



The Gypsy King

Maureen Fergus

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A runaway slave with a shadowy past, sixteen-year-old Persephone has spent four long years toiling beneath the leering gaze of her despised owner and dreaming of a life where she is free to shape her own destiny. Then, one night, a chance encounter with a handsome chicken thief named Azriel changes her life forever.

Sold to him for a small bag of gold coins, Persephone soon discovers what she already suspected: namely, that Azriel is not what he seems. And when she realizes that he believes Persephone has a special destiny—she is determined to escape him and his impossibly broad shoulders.

But things are no longer as simple as they once were. Torn between her longing for freedom and her undeniable feelings for the handsome thief with the fast hands and the slow smile, Persephone faces the hardest choice she will ever have to make. And no one least of all her—could have imagined the shocking truth her decision will reveal.

The Gypsy King Details

Date : Published January 22nd 2013 by RazOrbill Canada

ISBN : 9780143183150

Author : Maureen Fergus

Format : Hardcover 434 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Romance

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From Reader Review The Gypsy King for online ebook

Christa Seeley says

This review originally posted at More Than Just Magic

I love the amount of fantasy titles that are on my radar this year. The Gypsy King is my second and it's still January! I sat down with high expectations for this novel and I was overall really pleased with the fun, adventure filled story I got lost in.

I particularly liked Persephone as a heroine. Having grown up a slave, she was a little rough around the edges and developed a thick skin. But despite her unfortunate circumstances she still had a lighter, pleasant side. She's quick with a laugh or a sarcastic comment. She also talks to and names all the animals she encounters. As an animal lover myself, I am instantly drawn to those who love them too.

I thought Persephone was at her best when she was interacting with Azriel. I loved the back and forth between them. There is a romance present but there's so many other things going on, their relationship is placed on the back burner. I think this is a positive because it gave them more time to get to know one another and to grow alongside each other. They're incredibly cute and they absolutely make me laugh. The one drawback was that I didn't appreciate her all too frequent lies to him. This made their relationship seem a little one sided and at times I wanted her to get over herself.

But while I really enjoyed the protagonists of this story, I have mixed feeling about the villain - the Regent Mordecai. He was creeptastic. Don't get me wrong. He was truly a horrible human being and his presence could give you goosebumps. But at times he felt a little two dimensional. He reminded me a lot of Jafar, from Aladdin. We know he's bad, we know he wants power and control but we don't know how and why he became so ruthless. I love complex villains and the Regent just didn't do it for me.

I also found that some things felt a little too...convenient. I don't mind the odd coincidence but when they start cropping up on a regular basis it takes me out of the story. In The Gypsy King animals are always showing up exactly at the moment when needed. Or a character happened to be a perfect pool of water right beside where she fell in the mud etc.

Like many first books, The Gypsy King, left me with a lot of questions. I want to know more about the kingdom, the Gypsy lifestyle, the circumstances that left to the genocide of their people. I don't think the answers were missing from this book. It's already 400 pages, there would have been no way to smoothly include all that surplus information. But these type of questions have made me really, really excited to read book two and get absorbed within this world again.

Recommendation: A fun fantasy adventure, with an excellent pair of protagonists but a few notable flaws. Recommended for those looking for a light hearted read that is still packed with adventure.

Sarah (Workaday Reads) says

This was an exciting story featuring a strong heroine. There was always something happening, and yet nothing felt forced. The action seemed to move fast in a very natural manner.

Persephone is a strong girl. She has endured much, and yet has grown from the experiences, not letting them defeat or kill her spirit. Her interactions with Azriel were delightful to read. The tension between them is entertaining. Their attraction was slow and natural, yet quite forceful to watch.

While I loved the story and the characters, the ending partially ruined it. It was the dreaded nonending. The action just stops after a major announcement. It wasn't even a cliffhanger, just a sudden stop. I hate those endings. I guess there is nothing to do but wait impatiently for the next book to be released.

