



## Perchance to Dream

*Lisa Mantchev*

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## Act Two, Scene One

*Growing up in the enchanted Théâtre Illuminata, Beatrice Shakespeare Smith learned everything about every play ever written. She knew the Players and their parts, but she didn't know that she, too, had magic. Now, she is the Mistress of Revels, the Teller of Tales, and is determined to follow her stars. She is ready for the outside world.*

### Enter BERTIE AND COMPANY

But the outside world soon proves more topsy-turvy than any stage production. Bertie can make things happen by writing them, but outside the protective walls of the Théâtre, nothing goes as planned. And her magic cannot help her make a decision between -

**NATE:** Her suave and swashbuckling pirate, now in mortal peril.

**ARIEL:** A brooding, yet seductive, air spirit whose true motives remain unclear.

When Nate is kidnapped and taken prisoner by the Sea Goddess, only Bertie can free him. Bertie's dreams are haunted by Nate, whose love for Bertie is keeping him alive, but in the daytime, it's Ariel who is tantalizingly close, and the one she is falling for. Who does Bertie love the most? And will her magic be powerful enough to save her once she enters the Sea Goddess's lair?

## Perchance to Dream Details

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Author : Lisa Mantchev

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# From Reader Review Perchance to Dream for online ebook

## Laurel says

I'm gonna be one of those people and start off with a story that somewhat relates to this review.

I got back from my poetry class and wandered to the front door of my apartment. There was a goldenrod flyer chilling next to my door for a restaurant called Wings Over. I had gotten wings from this place whenever I visited Penn State, and I was in love with them. If you ever get the chance to order wings from Wings Over...DO IT. Anywho, they had opened up a place in Rochester (where I go to college), and I was freaking out all by myself in my apartment. It was glorious.

That's kind of how I wanted the ending to be for this installment of Théâtre Illuminata, but I did not receive as nice of a surprise. However, I feel that that's okay because it's probably just mulled over to get to the final book, So Silver Bright. I will let it slide, even though I still have this groggy feeling about it.

And so we get the entrance of Bertie and Company. Sedna's got Nate. Bertie wants to free Nate. Sedna says, "Fuck you, I'm the Sea Goddess." Then Bertie fixes her dress, slips on her bamf booties, gets some advice from Finn and Jake, and says, "Looks like it's up to ME!"

## Let us begin the breakdown:

The plot was not as jumbled, thank goodness. Nothing seem misplaced. However, it was still pretty hard to follow. I had to make sure I didn't miss anything, but at the same time, there were a number of things that were unnecessary and could have been cut out. That's just me. The writing was as poetic as it could be without turning purple and overdone, and I enjoyed it a lot for the brilliant imagery. I can imagine things **so well** with Mantchev's writing, hence why I say (and I will keep saying) that Hayao Miyazaki would have a **FIELD DAY** with these books.

I was not as drawn in as I thought I would be, but anything Shakespeare-related kind of does that for me, which leaves me baffled as to how I can love this series so goddamn much. The writing power of Mantchev couldn't match Brewer's or Roth's for Eighth Grade Bites and Divergent, respectively. I think the problem was that the pacing was a little jarring. Some scenes dragged on where some of the more tense scenes held the proper snap. I'd probably be wanting a hell of a lot more if the pacing was up to par.

Moving onto the characters, Bertie has more oomph behind her in this installment, and I love it. She's not taking any excuses, and no matter how much she tries to use her words to support the Company, there are times where they fuck up and prove themselves to not be a deus ex machina **AND GOOD GOD AM I GRATEFUL FOR THAT.**

This explains my thanks rather nicely:

Bertie, as determined and sarcastic as she can be, slips up around her two dudes. **This is why I can't stand fucking love triangles. They make unnecessary moments that drag people like Bertie out of character.** **At least I think so...** She doesn't go far enough to go ga-ga over Ariel and Nate, but it's on that thin line where I'm saying, "Stoooooop it and get back to hunting the sea bitch." I will say that she does have a few great moments where she's like, "Fuck y'all I'm better all by myself," and she ignores Ariel/Nate.

