



A Red Tale

Nicola Mar

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Nicola Mar's debut novel will transport you from a world taken over by 'global cooling', to Surritz, a tropical utopia beneath the ocean's floor. One snowy night, Stasia Forrester—a teenager who lives in the Caribbean, but only dreams of the warm breezes and searing sun of the past—discovers a funnel in the ocean that leads her to Surritz. She revels in the beauty of the land, encountering many fantastical creatures, including the most abundant inhabitants—water dragons. When she sets out to befriend one, he tells her that she once lived a past life in Surritz. Thus begins a story of love so powerful that Stasia must find a way to travel back in time. As she struggles to discover the truth about her past life, she learns how it will affect her future. Can she reverse global cooling, or will it destroy them all?

A Red Tale Details

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From Reader Review A Red Tale for online ebook

Elisa says

You can also find this review at Lii's Adventures In Bookland

This book was sent to me by the publisher in exchange for a honest review

What first got me when I saw this book was, obviously, the cover. The art in it is so beautiful that it got me almost hypnotized. It's simple yet complicated and at the same time it shows what the book is about. This is quite rare these days and I applaud to the artist who made this.

When it comes to the book itself, I loved it. The plot was surprisingly interesting and deep despite the fact that its description makes out for a very simple and shallow story. I must say it though, this book is not by any means shallow! It was so beautiful that I cannot put down to words how much it touched me. But we'll get to that in a minute.

Stasia to me was a very strong character, she was also naive to a certain extent. This though, did not prevent her from dealing with the problems that she was faced with. I actually loved the way she 'traveled' between herself and Nina. This character was also very captivating, her love for Abe was so strong that she didn't even flinched when faced with the oportunity to join him, even if it meant dying.

One thing that made me feel kind of bad was how Stasia didn't get to see her friends after her adventure, I would like to see her fall in love and all.

Right at the beginning of this review I mentioned that this book touched me, and even though I can't really explain how it touched, I can share a quote from it, that means a lot and made me think:

“Until now, I never understood that part of life was not understanding it. That we can’t plan everything, or know everything, or want everything. It was about believing that someone out there was looking out for us, planning our next move for us. Telling us to trust our instincts and that it was okay to feel insecure. To just let go.”

This quote just says so much and at the same time not enough. I love it.

All in all, 'A Red Tale' is a beautiful book, its author was able to picture a fantastic world on which you could get lost in. Also her writing is quite easy to understand and simple, though her descriptions can be very complex at times.

Ann-marie says

I was given a copy of "A Red Tale" by the author via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. That in no way changes my opinion of this book.

I have always been drawn to fantasy novels, especially one that involves past lives or time travel. "A Red Tale" fit that bill exactly, and the beautiful cover is what initially caught my attention and drew me in. The

author definitely took her time to be able to describe everything so well, you could almost smell the ocean, feel the breeze, and hear the conversations between the animals.

The book is written through the eyes of Stasia/Nina, and you get to learn about her life on the island of St. Michael as well as underwater in Surritz. There, you meet dragons and all sorts of various animals. And Nina's love for Abe was unconditional and eternal. Even if it meant dying to be with him again, she was willing to make that sacrifice. It is not until the very end does Stasia/Nina realize that not everything, and everyone, is what it appears to be. She is connected to Abe (from Surritz) more than she realizes, and Billy and Toro (dragons), haven't quite been so truthful while she has been on a quest to figure things out between the two places.

All in all, a wonderful read for all age groups. I am going to read it a second time now, since I know what I know, it will all make sense from early on in the book.

JoLee says

Featured in a Reading on a Theme on Intellectual Recreation.

The Caribbean island of St. Michael is covered in snow. The world is experiencing global cooling. People are afraid the the cooling temperatures are going to force the Wayters, water dragons, ashore. Stasia Forrester returns to St. Michael after being away at school. She can't seem to feel settled there. She keeps seeing footprints in the snow. She has dreams and visions of another land. Then Stasia meets Billy, a Wayter who takes her to Surritz, the land below the sea. She is told that she needs to find the diamond that can restore the world. To learn how Stasia travels back in time with the help of the Tree of Waking Dreams.

A Red Tale attempts to be a lot of things. It's a dragon book, a time travel book, a reincarnation book, an apocalyptic book. Nicola Mar's book has many intriguing elements, but it's not quite there. The writing feels a little stilted. The characters and setting seem to exist just beyond a veil that the reader can't quite part.

Review copy from NetGalley.

Aniko Nagyne vig says

A modern spiritual tale

A modern spiritual tale, finding yourself again after reincarnating. The beginning, where the tale part kicks on (underwater world), I wasn't sure what to expect, the science fiction part of an underworld living city was not explained enough, but as the characters and story develops I realized it wasn't even about that, there are more layers there.

I got it as a Goodreads giveaway, thanks.

Brianne Reeves says

Overview: Stasia goes home to St. Michael after spending the last few years studying Watyrs, the water dragons that are rumored to be encroaching on Earth. St. Michael is not the way it was when Stasia is a child. Normally the Caribbean island would be beautiful and warm, but now it's cold and covered in snow. The whole world is becoming cold.

On the island, Stasia is reunited with Amelie, a childhood friend, and the two start getting into mischief. Amelie convinces Stasia to let her conduct hypnotherapy in order to bring back childhood memories. Stasia then discovers that not only are the Watyrs real, but she was one of them.