Chapter by Chapter says

I've been more interested in fantasy as of late, so *The Gypsy King* by author Maureen Fergus was exactly what I have been looking for. A fantasy about a slave girl falling in love with a handsome thief and having to discover her destiny that is bound to leave readers with their jaws dropped? Doesn't that just spell out the epitome of awesome? Right from the opening chapter that literally left me at a loss for words, I enjoyed every single moment that I spent reading *The Gypsy King* and I'll just say right now that after the cliffhanger ending, I'd do anything to start reading what happens to Persephone next.

The Gypsy King takes place in a fantasy land where our main character Persephone has lived her entire life as a slave. When she finds herself face to face with a thief attempting to steal her owner's chickens and allows him to get away, Persephone thinks that that's the last she'll ever see of the chicken thief. It isn't until the very next day that he arrives and buys her for nothing more than a bag of coins, that Persephone finds herself swept up into a world full of danger. While Persephone believes that things can't get any worse and that she will eventually manage to escape the gypsy thief and gain her freedom—a darker plot is taking place amongst the nobles.

The Regent Mordecai murdered the king years ago and the queen had died shortly after, that left their young heir as King. But the Regent, a malformed and wicked man, has plans to rule the entire kingdom. A man who finds death entertaining and is unable to find a woman who would actually love him, the Regent is a seriously evil antagonist in the story. When Persephone finds herself involved in a gypsy quest to save a little gypsy boy from death, she is introduced to the idea of having to assist the Gypsy King (whoever that may be) in basically creating peace throughout the land. It's by chance that Persephone finds herself under the guise of a distant noblewoman and three things happen: The Regent and the King both begin to lust over Persephone and Persephone slowly begins to fall for the gypsy thief, Azriel.

I'll admit that I'm a bit surprised by just how much I liked *The Gypsy King*. The premise sounded interesting, but what really got me was Azriel's dialogue. Right from the first chapter we have with Persephone, we are introduced to how often he quips and makes snarky remarks. Since Azriel is in most of the chapters, I found myself laughing constantly by the funny things he would say and after dark chapters, the funny things that he says always took my mind off of the more dark subjects. Out of the cast of characters, I'll admit that I enjoyed Azriel and Persephone, but only as a pair because together they not only caused comedic scenes, but also had me shouting at the novel to have them fall in love already.

Most of the novel surprisingly takes place while Persephone usurps as a noblewoman within the Palace and acts a bit like a tease considering how quickly men were falling in love with her and how she'd string them along, however Persephone doesn't really notice it for the most part. The novel does change POVs (point of views) and when we do get chapters in the Regent Mordecai's POV we see just how obsessed he grows with who Persephone is pretending to be. His thought process consists of him constantly mistaking Persephone's

actions for signs of interest, instead of her just not wanting to be caught as an imposter.

Throughout *The Gypsy King* I was dying to find out just who the Gypsy King would actually be. I had a few guesses who and by the end of the novel, I was happy to figure out that not only was my main guess correct (score!) but I hadn't expected Persephone to be who she is revealed to be at the very end of the novel. *The Gypsy King* is a novel that's highly detailed and so the reader should be able to create the world Fergus made, while reading. With it having a high amount of details, there is also the fact that you literally cannot miss a sentence, or parts of the plot will stop making sense. (Just a forewarning for any readers who tend to skim over highly detailed portions of a novel and assume that there is nothing to gather from those parts.) The only thing that I think should be mentioned is that the novel does mention and hint at a lot of sex and sexual assault, I didn't put much thought into it, but to readers who do get a bit irked by those things, might want to mind it.

I'd recommend *The Gypsy King* to readers who are fans of YA fantasy as well as the YA romance scene. Readers who also want a story that they can easily get lost in, will adore *The Gypsy King*.

Graili says

A slave girl, Persephone, is sold to a gypsy who pulls her into the intrigue of a prophecy made 15 years earlier. The book was exciting, full of funny characters, but melodramatic and a tad juvenile at spots.