The newer characters like the Scrimshander and Waschbär were nicely developed throughout *Perchance*, more so that the band of show people that Waschbär came from, who seemed unnecessary enough that I forgot even now what their troupe name was. I only remember Valentijn.

However, lemme shed some happy light here. I am ALL about the magic portion of this book. There is so much brilliance in the magic that is dove into in this book. Mantchev's got a lot of gears going in this book and I loved seeing her originality fly free. Beautiful!

**I will also give my opinion, as a fan, on my personal choice for Bertie (as much as I hate love triangles and teams and deciding):**

Nate, in this book and the previous, acts **way** too much like a big brother. To the point where I find it awkward that he stands like a bodyguard between Ariel and Bertie. That is just my honest opinion. I still kinda like him, but not as a love interest. There hasn't been any scenes that stand out as good material for a romance to build between him and Bertie. He's just a fun-talking pirate who acts like Bertie's best friend, and not someone she could stay with forever. I think Bertie loves him, but she isn't IN love with him.

Ariel, has stuck around Bertie this whole book, right there for her. Though he acts a little possessive at times, he is not trying to get into Bertie's pants. He's not trying to kill Nate to get Bertie (like Nate is like a snarling pet dog to him), and it shows that Ariel legit cares about her. There were also scenes that really drove their characters together, more in this book than the first. Also, Ariel on the cover hooked me in and made me love him even more than I did in the first book.

*Ariel, my good sir...*

This bring me to that ending again. Bittersweet and poopy. When the climax came to approach Sedna, it fell upon the love triangle for WHATEVER reason, and I was just awe-struck at how stupid it was. Sedna wanted to kill all of them, then she didn't, then she wanted to kill Bertie, but then she let the men fight each other to take Bertie back with them, but then she wanted to kill all of them again.....**get what I mean about this plot thing and how love triangles make it go a little crazy?**

Sigh.

Anywho, as much as that ending really irked me, there were still many things that keep this story at a solid 4 stars. I still recommend this book because of its original, clever, and magical tendencies, but it's still not quite there yet as a simply AMAZING piece of literature. Still love it nonetheless.

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**Rae says**

***“Words are like the delicate stitches in the dress you wear, holding the fabric of the garment together. Without them, the dress and the world are nothing but barren cloth.”***

In this second installment of the Theatre Illuminata trilogy, Bertie and Co. have left the Theatre and for the first time since Bertie can remember she is truly on her own. With Nate trapped in the clutches of the evil sea goddess Sedna, Bertie and Ariel and her fairy companions have set out to rescue him and hope to find where Ophelia once lived and maybe even run into the Mysterious man that is supposedly Bertie's own father. Along their journey they meet a few new and interesting characters and even have a new recruit in their

entourage who comes bearing unwanted gifts, meet Waschbar! I loved his character and his two friendly ferrets, Pip Pip and Cheorio! They not only fit right in with this lovely group of misfits, Waschbar just seems to belong here. This is a journey he might not have intended to be on, but once he is, it seems unlikely he could belong anywhere else.

***“No more proper bed than a soft cushion of earth and the night sky for a coverlet.”***

These books hold so much magic in them that its hard not to get swept away in the beautiful story being told. I love the imagery and the connection to the written word that is so creatively woven together with the theatrical theme that carries through the book. I love the lessons Bertie learns while out on her own. How she really didn't realize how good she had it in the Theatre Illuminata with endless buffets of food and convenient scene changes to her liking. But now on her own in the "real world" she learns not everything comes free and she really has to be careful what she wishes for, because not everything is as simple and straightforward as it seems.

***Caught between the water and the sky, Bertie tried to stay grounded.***

I really started to like Ariel now that Nate can't be there to be her swashbuckling hero, Ariel really stepped up to the plate and proves his love for Bertie in so many ways. If I were Bertie, I really dont know who I would choose between her two handsome lovers. Nate is who I originally thought she couldn't do without but now having seen just how formidable Ariel is and how much he is willing to risk to protect Bertie from harm, I really have a soft spot for him as well!!! And to make matters worse, Bertie doesn't have a clue who she likes the best either. So bring on the love triangle!!!

