

Before the Full Moon Rises

M.J. Bell

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Deston Lespérance grew up believing faeries and monsters are just stories told to children at bedtime. However, when his mother mysteriously vanishes and he stumbles into the mystical realm of Tir na-nÓg, he discovers the shocking truth that not only are these beings real, they hold the key to his future.

With a new friend, Margaux, and Excalibur's twin brother sword, Caluvier, at his side, Deston races against time to find his mother and the Light Crystal before the full moon rises on the autumnal equinox. The odds are stacked against them and the obstacles they run into push the limit of what two teenagers can handle: an attack by gremlin-like creatures; captured by 6 foot tall vampire bats; hunted by a giant wolf, and almost lost forever in the mist of Avalon. Yet Deston doesn't give up, for he vowed to do whatever it takes to get his mother back—even if that means fighting the devil himself. The thing is ... when he made that pledge he had no idea how close he would have to come to doing just that!

Before the Full Moon Rises Details

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
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From Reader Review Before the Full Moon Rises for online ebook

Brandyeli says

MJ Bell has a strength for character development that shows right from the start with the MC, Deston, a young teenager just placed into foster care. His complaining, fears and focus are very believable for a boy of his age. It is just like opening a door to a real teenager's life. Margaux is Deston's "companion" throughout the book and the two of them have a relationship that is full of awkwardness and the norm in this age group--speaking before you think.

The mysteriousness of the plot trickles out of the background with each new chapter, making *Before the Full Moon Rises* a page turner. Each time Deston learned something new or stumbled into a new place, I was excited to learn what would happen to him and his friend next. The chapters are beautifully written, with some stunning imagery that will delight young readers as well as adults who like adventure with a definite sense of place.

Bell provided for me an excellent balance of good and evil. Her characters explore for you, with excellent dialogue, why the faeries are "good" and what is at stake if they lose. With great attention she also explores the motives behind the villain, telling a believable story that encases the realm of fantasy along with tapping into the human condition. For me this provided a real reference point to the motives and not a far fetched "dark" for evil's sake. I believe this is one reason this is great for young readers.

Bell's characters are full of moral struggles and each struggle comes with resolution that is believable while still holding the fantasy element that we all enjoy so much. I highly recommend this book as well as book two: *Once Upon a Darker Time*.

Tiegan Ziegler says

I had the great pleasure of meeting M.J. Bell at Denver Comic Con 2017 and buying her *Chronicles of the Secret Prince* series. I have finally read the first book - I know.. but as a librarian I get really distracted and it takes me a while to get through all the books I want to read. I think this series is a good fit for middle grade readers who enjoy some fantasy and want something a little different. I do not come across many books that feature the fae or Tir na-nOg, and that really stood out for me here. I suppose I had a hard time with Deston's character - he is supposed to be 14, but the way he is written he kind of comes across younger in a lot of places. I also found his friendship with Margaux confusing at times - he didn't like, then maybe he did, then maybe he had a crush on her, but then maybe they're just friends, but maybe he doesn't really like her, etc. The rest of the characters were also kind of silly to me and didn't seem to translate as they were meant to - but that could also have been because much of them were seen through Deston's eyes. However, the story was fun and felt very different to a lot of fantasy that I come across. Like I said, I do not see a lot of stories that feature faeries, and while I feel a little "meh" about this first book, now that the characters have been introduced, I am ready to read the next book and see some more of the fae.

Cheryl (I Heart Fictional People) says

In *Before the Full Moon Rises*, the first book in the *Chronicles of the Secret Prince*, by M.J. Bell, young teenager Deston loses his mother after she disappears, and he has no idea what happened to her. He is sent clear across the world to live with a distant relative of his mother's who he has never met. While exploring the forest near his new home, he discovers the realm of Tir na-nÓg, where faeries and monsters are very real. With his new friend, Margaux, Deston uncovers the truth about his mother, himself, and his destiny, and now he must do everything in his power to rescue his mom before something terrible happens. Together, Deston and Margaux must travel to where they think Deston's mother is being held while attempting to overcome tremendously difficult obstacles, such as gigantic bats and a huge wolf determined to stop Deston in his tracks. Deston may be out of his element, but he will do whatever it takes to bring his mom home.

I really enjoyed following Deston on this very exciting and dangerous journey. It reminded me of a combination of the *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* stories. While the point of view seemed just a tad confusing at times, the unique plot and memorable characters definitely made up for it. As Deston gradually discovers this new world and who he truly is, I felt like I was on this once-in-a-lifetime adventure with him, which made it difficult for me to put the book down. It was full of exciting and equally intense moments, some heartwarming scenes, and plenty of enjoyable parts for fantasy/magic readers. *Before the Full Moon Rises* is a must-read, and M.J. Bell is a very talented writer and storyteller. I can't wait to read the next book in the series.

Reviewed by ME for Readers' Favorite

Jennie Marts says

What a fun read! I thoroughly enjoyed this fantastical mysterious adventure with all of its unexpected twists and turns. The characters came alive and the story moved at a quick pace, keeping me wondering how it was going to turn out. Bell has created an adventure story that would suit elementary through high school with a little bit for every age group. What a great start to a trilogy. I can't wait to read the next one!

