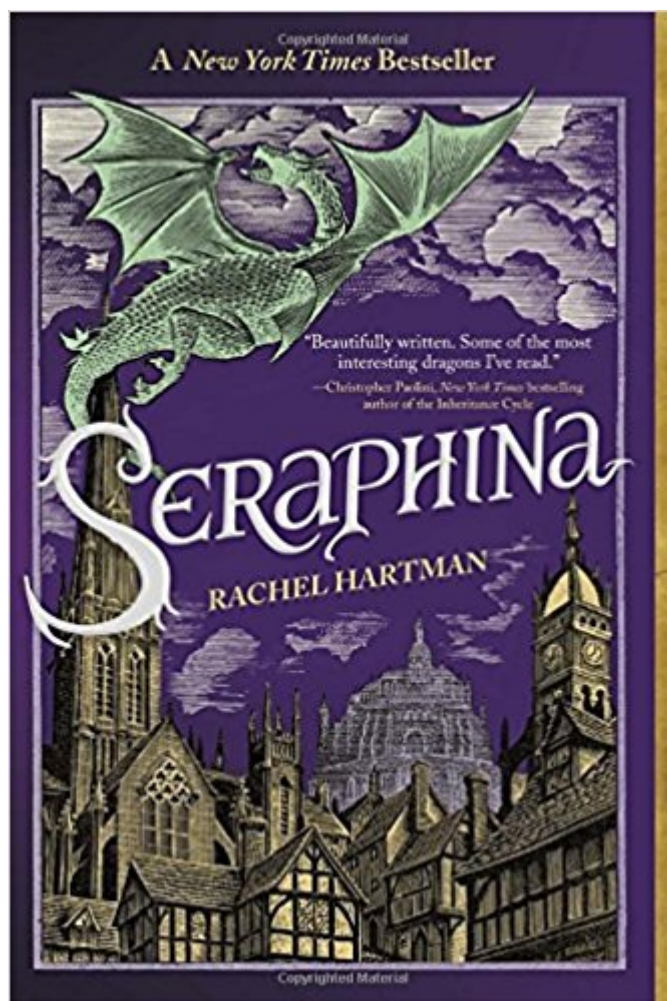


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Seraphina



Synopsis

Lyrical, imaginative, and wholly original, this New York Times bestseller with 8 starred reviews is not to be missed. Rachel Hartman's award-winning debut will have you looking at dragons as you've never imagined them before | Seraphina is a half-dragon, descended from a dragon mother who took human form and a father who has no particular fondness for Seraphina's kind. Not that anyone else does either. Hers is a world where dragons and humans live and work side by side—but below the surface, tensions and hostilities are on the rise. Seraphina guards her true self with all of her being, but when a member of the royal family is brutally murdered, she's suddenly thrust into the spotlight, drawn into the investigation alongside the dangerously perceptive Prince Lucian. As the two uncover a sinister plot to destroy the wavering peace of the kingdom, Seraphina's struggle to protect her secret becomes increasingly difficult . . . and its discovery could mean her very life. Will appeal to both fans of Christopher Paolini's Eragon series and Robin McKinley's The Hero and the Crown."—Entertainment Weekly —[A] lush, intricately plotted fantasy.—The Washington Post "Beautifully written. Some of the most interesting dragons I've read."—Christopher Paolini, New York Times bestselling author of Eragon Meet Seraphina's sister, Tess, in Rachel Hartman's brand new fantasy adventure, Tess of the Road.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 624 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #33,994 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Medieval #20 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Medieval #289 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Sword & Sorcery

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Best Teen Book of the Month, July 2012: In *Seraphina*, dragons and humans maintain an uneasy peace and for a woman who is both there is nowhere to turn for acceptance--not even within herself. *Seraphina* has spent her young life concealing the truth of her parentage and authentic nature, a task that proves ever more difficult when she is thrust into the spotlight of the royal court. Author Rachel Hartman's dragons take human form but shun the messiness of human emotion by remaining *à l'entendement* (a highly rational state of mind), while their counterparts cling to a dangerous assumption of species superiority. As the anniversary of the treaty between the two sides approaches, court intrigue reaches a fever pitch and hard-won truths, betrayals, and intricacies of the heart are laid bare. *Seraphina* is a beautifully complex fantasy that delves into the most basic of desires: "to be loved, to belong, and to find peace in self-acceptance." --Seira Wilson