***“There was no slipper, nor spinning wheel, nor true love’s first kiss. This was not a fairy tale with a happily ever after.”***

I really have come to love these characters and this world and can't wait to see what happens in the end. I'm happy I decided to finally pick these up after sitting on my shelf for so long, they are sweet, and magical, and beautifully written. I give them two thumbs up!!!

Happy Reading :)

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**Leah G says**

The opening lines, a riff off Pride and Prejudice, are very funny; however, throughout the book I found the mischievous fairies more an annoyance than an actual contribution to the book's quality. Ignoring them, however, I thought that Bertie is a good character and Ariel is even more complexly drawn than the first book. There are many cute and clever lines, and the Scrimshander is an intriguing invention- he may have been my favorite part of the book.

However, the plot is very flawed- I kept stopping while I read and saying, "But that doesn't make any sense. Why couldn't Bertie simply do [obvious, easy action:] instead of [weird, complicated, stupid action:]- oh, because then the book would have ended two pages later." I also wished Nate, Ariel's pirate rival for Bertie's affections, would have had more personality as he did in the first book. Ariel's development seems to have been at Nate's expense, unfortunately. The book's ending is abrupt and, I felt, something of a cop-out.

All that aside, this book can be very enjoyable, particularly for younger readers (although it's probably better if they know Shakespeare plays well in advance of reading.)

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## Molly says

### Rating 2.5

#### **WARNING: ranting and spoilers ahead (lots of it)**

Ah, \*sigh\*, what happened here!? What is this mess?

I loved **Eyes Like Stars** ... and yes, I know that often the second book in a trilogy wanders aimlessly, I was prepared for that...

... what I was not prepared for was ... that Bertie, after growing up, and leaving her self-centered conduct in the first book, loses all sense and sanity and makes decisions that are **barely fit for a five year old**. Once her attitude can be taken as cute every-teen-has-acted-like-that behavior, but twice ?! (I don't care for fast amends at the end... not this time around).

Second thing, the **damn love triangle** ... more insufferable than in the first book. Every time Nate the possessive pouty pirate appeared I wanted to throw the book or crush it. I know that he saved her from Sedna in the first book, and that she feels obligated to save him (still don't get what she sees in him), but Bertie keeps from the others the fact that she can communicate with Nate, and continues making stupid decisions one after the other to save him (and no, she doesn't ask advice, not once... because, **Bertie knows best**) ... and let's not forget that her "worthy" love interest isn't concerned for her safety, on the contrary he manipulates her in a marriage bond (stupid Bertie doesn't realize it till the end, and even then she doesn't care much) and throws fits of jealousy because of the air elemental Ariel. I want to mention that Nate the pirate in this book is technically dead, and no he doesn't say "be safe and happy Bertie, even if with Ariel, he cares for you, he'll keep you safe"..... no, no, no, no, he cheats her into marriage, with a blood bond and forced love confession... "Say you love me, even if you don't mean it, just once I beg you, it's just words...." Bleh. I want to throw up. **Is this supposed to be romantic?**

Ariel is no angel, he is tricksy, he does some stupid stuff too, but only because Bertie leaves him with the illusion that she loves him, and when he discovers he has been taken for a ride, he joins the club and plays dirty too.

Bertie on her part sighs after Nate but doesn't mind kissing Ariel. More or less like in book one, but as I said, once I can chew up the immature behavior, but twice!?

The other quip I had with the book is the **world-building**. I didn't care much for it in the first book because they didn't set foot outside the Théâtre. It was a little confusing as is stated more than once that Bertie wears jeans and mary janes most often than not, but then at the premiere night the audience was brimming with *noblesse* ... a Viscount, a Duke , a Marquis, a Baron, a Marchioness and some-such, and they arrived in carriages.

In book two we are finally outside ... and everything is still unclear. The troupe carriage is pulled by mechanical horses, at one point they board a train whose interior reminded Bertie of a "old-fashioned soda parlor"

The rest of the book they mostly rode through the countryside on cobbled roads, passing (if I'm not wrong) through one village (well, a hamlet).