This novel is a bit of a brick and I was a bit put off when I realized it was so long. I soon found that getting started was the best thing to do. It is actually a pretty quick read and always entertaining. It was quite adventurous and amusing. "*The Gypsy King*" had a lot of bulk, but was never dull.

The two main characters, Persephone and Azriel, dominate the plot. They exchange many quirks and are rather amusing and charming. The antagonist gets the plot moving, but is ridiculously evil and power hungry. He is bloodthirsty and twisted, and not a very believable character, but the readers are not meant to sympathize or think of him as anything other than an adversary. The other supporting characters are less interesting. The two protagonists and one antagonist are well-developed and set the story up for a fine melodrama.

There will occasionally come a time when I'm reading a young adult novel when I can barely tell it is a young adult novel. It will be well written and deal with a variety of themes maturely and believably. Mostly YA novels just remind of what they are in really cringe-worthy ways. "*The Gypsy King*" was somewhere in the middle and I'm going say upfront I'm a bit nitpicky on these points so feel free to disagree. It is melodramatic and with a writing style that is a bit unnecessary. The author *frequently* and unnecessarily used italicized words and explanation points! Another issue: in a class I had once that talked about how the slave narratives were a precursor to the Blues, the woman started the class by reading a sort of anecdote in which a Quaker asked a man if he was fishing for himself or for business. The man replied, "Ain't got no self." That's the nature of slavery. Persephone was strong, willful and never lost sight of her desired freedom, which was good and believable. Fergus does not make a goal of showing the reality of slavery so it is not surprising to see a very minimal amount shown in this book. Persephone's past hardships are used to make her tougher, which is a nice thing in YA novels.

"*The Gypsy King*" is an exciting and melodramatic read centred on two humorous characters. Though I did find the writing style tiresome at points it was an enjoyable book.

Andrea says

I won this book from the Goodreads First Reads program in exchange for an unbiased review.

The premise was certainly enticing. Persephone, a slave girl with a bit of an attitude is bought by the mysterious Azriel, whom she first met as we was trying to steal one of the chickens from her farm. Persephone is a great character and lots of fun. And Azriel of course is handsome and dashing. And don't forget the prophecy of the Gypsy King, leaving you wondering who this king will turn out to be.

But I had a few reservations while reading this book.

There were a few too many silly coincidences. They were funny, but unrealistic. One example is when Persephone tries to escape from Azriel. It's rainy, it's muddy. And just as she thinks she got away, she slips down an embankment and gets submerged in a massive mud puddle. But that's ok, because conveniently just a few feet from the dirty puddle is a nice warm and clean hot spring (I wandered in the woods before, never found a hotspring before, let alone when desperately in need of one...) So she strips and relaxes in one of her first hot baths ever. Then Azriel conveniently appeared while she was still in the pool, and he has that nice, handsome, well muscled chest...I mean sequence of events just don't happen like that. I know this is a YA book, but it felt more middle school.

Also, I found the characters to either be really good, or really bad. There wasn't a single redeeming feature in Mordecai, and we are constantly reminded of how his mind was even more twisted than his body. He couldn't look at anyone and not have an evil or lecherous thought. For example my favorite character in Harry Potter was Snape, because you were left guessing whose side he was on nearly the whole way through. On the other hand, brownie points for putting a handsome face on the broken body, I thought that was very unique and original.

Finally, what's with the ending??? Ack! You can't leave the story hanging like that. Every series I've ever read, each book is pretty well stand-alone, meaning the ending kind of wraps things up while not finalizing the storyline. But this book ended with such a cliffhanger than the characters might as well been hanging by their fingertips from a cliff. I've even read a book where the main character dies at the end (then comes back in the next). But even there, you're not left wondering will he die or not, you know he's dead, so it's wrapped up, however shocking it was. As another reviewer mentioned, you can do that in a TV series where it will continue in a week, but we'll presumably be waiting a year to find out what happens in the next book. I felt that was cruel to the reader.

