

***Seraphina* (Seraphina #1)**

Rachel Hartman

Reviewed by: Marissa Klippenstein, 21

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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There have been four decades of peace in the kingdom of Goredd, none of which have eased the mistrust between humans and dragons. Being able to transform into human shape, dragons lend their knowledge as ambassadors and scholars. With the anniversary of the treaty drawing near, however, tensions levels are high.

If anyone has a reason to fear both humans and dragons, it's Seraphina Dombegh, an unusually gifted musician. Just as she joins the court, a member of the royal family is murdered and all evidence points to dragons. Seraphina is drawn into the investigation, alongside the captain of the Queen's Guard, Prince Lucian Kiggs. While they begin to unearth hints of a plot to destroy the delicate peace in the kingdom, Seraphina struggles to hide her own secret, the one behind her musical gift – a secret so appalling that its discovery could equal her death.

There's not much to say about what I didn't enjoy about this story! *Seraphina* has quickly become one of my favorite young adult fantasy novels. It is much more than a superficial story with a love interest as the focus; it is a book filled with depth and complexity. Hartman encourages readers to look inside themselves and own who they are. One thing I enjoyed exceedingly was the musical descriptions. Not being a musical expert myself, I was fascinated by the imagery of choirs and instruments. Every detail I could picture in my mind, which is not something that many authors can do for me. I also enjoyed the dragon lore, as it is rather unique compared to others. Though the book is not action-packed, it is highly enjoyable with its characters, setting, and build-up. This is definitely a book to pick up!

I would recommend this book for ages 12+. It would be perfectly appropriate for someone as young as 12. Language and violence are minimal and sex is barely mentioned.

This book would be a great gift to anybody interested in high fantasy / dragons, engaging plot, and detailed world-building!

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