Elaine White says

Plot – good kid's story

Characters – interesting and relateable

Movie Potential - ★★★?? (not sure how they'd do it. It would be very intricate)

Ease of reading – very easy to read

Cover - ✓

Suitable Title - ✓

Would I read it again – Not sure.

**** I WAS GIVEN THIS BOOK, BY THE AUTHOR, IN RETURN FOR AN HONEST REVIEW ****

Plot

I'm on the fence about this one and I can't explain why. I'm somewhere between a 3.5 and a 4 star, but I've rounded up to the 4 because I think kids (between 10 and 15) will love it.

My main issue is that there are a lot of formatting issues with my copy. I'm not sure if every copy will be this way or if I've got an Arc, but every so often there is a chapter that is mis-formatted. Each paragraph (even when only one line) takes up an entire page so that one chapter takes forever to get through. It also broke up the ease of reading somewhat, but I do understand this isn't the author's fault. It could easily be a glitch that went unnoticed because it didn't appear until a few chapters in. But once it happened, it was probably that case in about 4 or 5 chapters.

There were a few spelling and grammar issues in the very beginning, but after the first three chapters, these fizzled out.

The fantasy aspect of the plot was good. There were a lot of creatures – Fae, bats, wolves, ogres – that kids will look for and love in a fantasy novel. They all play their part and some of them will be important in the following books.

There is a very small romance aspect to the book, but it's enough for kids of 14 and enough to sprinkle on top of the action/adventure aspect that dominates the book.

Another issue I have, that risked dropping this to a 3.5 star, is that the story takes forever to get into the good stuff. It took 50% of the book to build up to the big reveal and it was kind of anti-climactic for me. I don't think most of the first half of the book was really necessary, unless it becomes important to the next two books. At the moment, it feels like the first half is filler to make the book a novel. I would have been happy without about two quarters of this book, and I would probably just have made it one novel.

Characters

I really like Deston; he's such a real character, nosy, inquisitive and a typical 14-year-old boy. He'd hell bent, during the entire book, on going home and finding his mother. The way he fights and trusts his instincts is rare, but makes for good reading.

I liked the sense of connection that Deston had with his best friend, at the start of the book. I wish the best friend would have had a bigger part in the story, like Margaux's part, but I hope he comes in during the next two books.

I have to admit though that Margaux is one of the reasons I was on the fence about this book. Yes, she's a strong female character, but she often comes across as rude, sarcastic and very vain. I find her very self-involved and self-opinionated. She often loses track of the bigger picture – saving Joliet – and focuses more on herself and how she's feeling and what she wants.

She takes offence to every little thing Deston says, in the beginning, though he always apologises and it's clear that he didn't mean it maliciously. She doubts him all the time, fights him at every turn, yet she cries at a lot of the things they go through. I find her a very confused character. It feels like the author couldn't decide whether to make her the 'strong' female and stick with it, or whether to make her the weak and fragile female so often in books. Only so much can be blamed on her age. I would have liked to see her more like Hermione from HP, which she started out as, but that didn't happen.

Sadly, Joliet, Deston's mother was the same. The whole book she sounds like this adventurous, kick-butt woman, who knows what she wants and goes after it. But when we finally get to see her, she's like Margaux

Overall

I noticed a lot of influences from other fantasy books/movies in this one, though again it could just be me. There were hints of Stargate, Avatar, LOTR, Labyrinth and Harry Potter. They're small links, but I see them quite clearly.

All the females in the book are the same – when they're not in the book they're spoken about as if they're strong, powerful women, but they cry easily and fall apart at the smallest thing. It just doesn't feel right. The boys, however, are well balanced. They're not too macho, they make mistakes and accept it, they're open to emotion. It feels like more attention went into the male characters than the females, but that might just be how I read it.

There are two more books to go, but I'm not sure what is going to happen, because I don't really see the need for more. The story is done, except for an epilogue that will no doubt lead into book 2. Unfortunately, it wasn't as big of a plot twist as it should have been, because I saw it coming. That, unfortunately, is true of most of the book. The really big stuff wasn't a surprise to me, because I'd already anticipated it. Not sure if I was supposed to, or if they were supposed to be a shock, but I think they probably would be a surprise for a lot of kids.

Marty Banks says

Great YA fantasy that starts what promises to be an incredible three-book trilogy. I read this first book and immediately went on to the second book (Once Upon a Darker Time). From the taut opening scene when we meet the beast Grossard, I was hooked. Family secrets, blooming friendship and a fantasy world that reads as rich and real. Bell is an excellent writer who makes you feel as if you're right in the action.

Sharon Hughson says

I was somewhat disappointed in the writing of this book. Point of view shifted from one character to another on a single page. This distracted me.

Some of Deston's responses were over the top. This is definitely a book for age 11-14.

I had to give it 4 stars because I kept reading to find out the secrets and the resolution. It really felt like a combination of King Arthur and fae books like Iron King, not like an original story idea.

