

Seraphina

Rachel Hartman

Fiction

Random House

451 Pages

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Journey into a Different World

By Kayla

Have you ever imagined crossing into a different dimension or transforming into a different state of being? Being whisked away at every state of adventure, romance, and horror? Have you ever wished to become something you are not and portray a new found confidence? This lured me into reading *Seraphina* by Rachel Hartman. The elaborate beginning to the book tempted me into wondering what was going to happen next. Everyone should read this wonderfully written book because it tests your emotions and drags you into the empathetic world created by Hartman herself. In the book *Seraphina*, a young girl Seraphina, is a musical prodigy, working for the royal house in the small kingdom of Gorredd. Seraphina however, is not like the rest of the citizens. She is a hybrid, the most undesirable creature ever known in Gorreddi history. Her mother, Linn, an insensitive dragon, fell for her father, Claude, a mere human, something that is strictly against the laws of her city.

Seraphina matures very quickly when learning she is different. She excises herself from normal life, staying indoors, for if anybody found out her secret she would be executed on the spot. Among her problems she must also find a way to protect the kingdom from her rueful dragon grandfather who desperately wants to avenge his name for his daughter's wrongdoings in marrying a

human. Will Seraphina fall under the pressure of society and submit to creating a new life in secrecy or will she rise above the judgment of her kingdom and fight for her name?

Seraphina was exceptionally well written, in the sense that the amount of detail Rachel Hartman decided to include really influenced the plot and created a bond between the reader and the characters. In this book, every sentence was filled with wonder, making the reader pay attention to every detail: “The wind ran an icy finger up my neck; the door to the outer walkway was open a crack. I took a deep breath, willed down my vertigo, and opened the door.” This excerpt shows how Hartman explained every action in detail and clearly displayed Seraphina’s constant uncertainty. The large kingdom setting and characters of royalty featured in the text will bring the reader back to childhood, though a weakness in this book is definitely the sequencing of events. Hartman’s talent to create new words may confuse the reader and leave them to grapple with the unfamiliar vocabulary as well. While reading this book I often had to go back and reread. The expansive vocabulary used by the characters came as misleading at some points in the story. “You’re rather transparently new, saar.” “Saar,” another word for dragon is an example of the made up vocabulary by Hartman. In both strengths and weaknesses this book was unbelievably well written for a first time author like Hartman.

Seraphina is Rachel Hartman’s first published novel. She developed a love for music and writing at a young age and incorporated both interests to make her book successful. *Seraphina* won the William C. Morris Debut Award when it was published. This book definitely deserved to win such a prestigious award. This strong debut by first time author Hartman, will keep her under the watchful eye of many, expecting nothing but greatness following *Seraphina*. High school students should definitely read *Seraphina*, especially if fantasy is a key interest for them, because it brings the mind to a new dimension. Teenagers will definitely be able to grasp the contrasting concepts of real and make believe intertwined in this book. They will be brought into a world of detail and magic that

the author displays. For anyone who has read this book and wants to experience more of Hartman's writing, there is an expected sequel to *Seraphina* coming in March 2015. This was a very quick read for me despite the numerous pages and is a very strong recommendation to anyone who wants a good read.