So while I enjoyed the book and had fun reading it, those three elements took away from what could have been a four or five star rating.

Nafiza says

So I just wrote a shorter version of this review for reasons I will reveal later. And while I was writing that, I remembered just how much I love this novel. I think I may love this one as much as I loved Seraphina. And you know what that means? I'm going to have to buy a hardcover copy and get Maureen Fergus to sign it for

me. Now, I don't even know whether she'll be making any appearances in Vancouver but if she is, I'm going.

Anyway, let's talk about this book because it is the reason I am holding on to your attention. If you like strong heroines who are flawed and behave in flawed ways sometimes, then you will like Persephone. Persephone is nothing like the Greek goddess (of Spring) she shares a name with. She is a slave and her thoughts are naturally preoccupied with a desire for freedom in the true sense of the word. I cannot pretend to know what it means to not own one's own person but I can empathize with her feelings. Fergus creates a vibrant world where Gypsies are hunted and killed simply because of who they are. This genocide is a contemporary issue and Fergus does not dress it up prettily or try to excuse it. She portrays the horror of a people who are being eradicated through no fault of their own. Azriel is a gypsy who, with all his charm, buys Persephone from her owner. Not that she thanks him for it, of course.

Their relationship is engaging, fun and complex. The romance is present but it doesn't take over the narrative. In fact, Persephone's feelings are deliciously ambiguous and I get the feeling that if she had to choose between Azriel and her freedom, she would choose the latter. There is a prophecy (that Persephone snorts rudely at) and there are animals who are blindly devoted to Persephone. Her eccentricities and flaws make her into a likeable character despite some of her more dubious decisions. (Keep in mind, these decisions are not stupid and nothing damning.)

All the characters present in the novel are individuated and have their own personalities. The courtly intrigues and the young king who is very interested in Persephone spice of the narrative significantly. The villain of the piece is a most intriguing character. He is deformed but for he has a beautiful face and it is his desire to be whole again that motivates his actions. He is one of the creepiest and yet saddest villains I have come across in literature recently. He is dangerous because he doesn't seem to have a conscience that separates good and bad, and his greed for power at any cost, but at the same time, he is completely vulnerable due to his deformity. I have a feeling that he may not be the villain in the end because he is a bit too easily deceived. No, I think it is the captain of the guards who will become most dangerous for the protagonists of the piece.

The novel is gorgeous written, the pacing is quick and keeps the reader's interest and the plot turns and twists in the most unpredictable ways. I was literally shocked at the end because I did not expect the novel to go where it did. And it went there in a good way. It takes all expectations and shakes it around and presents to you in a shape you didn't think it came in. There is friendship between girls, a sisterhood of sorts, and a positive portrayal of women. Themes of identity, physical beauty and perhaps even love are present in the novel. Fergus has created a complex world peopled with complex characters that battle both inner demons and physical enemies in their attempt to right so many wrongs. Questions of duty versus desire will have to be answered. What is freedom? Can a person ever be totally free? I don't know but I am looking forward to finding out how Persephone's story unfolds. Do I recommend this? Really, I have to spell it out?

Okay fine. I recommend this strong. Go read it.

Christine H says

Reading *The Gypsy King* is like jumping wholeheartedly into an unknown world replete with characters and conflicts that refuse to relinquish their hold on your heart even long after you've turned the last page. (And I'm sure I'm not the only one who flipped through the four blank pages at the end of the book, desperately

trying to find an epilogue or notes from the author or just *something* to make the journey last a little longer.) Fergus' story revolves around a 16-year-old slave named Persephone who, despite her many attempts to achieve freedom, finds herself entangled with Azriel, a thief who is as witty as he is handsome. Together they embark on a noble but ambitious rescue adventure that will find them dancing with danger and running for their lives. Persephone must choose between her freedom and her feelings for Azriel, but is she prepared for the repercussions of either choice? Fergus takes you on an edge-of-your-seat adventure that will have you re-reading some delicious parts and hastily gulping down others to find out what happens next.