Guest Review by Tamora Pierce Tamora Pierce is a best-selling author of fantasy books for teenagers. Her books, known for their teenaged girl warriors and wizards, have received critical acclaim and a strong fanbase. Her newest book, *Mastiff*, is the third book in *The Legend of Beka Cooper* series. In *Seraphina*'s world, coldly intellectual dragons can take on the shapes--and feelings--of human beings. Sometimes this results in a surprise. *Seraphina*'s father married a beautiful musician, and discovered too late that she was a dragon. She died, leaving him with a daughter who confuses him and his new wife and children. Now the half-dragon *Seraphina* is the assistant to the cranky royal music master. She is in charge of Princess Glisselda's music lessons; she books performers for the 40-year celebration of the peace treaty between dragons and humans, and she rehearses the rowdy court musicians. She has to hide the scales on her arm and around her waist, and she can never let anyone find out that Orma, her music teacher, is actually a dragon. When she plays the solo for the funeral of the realm's murdered prince, *Seraphina* is suddenly raised into entirely new, visible levels of peril. People she always avoided are noticing her. She has to attend social functions, where she is caught up in court politics, between those who support the treaty and those who want to destroy it. She runs afoul of conspirators who want to start the war again--one of them may be her own grandfather. She even discovers that Prince Lucian, who is betrothed to Princess Glisselda, is not only very sharp-eyed but also very agreeable to be around. He appreciates her insights on intrigue at court and in the city and uses her as an unofficial investigator into the ongoing unrest. The plot thickens. A new religious order plots riots and revolution. Exiled knights return to report an unregulated dragon flying near where the old prince

was murdered. The dragons are trying to send Orma for corrective surgery--they think he's gotten too human and they want to cut those parts out of his brain. Seraphina fears that if she tells the prince and the princess what she is, they'll hate her forever, but their work to preserve the treaty celebrations is bringing them closer together. And all of them are terrified that the dragons will decide that humans are not worth the trouble, and will destroy them at last. I loved this book even more the second time I read it than I did the first. The characters are interesting and engaging, and I love the new look at dragons. For all that she's half-dragon, Seraphina is a very believable human being, caught between different loyalties and just trying to keep everyone she loves alive. But don't take my word for it--read it yourself! --This text refers to the Digital edition.

Gr 7 Up-For nearly 40 years, the treaty between the humans of Goredd and the dragons of dragonkind has held strong. Humans must not enter dragonkind territory and dragons, upon entering human lands, must take their human shape, or saarantrai. In Goredd, Seraphina's human father, a high official, needs her to stay anonymous. The dark secret that she must hide is that her mother was a dragon. Because of her musical talents, Seraphina becomes Goredd's music assistant, helping prepare for the anniversary celebration. Layers of clothing disguise the scales on her arms and stomach, but unlike dragons, her blood runs red, not silver. Also, to keep from having fainting spells in which she relives her deceased mother's experiences, Seraphina must clear her head each night. She calls the figures in her vision grotesques, and each night, she must ensure all is calm in her mind-garden. When the decapitated body of Prince Rufus is found just days before the anniversary festivities, many humans are quick to accuse a dragon of breaking the pact. Seraphina's grotesques begin acting strangely, and the whole court is investigating the murder. When the celebrations are in full swing, all hell breaks loose as the rogue dragon that killed the prince enters Goredd in his dragon form and attempts to take control. Seraphina must risk revealing her true identity (and that of her fellow hybrids) in an attempt to save the kingdom. Hartman creates a rich story layered with intriguing characters and descriptive settings. Seraphina is a complex and fully developed protagonist. Although long, this unique novel (left open for a sequel) will surely appeal to fans of Christopher Paolini's "Eragon" books (Knopf) and wherever readers enjoy fantasies.-Lauren Newman, Northern Burlington County Regional Middle School, East Columbus, NJ (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Digital edition.