I read many reviews where people complained about the world-building .... never comprehended what they complained till now.

There were new characters .... but I didn't care much for them.

Maybe I should mention that in this book Bertie meets her father ... and more than once, during her tantrums throws rocks and stuff at him. Just charming.

Well, as you could have guessed ... I'm **not reading book three**. Two and a half stars ... and I'm giving this much only on the account of the four fairies (and occasionally Ariel).

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## The End

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### Becky says

I read and fell in love with the first book in the Théâtre Illuminata series, Eyes Like Stars, several months ago. I was a bit concerned about starting the sequel because I was a little hazy on the details of the first book. I needn't have worried; while you certainly want to read the first book first, book two is almost self-sufficient.

As Bertie, Ariel, and the four Midsummer Night's Dream fairies are off on an adventure outside the Théâtre; Bertie is desperate to rescue her sort-of-boyfriend, the pirate Nate, and she also wants to discover the identity of the Mysterious Stranger who is her father. At the same time, she's maybe-a-little-bit falling for Ariel. She's also learning how to use her storytelling magic without accidentally doing anything dangerous, like lighting her fairy friends on fire.

So much of this book had me literally laughing out loud. I adored it. The comic relief, mostly in the form of the fairies but from other sources as well, is excellent. And I love, love, love all the literary references (the first line is "It is a truth universally acknowledged,' Mustardseed said, flying in lazy loops like an intoxicated bumblebee, 'that a fairy in possession of a good appetite must be in want of pie," and it only gets better from there). But even through the lighthearted tone and the cheerfulness, there's a fair amount of danger and dark situations that definitely kept me turning the pages.

And the characters. Oh my goodness, the characters. Peaseblossom, Moth, Cobweb, and Mustardseed alone would be enough to keep me reading even with out all the other amazingness. Edible boyfriends and parodies about pie? Oh, yes. And Bertie is so sweet and so relatable - an awesome protagonist. And then there are the love interests. Nate and Ariel are both great characters (I'm Team Ariel, but that's me.) And all of the side characters are so much fun too. It's just spectacular.

My one complaint is that some of it was really hard to follow. While Bertie was experimenting with her

magic, there were two or three places where I got really confused as to where she was and who she was with. But I think even that worked, because Bertie was confused a lot too. It made it difficult to keep up in places, but I still really, really loved the story.

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### **Amelia, the pragmatic idealist says**

I loved *ELS*, and I loved *Perchance* as well!

This story goes in a different direction from its predecessor: instead of the entire setting being within the Theatre, Bertie and Company take their show on the road, and therefore there's more action driving *Perchance*, I think, and so it gave me an exhilarated, excited feeling as I was reading. There were so pretty interesting discoveries made over the course of the story, and so that was fun.

The romantic angle is more pronounced in *Perchance*, but (thank my lucky eyes like stars!) it never took center stage. There were other more predominant forces of the story, and for that I am especially grateful to the ever-talented author! I said this in *Eyes*, so forgive me if I sound redundant, but I really, really like Bertie! I just seem to identify with her, somehow, and so it was really nice to read about a character that I actually cared about! Sometimes, though, I wished she didn't have to be quite so haughty, but she's someone I could relate to and she goes through a lot of the course of the story. I guess what I liked best about Bertie is her unwavering concentration: stuff gets thrown at her from all angles, and yet she never strays from her goal (in this case, to rescue Nate from the malicious Sea Goddess' lair). Joining her on her journey are the hyper, food-frenzied *Midsummer* faeries! I love these little guys! Oh, and you too, Pease! These loveable sidekicks were hysterical and adorable from start-to-finish, and I just wish I had four little faerie pals, too! I have to say, though, that while I liked Nate and Ariel equally in *Eyes*, but at the end of *Perchance*, I am now Team Ariel! I don't fully trust him yet, and I'm sure there will be more revelations about him in Untitled Book Three (most of *Perchance* seemed to emphasize the search for Nate, and what he was going through), so I can't wait to for more Ariel!

