.

Utilising the grasp of pacing and language that marks his more adult work, but selecting a less convoluted plot and vocabulary, Cox creates an entirely plausible voyage into fairytale that is accessible to younger readers without losing the depth that more mature readers might expect of a fantasy novel.

Rather than leap straight into the fantastical, Cox opens with mundane issues: arguments over clothing, handling a boisterous younger brother, the complexity of bullying, and other challenges that will be immediately recognisable to anyone who is at least ten. Threaded alongside this, Emma's parents and neighbours provide glimpses of mundane adult concerns such as banditry and alcoholism. This grounding in the real makes the magical – when it does start to seep in – seem more frightening by comparison.

And provides a plausible reason to explain why a ten-year-old might end up trying to fight an ancient evil rather than involve adults: if some adults don't believe, and many give the appearance of not believing, in the supernatural then Emma's failure to press repeatedly for their aid feels – if not sensible – reasonable.

As with Cox's other works, the characters are as strong as the plot. Emma is a complex mix of sensible and responsible with still-actually-a-child. This gives her a can-do attitude and a certain level of competence without making her a clichéd plucky hero or having her suddenly fold when the plot needs it.

The supporting cast are equally complex. Adults have flaws but are not defined solely by them, and other children present contradictions equal to the protagonist of many adult novels.

While the protagonist is ten, Cox creates more than one genuinely scary threat so some discretion might be advised for younger readers.

Overall, I enjoyed this book. I recommend it to readers seeking an enjoyable young adult fantasy, or fantasy

readers seeking a lighter yet entertaining tale.

I received a free copy from the author with no obligation to review.

Gail says

Engaging story. Maybe a bit scary for my ten year old but then again she seems to be sleeping.

Joan says

This is the first book in a three book series telling the story of 10 year old Emma who is just learning that her Nan, mother and herself have magical powers. She can talk to animals and perform a few tricks. The Banderwigh has his sights set on Emma and in this story you'll see how that turns out. I am way past the age of YA but quite enjoyed this story. I recommend this book to anyone who loves the fantasy/YA genre.

Janis Hill says

I would like to thank Curiosity Quills Press for an ARC of this book in exchange for an open and honest review.

This is a very entertaining YA fantasy novel. At first I thought it was set in our past and so found some of the historical inaccuracies grating, but as I read more I learnt it wasn't set in our world, simply set in a world similar to our own. I could cope with it after that.

It was a good read, definitely better suited to a YA/NA audience. Not that that is a bad thing, I love the YA/NA genre despite the age of forty nearly being upon me.

As much as I enjoyed the story, I sometimes found the characters a little disjointed and parts of it hard to follow. Though I'm pretty sure this was more my fault than the book. Sometimes a story grabs you and won't let you go; sometimes it just sits there companionably chatting to you when you have a moment. For me, 'Emma and the Banderwigh' was more a chatter than a grabber. ;-) Saying that, at times this book did get my "one more chapter" mantra going until after midnight. Which shows it was an entertaining read.

My only minor gripe with the story is I felt it ended too abruptly. Almost mid-sentence. I don't expect every tale to have a long winded wrap up where it sets out precisely how they will all live happily ever after... but I do like a little more than a one liner, as if it's about to lead into just that little bit more. If this is the first in a series (I don't know), then the ending is not so bad. As a stand-alone, it didn't work for me. **See Update below!**

Would I recommend this book to others? Yes I would. Lovers of YA/ NA Fantasy would really enjoy this work. The pace is steady, the characters well thought out and believable. Ticks all the boxes for a good YA Fantasy read.

Would I buy this book for myself? Possibly. It was a good YA Fantasy story, but I'm not finding myself

thinking over it and rehashing the plot and wondering “what ifs” about it. So it just hasn’t grabbed me as much as I’d hoped. If it is the first in a series, I WOULD be keen to read the next book to see how it goes. So, not all that bad. ;-)

In summary: A fun and entertaining read, a well written YA Fantasy and a gorgeous cover setting the scene for a good yarn. Something lovers of the YA Fantasy genre should take a look at as I’m pretty sure they’re going to enjoy it too.

****UPDATE**** Matthew Cox – the author - contacted me with a new last chapter added to ‘Emma and the Banderwigh’. I’ve read it and felt I need to update this review and give it another star – bringing it up to 4 out of 5 stars.

The chapter lifts the whole ending of the book, rounds it off nicely and doesn’t just leave it hanging and having you wonder if there is a page missing. The new ending works well if the book is a stand-alone, but also makes the idea of a series even more enticing.

My opinion of recommending or buying the book hasn’t changed – as I still would recommend it and would still read it as a series. But I do have to say it needed this extra chapter and I’m so pleased it has happened. Really does smooth things out and keep the ending up to the same quality as the rest of the novel.

Jan farnworth says

This is an amazing start to a series that is sure to delight people of all ages as it has moments of such an intensity that you forgot it was meant for a younger age group. I love that our main character is the perfect kind of character that is growing up and chooses not to believe the folky fairy tales her grandma has told her for years. When she faced with the truth the story really ramps up and she comes into her own as a believer and defender of her family and things that go bump in the night. It was a delightful story and i highly recommend it.

Heather says

I received a free copy of this book from the author, Matthew S. Cox, for an honest review.

Emma doesn't believe in Princesses, Fairies, magic and she certainly does not believe the Banderwigh is real. That is until her entire reality is turned on its head and she has no choice but to believe.

Emma lives with her parents, her brother Tam and her Nan in a small two bedroom house. Her dad is captain of the guard and her mom helps people in the village. She never realized the help her mom was giving used magic. She learns her mom and Nan are druids and that she too, has magical capabilities.

Emma and the Banderwigh is a fantastic YA read. I found this fast paced, action packed book to be exciting and surprising and very entertaining. This book is one that can be enjoyed by all ages and I highly recommend picking it up