Quotable Quips

“Walk if you wish—for now, Persephone—and when you begin to falter, I’ll show myself to be a true and noble gentleman by giving you the choice between riding up here with me—or being dragged behind my horse.” (72)

“To be a true ruling king, His Majesty will need to settle upon a fertile wife and get down to the business of getting down to business.” (145)

“There is no humiliation in being fairly beaten ... How are you ever to prove yourself a great ruler if you never have to fight for any victory you achieve?” (360)

Story & Pacing: 10

The plot of this book is unique and fantastic. Each conflict adds layer upon layer to the story as a whole, so rather than having to deal with situations in a linear fashion, Fergus' characters encounter problems that pile up before each can be solved. There wasn't a part in the book where I was bored or where I felt that a certain character's troubles could be skipped over. The chapters alternate between the (omniscient) point of view of Persephone and Mordecai who, at first, have absolutely no connection to one another. This format choice lends a very thick air of foreshadowing, which enhances the pace of the novel, especially once the two characters meet. The ending of this story is so wonderful—a great payoff! The crisis and climax are intense and occur so late in the final chapters that I had to make sure I knew exactly how many pages were left so as not to leave myself unwittingly gasping in disbelief at the sudden conclusion. Nevertheless, I breathed a HUGE sigh of relief when I discovered that there will be not just one, but two more books to complete this story. Phew!

Characters: 10

Fergus' characters are endearing, complex, and memorable. Persephone is smart, diligent, and very kind. I can feel her sadness when she tries to recall her upbringing, and I understand the decisions she makes throughout the novel. She is a good role model for any young person as she is unwilling to be dominated, especially by men, but she is loyal to those who are loyal to her. She has the great flaw of being too spontaneous to the point that she becomes foolhardy at times. Azriel exudes charm: I can imagine the smirk on his face as he delivers one-liners to match Persephone's wit. And I can just as easily imagine the way he looks at Persephone when she doesn't realize he is gazing at her. Their interactions throughout the novel are so tender and romantic—despite Azriel's bravado and Persephone's punches and temper tantrums. (But, really, isn't that just the way girls demonstrate their affections for someone?) There is so much more to explore in their relationship. And Mordecai is so deliciously complex that I waddled back and forth between writing him off as completely evil and feeling sorry for him: He is equal parts ruthless and piteous. Fergus has me completely enamoured with her characters (except maybe Mordecai)!

Setting: 7

There is a lot of description of the various physical settings of this novel, which seems to take place in the late Middle Ages. The different places were very visible in my mind, but I would have liked to have had a

map of Parthania and its surroundings to know exactly where each region is located in relation to the others. This would have been helpful considering the various characters in the story hail from a variety of identified places. I especially would have liked the map to help me envision Persephone and Azriel's journey.

Style & Writing: 9

Fergus' writing is crisp and each of her characters has a very distinct voice. I particularly liked her knack for writing banter between characters, especially the kind laced with sarcasm (which, of course, is my cup of tea). She makes use of varied syntax, and she doesn't shy away from descriptions via adverbs, which I really enjoy. The book, as a whole, is free of errors.

Learnability & Teachability: 9

The biggest lesson to be gained from this novel is how to write well. Students who aspire to be novelists can learn from Fergus' writing style, including her choice of words, her sentence structures, and her chapter and book endings. Anyone who wants an example of how to write well will find Fergus a great model to follow.

Potential Teachables

The Middle Ages; origins and history of gypsies; etymology and use of the word "gypsy"; character development; plot structure; conflict creation; monarchies and associated terms; patriarchal societies; slavery; making difficult choices.