As always, I remain a big, GUSHING fan of Mantchev's clever, witty writing style. She has an amazing talent for taking Shakespearean quotes and scenarios and weaving them seamlessly into her narrative – I even underlined all the references I saw.

A very well done sequel! Can't wait for Untitled Book Three!

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### **Kristen says**

Why I read this: I really enjoyed the first one and wanted to read more about Bertie and her adventures.

Plot: I have to be honest here. This book felt scattered to me at times. The setting was hard for me to picture. Otherwise, it was the usual rescue adventure with obstacles caused by mystical forces. The whole setting felt surreal and I couldn't seem to focus on what was going on and then suddenly they were moving on to something else. It was kind of a trip.

Characters: Okay, why can't Ariel just be the bad guy? I feel like he should be, but he isn't - it's just how Bertie reacts to his "love" for her. Okay, less venting about Ariel versus Nate.

I cannot really connect with Bertie. I think the problem is I can't see her background clearly in the books and how it's made her into who she is. I don't understand her. Why does she push Ariel away? Why is Nate the one she runs after to save? I'm not quite clear of her motives and then the sudden father figure entering the stage threw me off and it felt awkward and really weird all at once. I do love the fairies - they crack me up and keep me fairly sane throughout the whole adventure. They are constant in their love for food and constant bickering and insanity. Definitely my favorite characters.

Relatability: I can relate to the fairies, but I feel like the other characters aren't as real. There's nothing quite human about them besides emotions and I need some basis in reality to really connect. I'm sure people involved with theatre would understand this novel more, especially with the scene changes and play-writing.

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Cover Commentary: Gorgeous. I may buy it just to have it next to Eyes Like Stars, which I enjoyed more than the sequel for some reason.

### **Iris says**

#### **DNF at 55%.**

Wow. I'm so disappointed. I really liked the first book, but this one just isn't working for me.

I *do* really like the characters. or some of them at least.

But it's not enough. This book has none of the whimsy of book one. It completely lacks in the magic that I so loved. Instead it's boring, all over the place, and convoluted.

This book is made up almost entirely of writing in a magical book, traveling, more traveling, a really cringey love triangle between two guys that are waayyyyy too old for her, traveling, and more traveling. And did I mention traveling?

ARRRGGGGGGGHHHHH!

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Yes, I adore the fairies, but this series has simply lost it's charm, and I cannot force myself to read another page.

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### **Sanaa says**

[3.5 Stars] I have so many thoughts about this book series. I've never quite read anything like it. Unlike the first book which is told almost entirely through dialogue, this sequel turns to more descriptive writing, partially to its benefit I think. The story is still fantastical and magical, sometimes confusing, fast paced, and extremely fairy tale like yet this second installment was even more enchanting than the first. It felt as if I was reading some kind of mystical play. Lisa Mantchev spins a very convincing story so long as you can suspend your disbelief pretty well.

I suggest this trilogy if you would like to read something unique, magical, fairy tale like, and do not mind taking things as they are and not having everything entirely explained to you. I'm almost sad that I only have one more book left in the trilogy, but I am intrigued to know how things will go because really I find this series completely unpredictable and a joy to read! This one isn't quite as funny or as much of a romp as the first one, but this one feels more like an adventure and more like a magical mystery or a dream. ALSO, the writing is just gorgeous.

[Edited to Add] I was reading one of the reviews below and I totally agree with them that Hayao Miyazaki would have a field day with these books. I think the problem most people have with them is that nothing is really explained and you have to take it like it is. You don't know what time period everything happens in or why certain things are the way they are, but you just go with it. A LOT like in Howl's Moving Castle because come on, that movie is amazing but so weird. Like why? So yeah. I really love these books and you will too IF it doesn't bother you that things are not necessarily explained...