Trudi Jorda says

I should never to get book one in a series -- but I would recommend this book to any lover of fantasy!

Pete Aldin says

A wonderful YA novel. This would definitely have been a book I'd be reading to or with my boys when they were 10-12 years old but I can imagine teenagers enjoying it too.

The first half sets up the novel, the series and the characters who'll populate them. As with many YA classics, our main heroes are boy-out-of-place and feisty female, while the villains have powers AND

motivation.

The second half explodes into action as Denton is brought face to face with the truth of his origin and heritage but also its responsibilities. Monsters, exotic magical locales and some welcome "violence" pepper the pages--and by welcome, I mean that rather than sanitise the story, the author allows the stakes and consequences to be truly dire.

A recommend for young readers of both genders.

Kj Partridge says

Deston has absolutely no clue who or what he is, all he knows is his mom disappeared and he got dumped into the foster care system. Now he is being sent to France because a long lost relative has spoken up. When he arrives he meets NiNi and the weirdness starts there. When he goes to the village he meets Margaux when he helps save her brother from bullies. He meets an elderly man who gives him a gift and disappears. He wants to explore the forest but is warned to stay away since the forest is dangerous. He decides to go in anyway and Margaux goes with him. Together they discover the most amazing things either of them have ever seen. What will all this lead to?

Without a doubt this is one of the most wonderful books I have read in a long time. It is beautifully written and wraps around you, pulling you into a story that is a fantasy anybody would be thrilled to experience. Ogres, fairies, pixies, and a great number more fantastic creatures await your eyes and sometimes your nose. Honestly you feel you could reach out and touch, if not be walking beside the characters at any given moment. I recommend this for the younger set all the way to adults, it is a fantasy world that we should all get to enjoy. Many thanks to M.J. Bell for giving me her book to read and review, I am a huge fan now.

Sarah says

<http://www.bookwormblues.net/2016/08/...>

Allana Kephart says

Originally posted on Girls *Heart* Books

Before the Full Moon Rises is the first book in the *Chronicles of the Secret Prince* series by M.J. Bell. The novel is written from the third-person and focuses on our hero, Deston Lespérance. Now, I am not going to bore you with details (my god, read the book if you want to know what it's about) so I am going to jump straight into the gushing part of the review.

Anyone who reads this blog knows I am the single pickiest person in the world when it comes to books about the fae. In my opinion they are never done justice and I am usually left disappointed and mostly irritated that yet another author spit on the genre. However, Bell is up there with Maggie Stiefvater and Kaye Thornbrugh when it comes to hitting right on the head with how one should handle the world of faery. Not only is the story realistic (by my standards, at least), the writing is absolutely magical. From the very first page you are transported into this world and you feel like you're standing right there with Deston. You feel the anxiety, the tension, the fear, the excitement, all of it. You are right there in the story from the very first page all the way

to the end.

Beautifully done! I highly recommend this to anyone, from ages 7 to 107, everyone can find themselves at home in these pages.

Maggie Thom says

Quite an adventure. Deston, a teenage boy, has had a rough go, his mom disappeared and he ended up in the foster system. Then he gets told he's going to France to live with a relative, where he doesn't speak the language and doesn't know anyone, not even the relative. The only thing he is sure about is that his mom is alive, even though others are telling him she's not. He soon learns though that everything he thought and all that he thinks he knows isn't true.

Deston soon enters a world of magic but where there is magic there are sinister things happening. He's trying to find his mother but someone not only wants his parents dead but him as well. As I read there was this steady feeling of something sinister hanging over the teenager, so you know something bad is going to happen, you're just not sure when. There are some well crafted evil characters. I have to say the setting was really well done. There was one point where he's riding a bike, which he ditches and goes into the forest, he's forbidden to enter and it was so clear to me, I could see it. There were several scenes that really came alive for me – the golden bridge that only Deston could step onto, only to cross and find a large wooden door blocking his way, the pyramid scene was pretty cool – can't share too much more. It has some really sad moments, some heartwarming moments, suspense, magic, adventure, mystery... It really was an intriguing read. And of course your rooting for this young teenager to come out on top as well. I was given a copy as part of a tour. I look forward to book 2.

Reviewed on my blog: <http://wp.me/p2ydBI-10F>

Tiffany says

This book is truly amazing. The author painted such an amazing picture of this world, it is hard to believe it is fictional. I love all of the characters (even the villain) and I love how you are able to relate to Deston, the main character. This book is full of adventure and suspense and is a great read for any age. My 7 year old son is even excited to read it! I cannot wait until the next book in the series comes out. I want to get sucked into the world all over again with Deston and all of his friends.

Eszter says

I have received my copy of Before the full moon rises through Goodreads First Reads, and again thanks for it!

This really was a lovely tale of adventure, friendship and bravery. I enjoyed following Deston during his journey to save his mom and a complete new world he didn't even know about. It was exciting and funny, especially the fights between Deston and Margaux. I also liked the fairy world with its mythical and beautiful creatures.

My only observation is that at the beginning it started rather slowly, and I had to push myself a little, but overall it was really enjoyable and had me hooked until the end.