Illi says

I really enjoyed this book!! I seriously loved it! And I was pleasantly surprised to find that Maureen Fergus was born in my meager "city" of Regina. How refreshing to find that one of my favorite books was written by someone who was born in my hometown! Anyway, I must confess that I am in love with Azriel and admire Persephone. I eagerly await A Fool's Errand. :) Though I'm not really sure when the book will arrive in Regina...

Bee says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. What had won me over from the start were how Persephone and Azriel interacted; snarky comments and even all that *ahem* tension between them. What drove me nuts was that she fought her feelings for him. I mean, REALLY? He obviously likes you and you obviously like him so stop fighting it and KISS HIM. Of course, the storyline was good too, though I could totally see the end coming. I definitely recommend this amazing book.

Penguin Random House Canada says

I LOVED this book. The relationship between Azriel and Persephone is so fun to watch unfold! The dialogue between the two made me giggle out loud at times as I voraciously devoured this book. When I wasn't being entertained by Azriel and Persephone, I was reeling in horror at the pure evilness of the Regent Mordecai! He is one of the few YA villains I've seen in a long time that is actually seriously dark and twisted. I never knew how far he was going to sink; how evil and rotten he was going to be at his core. I

don't think we even know yet the depths of his malice! I can't wait for the second installment coming out Fall 2013!

- Amy Smith, Marketing Associate

Wendy says

"The Gypsy King" by Maureen Fergus is a fast-paced fantasy that grabs the reader's interest from the first to the last page. Set in a realm scarred by class distinction, corruption, death and murder the story opens with a young runaway slave Persephone, struggling to survive the taunts and abuse of a master who keeps her chained in irons as she works. A chance encounter with a handsome young chicken thief Azriel and the revelation of a Gypsy prophecy will unlock Persephone's destiny as the two go on a journey that will lead them not only into the world of the rich nobility but into perilous danger that could cost them their lives. This is a story of hidden identities, of adventure, of friendship and young love in a chaotic world split apart by the autocratic control of a bloodthirsty Regent.

I loved the characters, each with a distinctive personality that unveils many of their strengths and weaknesses. Sixteen year old Persephone having grown up knowing only pain and suffering is apprehensive and confrontational with people, but has an affinity for animals who are constant in their love for her. She can be belligerent and obstinate, but is brave and determined when challenged. Good-natured and witty Azriel tends to be headstrong and stubborn, but is also loyal and trustworthy. Rachel, at first is soft-spoken, timid and anxious but begins to show courage and resolve under Persephone's friendship and care. King Finnian, the kind and considerate heir apparent has been easily duped by the machinations of his treacherous Regent, but as the story progresses he begins to develop tenacity and strength of will.

Even the minor characters are notable like Moira King Finnian's loyal and shrewd protector, Meeka Persephone's perceptive and trustworthy servant and Fayla, the jealous but brave young gypsy girl. Yet, it is the antagonists that are unforgettable and bring mounting tension to the plot with all their evil and bloodthirsty scheming; Mordecai, the severely crippled Regent who's cruel, bloodthirsty and power-hungry, his weapon the unscrupulous General Murdock and Lord Bartok the devious, smooth-talking nobleman. Although just as crafty but not quite in the same league as the three Machiavellian villains above add Lord Atticus the amoral drunkard, son of Lord Bartok and his sister, the conniving and deadly Lady Aurelia.

Reminiscent of Jennifer A. Nielsen's "False Prince" with its setting in a turbulent and unstable kingdom, its people divided, this adventure is also filled with danger and action, hidden identities and intrigue. It is well-written, and the plot captivating as Persephone and Azriel confront one challenge after another on their journey of discovery. I highly recommend it and look forward to reading "A Fool's Errand", the next in this magnetic series.

Tisha says

WARNING

This is my first review EVER!!! I may not be as eloquent with my wording as some other people on here are

but I hope that you will bear with me as I try to convey my deep like of this book.

