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# Eyes Like Stars



## Synopsis

All her worldâ™s a stageEnter Stage RightBeatrice Shakespeare Smith (Bertie): Our heroine.Nate: A dashing pirate who will do anything to protect Bertie.Cobweb, Moth, Mustardseed, and Peaseblossom: Four tiny, mischievous fairies, and Bertieâ™s loyal sidekicks.Ariel: A seductive air spirit. Disaster follows in his wake, but Bertie simply cannot resist him.Welcome to the Théâtre Illuminata, where the characters of every play ever written can be found behind the curtain. The actors are bound to the Théâtre by The Book, an ancient and magical tome of scripts. Bertie is not one of the actors, but they are her family. And she is about to lose them all because The Book has been threatened, and along with it the Théâtre. Itâ™s the only home Bertie has ever known, and she has to find a way to save it. But first, thereâ™s the small problem of two handsome men, both vying for her attention. The course of true love never did run smooth. . . .

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

## Customer Reviews

Grade 8 Upâ "Beatrice Shakespeare Smith, a sarcastic, likable 17-year-old, must find a way to make herself invaluable to the Théâtre Illuminata or she will be forced to leave the only home she has ever known. How she arrived at the theater as a baby is somewhat of a mystery, and through the years she has been allowed to run free and cause mayhem of one kind or another.

Beatrice proposes to restage Hamlet set in ancient Egypt and promises it will be the sell-out performance that will restore the Theatre to its former glory. If that were all, the story line would be fairly straightforward. However, the Theatre Illuminata is no ordinary theater. Characters from the world's major plays live inside, summoned forth by pinning a note on the Call Board. They are bound to the physical confines of the theater by the pages in The Complete Works of the Stage, an enchanted book. Scene changes happen magically by command, though human Properties and Scenic Managers argue over which pieces belong to whom. The fairies from A Midsummer Night's Dream provide the comic relief, and Ariel and Ophelia provide some of the action. Readers who have some knowledge of or interest in theatrical productions will have the easiest time following the twists and turns of the plot, which is especially confusing in the beginning. However, wondering what crazy thing will happen next will keep them going. The ending is a little unsatisfying, and it is clear that a sequel is coming. Nonetheless, the story is clever, if a bit melodramatic at times, and Beatrice is a fun character.â

Cheri Dobbs, Detroit Country Day Middle School, Beverly Hills, MI  
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â œLisa Mantchev's theatrical fantasy â 'Eyes Like Stars' pits a plucky orphan, Beatrice Shakespeare Smith, and her fairy attendants against the wiles of Ariel and a stuffy stage manager.â • â •New York Times Book Reviewâ œAll the world's truly a stage in Lisa Mantchev's innovative tale, Eyes Like Stars. Magical stagecraft, unmanageable fairies, and a humourous cast of classical characters form the backdrop for this imaginative coming-of age.â • â •Suzanne Collinsâ œWith an iron-willed girl hero whose magic is with words, and a universe that is also the ultimate theater, Eyes Like Stars is the most unusual fantasy I've read this year! I recommend it to anyone who loves drama, strong girls, and rowdy faery folk!â • â •Tamora Pierceâ œElectricâ |deliciousâ |fascinatingâ |vividâ |smart and sassyâ |bawdy and hilariousâ |Brava! Encore!â • â •Kirkus Reviews, Starred Reviewâ œBertie's determined efforts to become invaluable form the basic plot in this wildly imagined adventureâ |Mantchev clearly knows theater from all angles, and she uses inventive play-within-play formats to create a tumble of multiple, even metaphysical narratives filled with delicious banter and familiar characters from the dramatic canon. Many teens, particularly those with some theatrical background, will look forward to the sequel suggested at the end of this bravely flamboyant and wholly original romp.â •