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### **Jade says**

I can explain this book with a single gif:

Yeah. That's all I can really say. The first book made enough sense, and the story was plausible, but in this, the second book, everything just stops making sense. What time period is this? Where does this happen? How did Bertie obtain this power? What allows the Players to come to life, and still exist, even outside the *Théâtre*? None of this is ever explained, neither in this book nor the previous one. It doesn't help that the writing is drowning in purple prose, so much so that it's practically impossible to follow what's going on, especially towards the end. One moment, Bertie's standing in a cave with her arm stuck in the wall (don't ask) and the next, she's lying in a magical swamp with one of her boyfriends dressed as a white knight, standing over her on horseback. Then, three seconds later, she's teleported to a stage covered in ice? What? Where? How?

Speaking of her boyfriends

### **Ariel:**

I love Ariel. Love, love, looooove him. I mean, just the tango scene in *Eyes Like Stars*.

Hot daaaaayuuuuuummmmm

Admittedly, Ariel surprised me by being much more foul-natured than I expected. I was expecting him to be much more eloquent and gentlemanly -- but then again, why would he be eloquent and gentlemanly? He's a Shakespeare character. There were times when I wanted him to shut up and stop being moody for thirty

seconds, but I suppose he has to be; he *is* an air spirit, after all. Either way, he was funny and sexy, and damn, I wish I had his powers. (Or just him <3) I, too, want butterflies flying around my head all day. It has always been my dream to be a flower.

**Nate:**

At the end of the first novel, Nate was kidnapped by Sedna, an ancient sea goddess, who stole his soul and left his body to rot in her sea cave. Therefore, for the majority of the novel, Nate is as follows:

Yeah. Basically. As for him as a character...

Really. I can't complain. He's nice. He cares about Bertie. He certainly has his moments. But that's it. He wasn't stupendously sexy or unique. He's just... Nate. I don't really love him or hate him.

So yeah. Not the greatest book ever. Moderately entertaining, but confusing as hell. Don't read it if you appreciate coherent plots and heroines with common sense.

[image error]

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**Bry says**

Not sure what happened here. The first book was so good! So so good! But this one just...completely feel flat for me.

Bertie was actually annoying me in this book and to be honest I can't even figure out why. To me some things that were so obvious was a mystery to her, and her emotions didn't always make sense to me. Ariel never convinced me of his goodness. I did believe in his love for Bertie but I didn't buy that he was any less selfish than in the first book. I believed one of the other characters take on Ariel - that he would give his life for Bertie, but that didn't mean Bertie wouldn't die alongside him.

One issue with the book though was the vague segways. Bertie would float back and forth between reality, dreams, and the otherworld. And the actions and consequences from each would bleed into the others so it all becomes reality yet isn't. Another issue, was the love triangle. The conclusion of it was just such a cop out to me. But maybe that is just because I think one is more worthy than the other. Usually I do like the bad boy but not this time. I just don't trust the bad boy this time.

Anyways, this book just wasn't for me. I do still want to read the 3rd book though. Hopefully I will enjoy it much more.

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## Erika says

Forgive me if this review isn't as clear, eloquent, or cohesive as I'd like. I have a cold and am having a little trouble concentrating.

Also: there are no spoilers in this review.

*Eyes Like Stars* left readers at the mercy of a crossroad--which would Bertie chose: Nate, the salted and sun-bronzed pirate from *The Little Mermaid*, or Ariel, the mysterious and alluring wind spirit from *The Tempest*? With Nate kidnapped and taken to Sedna's lair deep under imaginatively dark and murky waters, Bertie, encouraged by his return to the Théâtre Illuminata, takes Ariel and her fairy friends with her on a caravan ride to The Outside to rescue Nate. The question remains: will she fall for Ariel along the journey and forget about Nate or will she do the impossible and rescue her beloved pirate from a place where only the dead live?

You may remember, I wasn't too keen on the romance between Ariel and Bertie. She should, I thought, be with Nate. He never manipulated her; he's steady where Ariel is mercurial; dreamy and burly instead of elusive and dependent on magical charms. It's undeniable that both stand at opposing sides, polar opposites that war for Bertie's attention. The two were largely a most welcome distraction while Bertie began her search for her real parents and ultimately became entangled in what has always been Bertie's story.