A Spoiler Free Review:

First off Maureen Fergus's writing style grabbed my attention (and held it) from the very first page. I was captivated by the world she created which was extremely harsh. The rich and privileged were hard and cruel while the poor and low borns were considered to be nothing more than 'furniture', something that could easily be replaced. And although at times I thought this book might be hard to read, I couldn't stop cause it made me feel....that's it. Whether good or bad, happy or tragic, any book that makes you feel something is worth reading as long as what your feeling is not boredom. And I definitely was not bored.

Secondly, I loved, I mean LOVED the main character Persephone. She was unbelievably strong and resourceful and whether she recognized it or not, she was fiercely loyal. She wasn't simpering and constantly confused as many of the female MC's in YA books are these days. Don't get me wrong there is personal struggle and growth in this book but the way Maureen Fergus writes it, I understood where it came from and that Persephone had and still has to go through it, to become the woman she is destined to be. And of course the male MC, Azriel, was nothing but yummy sounding. Strong, funny, defiant and yes he was handsome too. Both MC's in this book were a lot alike actually and I didn't mind that the whole "opposites attract" thing didn't apply here because it was still sweet and had me waiting with anticipation for the moment they would finally declare how they feel about each other.

And lastly Mordecai, the evil cripple with the handsome face. The contradiction is not lost on me but what might shock people is that it wasn't his crippled body that made him ugly, it was his black heart and his corrupted soul. This character just reinforced what we all know to be true, beauty is only skin deep. He thought he was ugly cause of his body but really his callous treatment of others was what truly made him dreadful. And even though he had it rough because of his deformity, I could find no compassion for him. Making him a great villain for this story.

So, now that I've said all that, all I can say now is that I can't wait for book 2 'A Fool's Errand' which comes out October 2013. Yay!!

Come on October!!!! I'm waiting for you.

Kay says

Sometimes you take a chance on a book you know little about, and you quickly live to regret it. Other times, you thank your luck star you took the risk. With The Gypsy King, it is without a doubt a case of the latter, as I had tremendous fun reading and discovering the first in this new series!

First, I have to say that I found Maureen Fergus' writing to be wonderfully engaging! Her words followed each other so naturally, and even the conversations felt natural. It also felt balanced; without trying too hard to use a language inspired of medieval times and fantasy, it is also not too modern. I really felt I was transposed in another world, in another time, both by the setting and the writing.

Persephone clearly is the star of her story. She is strong but flawed, and her relationship with Azriel was incredibly fun to follow. Their banter had me smiling for a good part of the book, and I loved how her

feelings were a bit unclear. She doesn't like him at the beginning (so no love at first sight here!), but she also doesn't hate him. Mainly, it is not that she doesn't appreciate him, but more that she desires her freedom more than anything else.

There were many more characters in the story, and I was amazed to see how rich the cast was. Diversified, complex, mysterious. Azriel, Rachel, Meeta, and many more; they all are worth the time, which isn't something I can always say about secondary characters!

If there is one thing I enjoyed less, it was how the chapters alternated between Persephone's view and the court intrigue. It's sort of weird, because while I absolutely loved the mysterious plot with the king, the throne, the villain and all that, for a long time I didn't like how the story kept changing - even though it was all written in the third person, and even though it all fit well together. Maybe a clearer explanation will come to me later?

All in all though, *The Gypsy King* took me by surprise and was a great read. I was a bit disappointed, in fact, that I didn't have a nice paper copy to put on my shelf! For sure I'll have to add it to my wishlist!

Farah Jay says

The *Gypsy King* started off with an event from the past, where an old gypsy women said that there would be a gypsy kind who will make peace between two places. We are then taken to the present, where we meet Persephone. Persephone is a 16 year old runaway slave, who just adores animals and has them as her only friends. When she meets this certain thief one day, that's when her world starts to change. The next day, that certain thief comes over and "buys" Persephone from her owner. Persephone then embarks on a long journey with Azriel, and along the way, she starts learning more about the world around her.