â •Booklistâ œMantchev's first novel feels dreamlikeâ |underneath is a solid story about the search for happiness and identity. Inside jokes will delight drama club devoteesâ |but this passionate debut

should attract a broader readership as well. • Publishers Weekly

Beatrice Shakespeare Smith is a girl whose life revolves around the theatre and its "players." (To be clear: "the Players" include every person in every role that the theatre has ever produced, and they are all magically immersed in their roles, and they cannot leave the theatre because they are all bound to it by magic. This is actually a lot to take in during a review but believe me, this is something the book delves right into, and it took me a fair minute fully understand it all, which is why I am sharing it up front.) The theatre's magic brings plays and productions to life by making scene changes really authentic, from a foggy streets of London scene complete with rain to a Turkish bath scene that people can actually bathe in. Bertie has lived in the theatre with the players and the various theatre managers as long as she can remember. Even her bedroom is on the stage, and it disappears below stage when there is a scene change. But after Bertie causes too much mischief at the theatre, the Theatre Manager tells her that she has to leave the theatre unless she can find some invaluable way to contribute--a challenge that Bertie takes very seriously. She enlists the help of all her friends at the theatre, and together they help her rise to the occasion. There are appearances of many of Shakespeare's characters in this book, which was great (Ophelia shows up and asks if she can drown herself). Also, the depiction of theatre dynamic, with people arguing about what constitutes a prop vs. what constitutes a part of a person's wardrobe vs. what constitutes a part of the scenery was hilarious. There were two romantic interests for Bertie. One was Ariel, a seductive ghost-like creature, and the other is Nate, a pirate. I personally am pulling for Ariel, even though I hope she saves Nate eventually. I know it looked like she really liked Nate and all, and he is really protective and caring of her, but I can't resist Ariel's charisma. And he really did come through for Bertie in the end. Anyway, it's a great book. And it's different. It paints a magical picture of theatre drama, what goes on both on-stage and off.

The story is pretty intriguing with the whole of it happening in a magic theatre and all. I did find the main character a bit immature but then again... Maybe everyone that age seems immature to me now that I'm in my thirties haha! I liked the love triangle tension, but then again I'm really into that story line anyways from various animes, so... there is that. My main reason for docking it one star is that, without spoiling anything, the uh... Way it wraps up and "reveals" the main suspenses answers was... Convenient. And not only the actual culmination, but the WAY it played out.... was also .... well, it could have been more ... Grrr... Trying to explain it without giving up anything... Let's just say, us as the readers who have gone through the story can get it but, it could have been filled out better

for those actually within the story but not necessarily privy to the backstory.... I imagine those in that category would have been somewhat lost and therefore their reaction was predictable but not believable. And we have already agreed to suspension of believability since this is basically an enchanted theater and all, but I just didn't find the rather tidy and convenient revelations to garner the reaction they did from those privy to the reveal.

I really wanted to like this book because it was one of the first books I marked as 'to-read' on my GoodReads profile. But from the first chapter, I knew it wasn't going to be what I was expecting. The reason I kept reading it was because I kept telling myself, "It's gonna get better. It's gonna get better." But it didn't get better. 'Eyes Like Stars' did have an original premise and nice world-building, I'll admit. Unfortunately, that wasn't enough to save it. The plot was uneven, the characters were unlikable, and worst of all, the ending made it too obvious that this is just the beginning of a franchise. All in all, not my cup of tea.

Confession: I bought this series because the covers are gorgeous. I was also looking forward to a whimsical fantasy with heaps of romance. There IS romance, it just feels rather forced and well, not all that romantic. In fairness, love triangles aren't really my favorite, and the description certainly makes it clear that will be a primary focus of the book. There was just rather too much "I cannot trust him, he is a scoundrel! Hmmm.... I think I shall make out with him now". The world itself is intriguing and you are thrown right into it with little explanation of how it works. That was actually something I enjoyed. It made it seem like an actual world that had an existence apart from the reader. (However, it did make for a bit of confusion.) This book also contained some incredibly beautiful descriptions. I had quite a lot of fun imagining all of the outlandish and lovely things that were happening. Bertie herself is rather mischievous and usually likable. I was a bit smitten with her tendency to dye her hair. Her pastry obsessed fairy companions were mostly adorable, though their antics grew tiresome at times. Nate the pirate doesn't get well fleshed out in this book, and I honestly felt bad for poor Ariel. ( Nate shines more later in the series.) On the bright side, the covers are even more gorgeous in person.

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