The romance is only one part of *Perchance to Dream*. Lest we forget Bertie's other mission--to discover her father and bring him back to Ophelia--Mantchev introduces a dark and mysterious figure with a haunting past and secrets buried beneath a curious façade. Romance and revelations aside, *Perchance to Dream* delivers everything else you've come to expect from pastry connoisseur Lisa Mantchev and--dare it be possible--even more. The fairies were, as always, charmingly obsessed with their stomachs, but who can blame them? Like its predecessor, *Perchance to Dream* is a glittering explosion of pastries and color, magic, an impressive array of ornamental finery, costumes, stage sets, extraordinary periphery characters, and food. Did I mention the food? I never thought a generous reminder every now and then of dessert or dinner would actually make me hungry, but it did--and I'm not too big on the sweets. I even went out and bought a glazed donut to celebrate (I kid you not)!

The fairies aren't the only comedic relief. The tension between Ariel and Nate makes for testosterone fueled jabs and egotistical quips at each other's expense. The boys lose their usual composure as often as they try to save face in front of Bertie. Nate snarls; Ariel sweats. *Perchance to Dream* is worth the read, if only in part to watch the boys split themselves into equal parts sweetness and seduction, envy and brooding. Although Nate is still my favorite, Ariel makes a fine contender. Before I go on I must tell you that Bertie does makes a decision that answers the burning question: Nate or Ariel? No, I'm not going to reveal the answer. You'll just have to read the book to find out!

In addition to the goodies we've come to expect, Mantchev outdoes herself with richly imaginative scenes so vivid and abstract it's impossible to rely solely on her descriptions to take you far away into another dimension--a little imaginative thinking on the part of the reader is sometimes necessary. It's these scene, I'm afraid, that may turn more reluctant readers away. Bertie's dream-sequence-realities and scrimshaw-induced visions clash against the vividly chaotic Caravanserai into an almost overwhelming display of ideas and visual stimulation. It might be too overwhelming, too much stimulation for a reader that may stumble in the landscape Mantchev fills with troupes and troubadours, gilded cages, feathered ladies, enchanted gardens, and layered realities.

For those that brave the adventure, there might be something that, if possible, heightens the experience. I don't usually recommend music to accompany a text; people have such different tastes that any one song or album could ruin the atmosphere created by the author. In the spirit of Bertie's adventure, I think it's pretty safe and following the magical and haunting spirit of the scene to recommend Loreena McKennitt's "Caravanserai" while reading that particular chapter. The music is as achingly beautiful as the drama, as enchanting as the scenery, and lingers with echoes of desire and bittersweet memories. It complements Mantchev's lush descriptions well, I think, without detracting from the emotion and beauty of the scene.

As beautiful and imaginative as most of the book is, there is also a dark side lurking around the last 100 pages involving swords, seawater, and sojourns into the wickedly possessive--courtesy of Sedna's cruel manipulations. I could go into detail, but I won't. Bertie proves herself to be a courageous protagonist. Her confidence grows throughout the story as she becomes comfortable asserting herself--asserting her story. She forges her own path, claiming the future she wants and pursuing what's become important in her life. *Perchance to Dream* is the next evolution in Bertie's life: some areas become clear, others are left messy. Life is never easy and it's not always black and white, but Bertie bravely faces everything surrounded by good friends and tasty delicacies. She's well nourished.

I feel lucky that Lisa Mantchev was gracious enough to pass my information on to her publisher so I could read this ARC before the official summer release. Both *Perchance to Dream* and *Eyes Like Stars* were a lot of fun--especially because they're loaded with random (contextually appropriate) quotes and references from Shakespeare's plays. It's an extra perk that you can test your knowledge to see which lines are from what plays, said by whom. I only recommend that you not read this while on cold medication. Mantchev's prose is already so whimsical you might start hallucinating nonexistent performers and exaggerated interpretations. Otherwise, you should be fine.

Thank you Lisa Mantchev and the lovely folks at Feiwel & Friends!