Persephone was an amazing character to read about! She was so kind, but took care of herself very well. I loved that she loved animals, and it was great to see how a big role those animals played in the book. I loved the relationship between Azriel and Persephone, and I liked that they were more innocent than the usual young adult characters. Though I did feel like there was a bit too much detail regarding the government and the historical/political aspects, but maybe it's because I'm usually not very good at understanding them. There were a fair amount of characters that I really enjoyed reading about, and even the evil ones were a joy to read. The world building in "*The Gypsy King*" is amazing! I think of it as this beautiful magical forest where it's full of nature and animals. Maureen Fergus's writing style is also very enjoyable, and I liked how some chapters were about Azriel and Persephone's journey, while some were chapters about the government issues and events.

Overall, *The Gypsy King* was a very enjoyable read! I was also glad to have met Maureen Fergus herself! She's a hilarious person! I would totally recommend this to all fantasy, historical fiction readers out there. Though I do recommend it to the younger "young adults." I sometimes forget that it's young adult, and sometimes I think of it as middle grade. Anyhow, I really did enjoy it overall, and I'm glad I already have my hands on the second book of the series!

Tynga says

Persephone has been ill treated her whole life. A slave born and bred (as she likes to say), her life has never been glamorous, but it got much worst when her owner lost her in a game of cards. Beaten, forced to work in the mines without seeing the sun for years, her life wasn't all that bad when she ended up working for a despicable farmer, if you don't mind a wiping here and there, that is. Her life is about to change once more when Azriel, the beautiful thief, enters her life and plans to stay in it.

I am a fan of fantasy novels and even though the cover leaves a lot to be desired (bad Photoshop much?), I decided to give this Canadian author a shot and I was not disappointed! When I read fantasy, I can't help to compare the novel to those of Kristin Cashore and Maria V. Snyder. The Gypsy King isn't quite up there, but it's not far behind. Maureen Fergus is a great entertainer and I truly enjoyed her writing!

The third person narration alternated between Persephone and the evil Regent, Mordecai. It was a genius decision to pick those two characters, instead of Azriel for example, because the Regent's twisted perception of the world is definitely worth a pound of gold! One chapter you see what really happens from the hero's point-of-view, and the next you have the Regent's alternate perception of the very same event. It was funny in a strangely disturbing way. Furthermore, Miss Fergus stayed true to old English and her writing made for a very seamless read.

Maureen blessed us with highly likeable characters. Persephone has a quick mind and a sharp tongue and Azriel is right there to butt heads with her. Their frequent banter was very entertaining and I loved that humour was on the menu. So often fantasy novel are very serious, I liked the The Gypsy King had, on occasion, a light spirit despite the dark circumstances the characters had to face. King Finnus was a young idealistic man and his naivety was endearing. I really hope he has a bright future in front of him. Regent Mordecai is sick and dreadful, and even though he has a hard part, I couldn't muster any compassion for him. Truth being said, I hope he rots in hell!

Rescued by Azriel to launch on a mission even more dangerous, our young hero will supposedly help crown a Gypsy King. The Gypsies have been hunted down like animals for generations and Persephone is convince it's all fantasy. She plays along in hopes of freedom and will end up playing the role of a noblewoman in the castle. The situations she has to face were at time comical, painful and breathtaking. I would lie if I said I enjoyed this book from the start, but the more I read, the more I was engrossed in the story, having a hard time putting the book down. Maureen's fantasy story kept a good pace and the end is like a bomb!

Sweet and innocent, the romance really spoke to me. I love how naive Persephone is in matters of love and her quick blush amused me. The relationship between her and Azriel was very touching and I hope the best for them!

Suspenseful, engrossing, with a speck of humour, The Gypsy King proved to be a great read and I honestly can't wait for the sequel. I can't find any information about it right now, but I sure hope it will release soon! Maureen Fergus was a new-to-me author and I suggest you give her a try :)