Early on, I thought this could be a 5-star book. It almost missed out on the fifth star, barely, because

it somehow wasn't as compelling as I felt it could have been, but on balance I awarded the extra star for beautiful writing, an admirable protagonist, good worldbuilding and a well-constructed plot. It's certainly a well-edited book. I spotted five errors: two sentences joined by a comma-splice; an excess closing quotation mark partway through a speech; the use of the word "palpated" in place of "palpitated"

Seraphina was a positively unique novel. In the world where dragons and humans have been at peace for only a couple of decades after centuries of war, Seraphina is a someone who may serve as an excuse to break the peace that is already crumbling. Dragons can take a human form, they don't like it, and they view all human emotion as dangerous and are ruled by logic alone. Love doesn't compute, so for a dragon to fall in love with a human is not only illogical it's also the highest of treason that will end up getting either both of them killed, or the get the dragon brainwashed. Seraphina is the other result: she's a halfling, which is something we find out early on, and her life could be cut short if anyone was to find out. Seraphina seems to inherit both the logic and the sentiment from her parents. She's very practical, but she does feel love and affection for her father and for her dragon-uncle (her mom died giving birth to her). Seraphina is an amazing character, in fact she's probably one of my most favorite female leading ladies ever. She doesn't let herself be clouded by emotion, even if she feels it, she does what is best. She doesn't let the guy who she feels attraction to, either distract her, or confuse her. So she doesn't blush or act like an idiot every time he's in the room. The supporting characters are all wonderful, the love interest is quite deserving of being loved, her friends are all lovable, and her uncle is just badass and no matter how much he tries not to, he loves Seraphina with all his dragon heart. The one issue with this book is the very slow pacing that absolutely drags sometimes, but otherwise the story is engaging. It was the language of the book that made me love it. The prose is brilliant and moving, the metaphors are beautiful and quite often made me either smile or tear up. Just read: "I became the very air; I was full of stars. I was the soaring spaces between the spires of the cathedral, the solemn breath of chimneys, a whispered prayer upon the winter wind. I was silence, and I was music, one clear transcendent chord rising toward Heaven. I believed, then, that I would have risen bodily into the sky but for the anchor of his hand in my hair and his round soft perfect mouth." (Seraphina) There were other beautiful quotes like this as well. The entire book is just beautifully written. It spoiled my eyes and tickled my brain. I would highly recommend this to anyone who wants to read beautiful prose or a great novel about dragons.

I am dumbfounded. This book has reminded me why my not-so-young adult anymore self hasn't given up on it. This book made me realize just how much I love young adult fiction, and books in general. Wow. Where do I begin? The beautiful writing? The exquisite food descriptions? The worldbuilding that completely swept me away, into a new world? The beautifully realized, complex characters? The pacing, which was breakneck from the beginning? (Also, since I bought it, there's a huge section of stuff that isn't in the hardcover edition! SCORE!) Anyway. Seraphina Dombegh loves music. So much so that she auditioned for assistant musical director, and got in. But our lovely, spunky heroine has a secret that could be the death of her: She's half dragon. And don't even get me started on The Garden of Grotesques. (You'll see when you read it.) When deaths begin to occur, on the very anniversary of the peace between the peoples of Gorredd and its scaly, reptilian counterparts, Seraphina begins to suspect that something is wrong. Forced to team up with members of the royal family, she discovers that the killings may jeopardize the peace that has surrounded the land these four decades. As I stated before, I loved this book. Probably everything about it. I am shamelessly fangirling and I am so HAPPY that I have Shadow Scale waiting for me on my Kindle Fire. The bottom line: A beautiful, gorgeous debut, Seraphina completely stole my heart. Next on deck: Shadow Scale by Rachel Hartman!

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