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### Miss Clark says

2.5 stars

I still admire Lisa Mantchev's writing style and the wild, unabashed imagination that is bursting from every scene. It is a glorious, magical ride and the trickiness of writing stories is used to full advantage.

Bertie and Co. have left the safety and familiarity of the Theatre and are journeying on their own to rescue Nate from the sea-goddess Sedna. There is friction between Ariel and Bertie, as Ariel desires to win her affections, while Bertie is fixated on Nate. (More on the love triangle later.) The faeries are as bawdy and happily vexatious as ever, adding levity to what at times becomes a tad too melodramatic. Several new members join the cast, not the least of which is the man-bird Mysterious Stranger, Bertie's father. Bertie's strange and frightening power over words causes many a mishap and a problem as she attempts to use this wordsmithing magic to help them on their quest. Writing things like "their stomachs grumbled" is all very well, but with Bertie it becomes reality and so their hungry bellies start complaining and, well, who wants their stomach to actually talk to you? Or, saying a bridge was "knife-thin" makes for an excellent description, but if it becomes real and you have to walk over it? Ouch. So, seeing that aspect of writing being played around with was fun, but the rest of the book confused or frustrated me.

We'll start with frustrated. The Love Triangle. Ugh. firstly, neither Nate nor Ariel are strong characters. I

don't feel like I really know either or understand why Bertie would love them. Both of them are possessive of her and seem more interested in showing the other up than in caring about Bertie. Bertie cannot make up her mind between them and so is stringing them both along, kissing one and then trailing after the other. Yes, you can like two guys. Yes, you may not be sure which one you like better. But don't play them. Don't lead them on when you have no clue whatsoever. And Bertie herself is something of a bland character for all that she has this amazing ability and lives in this extraordinary world.

Now for confused. I know it is partially a result of the story being told in what amounts to a universe that is nothing more than the stage of a play and the play is influenced by what Bertie writes, thus scene changes and sudden shifts in place and person are as if no more than an author executing a rewrite or a transition might feel to her characters, but as a reader is is utterly bewildering. The swift shifts from one place to another make no sense because they are not explained and since we have no access to Bertie's mind, we don't know why it is happening and it made for a thoroughly difficult read.

So, I will be picking up the third book, So Silver Bright, in this series, as I am interested in what may come next for Bertie and Co., but I cannot say I look forward to it with glee. Still, you just never know.

Coming soon: So Silver Bright, Act III of the Théâtre Illuminata

The Curtain Goes Up (for the last time) Fall, 2011

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### **Kayla says**

A great sequel.. I'm so in love with the atmosphere of this series.

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### **The Winter Rose says**

Alright, I managed to sit through the first book only because despite the jumbled mess of weak transitions, poor dialogue, unclear environment and inconsistent motivation, I enjoyed the overall aesthetics and stuck with it to see where it was going and hoped that the author would have grown by the second book. Sadly, it's still just as much as a mess as the first. I sat through the first one to try to give her the benefit of the doubt given that it was her first piece, but this is her second book and she should really be improving, and I see no improvement in her writing skill whatsoever. It's really the editor's fault though. Mantchev has created a great concept and beautiful imagery, but she fails to weave it together in any form of coherence. This is something the editor needed to handle. Had the editor actually done their job and helped sculpt this work into any semblance of cohesion, we would probably have a very imaginative and well thought out piece. Instead we are given a clutter of thoughts and ideas that fail to string together in an effective way.

Bertie is still an unlikeable character with her motivations changing at the drop of a hat. Ariel has now lost all his mystique and is boiled down and reduced to nothing more than an obsessed supernatural love interest. While I understand and can, to a point, appreciate what Mantchev is doing with the mix and matched script type and regular dialogue, it doesn't work and comes off as more distracting than anything else.

To be honest though, I was unable to get past page 18. I sat through the first book based on the aesthetically

value appealing to me, but that alone is not enough to keep me for another book. The writing has not improved in any way, shape, or form and Bertie is just as unlikeable as she was in the first book. I can't see any reason to keep reading. It's a shame because I like the idea and I truly wanted to love this book, but I can't. It's just too poorly written for me to enjoy.

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