For Fans Of: Fairytales, Melissa Meyer

World-Building: I was disappointed in this book's world construction. There were so many elements to the world that (1) were simply accepted for being there and got no explanations; and (2) were wholly unbelievable. It's a world with dragons and magic portals, fine, but then on top of it there's a bunch of humans accidentally killing the diamonds that make the portals work and global cooling (which is treated like something we haven't considered possible—for reference, we thought that was a concern in the 1970s) AND shaky concepts of therapeutic hypnosis AND an approach to it that pretends there aren't serious methodological problems. On top of all of that, Mar uses reincarnation. But I guess at this point, why not? A set of two or three of these things may be believable, but all of them together are a bit grating.

There isn't really a clear and thorough description of Surritz, the world that the Watyrs live in, despite many opportunities for it. Mar describes it as an inverted island without a clear explanation of what that means. The water is supposed to be all around—above and to the sides of people walking around, but there's no real explanation, then, of how a human would breathe. It's also supposed to only be accessible to specific humans, but that doesn't really seem to hold weight—Stasia's friends pretty much all can get access.

This all being said, there are some well written descriptions of St. Michael's.

Character Development: I don't have any real problems with the characters. Stasia was fine. Amelie at least had some overarching motivation throughout.

There wasn't really any need for Stasia to fight to gain back her memories, or any knowledge of the Watyrs.

Plot: The plot lacked a lot of foreshadowing and moved too quickly from one event to the next, often without tying them together or really dwelling on events' implications.

Maria Tizon says

Nicola Mar has created here a world to get lost in. She balances perfectly the real Caribbean and the imagined Surritz. Instantly the question is formed: What happens when it starts snowing in the tropics? How will it change the planet we live on? How will it affect the people who live there? A Red Tale is one of those lovely stories that ignites the imagination with imagery and stirs the soul, reminding us of our connection and responsibility to each other and our planet. Mar runs with the idea of Global Cooling and feathers out a

lovely, thought provoking fantasy to delight young and old readers alike. Did I mention the dragons and an underwater world and first love? There is something here for everyone.

Krazykiwi says

Beautifully written, but just not really for me.

There really is some lovely writing here though. Some days, for me, that's enough, but not here. I'm kind of over essentially passive MC's who don't really seem to have any agency (or when they do seem to, not doing anything with it.)

The MC here is so busy having things happen to her, and deus ex machina helpers pop up a la Alice in Wonderland style to move the plot along, that she almost disappears into the scenery. Some kind of tabula rasa for the story to be projected against.

If you like Kate Griffin, Catherynne M. Valente, perhaps John Crowley (and I do, all three, very much), you might give the sample of this a shot though.

Roxy Wilson says

Global cooling? What an interesting thought! This is especially so, in light of the fact that Earth is presently experiencing the ill-effects of global warming. Author Nicola Mar does a fantastic job in her fantasy story, *A Red Tale*, in which she reverses the natural scheme of things: instead of Earth experiencing global warming, in her story, it experiences global cooling.

I was born and bred in the Caribbean, so I know that the tropical islands are known for their extremely warm temperatures throughout the year, verdant hills, and white, black or pink sand beaches (according to which island you happened to be visiting). So, you can imagine how my curiosity was piqued quite early in the story when Stasia, the main character, sees the snow-covered islands of the West Indies, as the plane she is traveling in flies across the sky.

Things are certainly different in this new Earth, so different that Stasia's dark-complexioned mother is now pale, and instead of people frolicking and having a grand time, they now have to maneuver their way around heaps of snow. Even the economy is negatively affected by global cooling as the sugarcane plant cannot withstand the extremely cold weather, and indigenous flora and fauna no longer thrive there. However, one thing is certain; one type of animal seems to be lurking around, and Stasia thinks they're dragons. Dragons? Who will believe her?

Author Nicola Mar weaves a fascinating tale of Stasia's adventures. There are descriptive scenes that take me to different worlds, both above and beneath the sea. Another thing that makes this story such a fantastic read is the fact that it is told from Stasia's point of view. For that reason, it feels as if Stasia and I are one and the same person, engaging in adventure and discovery. So, for instance, when Stasia dreams of Surritz, it seems as if I'm seeing what she sees in her dream, in which plants become animals, and animals become people.

A Red Tale is definitely a must-read for people who enjoy reading fantasy. Congratulations, Ms. Mar for a job well-done!

Stephanie says

A young adult, high fantasy on the island of St. Micheal in the Caribbean and a different type of island under the sea in the land of Surritz. The phenomenon of global cooling has now taken over the Earth and even this tropical island receives snow now in the winter, even stranger than that...a new sort of water dragon called a Wayter has washed up on the shores of St. Micheal. For Annastesia Forrester, the appearance of the dragon is when everything started to make sense. Stesia had a troubled childhood, with intense imaginary friends and memories of another time and place. As she grows, the feelings of another life come back stronger, and now a water dragon has come back for her. They need her help and her powers from her past life.

This book had a lot going on in it, past lives, reincarnation, a touch of religion, a little bit of time travel and a mysterious and beautiful other world contained under the ocean. My biggest problem, however was the joking and sarcastic tone that the author used for the issue of global cooling within the islands. Instead of bringing up the issue of global climate change (in which strange weather patterns, like snow in the Caribbean is completely possible), she mocks climate science saying "Despite the definite theories of global warming years ago, scientist were now scrambling to come up with an excuse for their blatant miscalculations." I know this is a fantasy novel and all, but the global cooling idea didn't add that much to the story other than a very interesting setting. Other than that, the plot was very different. Stesia's past and quest within the world of Surritz makes for a great adventure. The world of Surritz itself is intriguing, I did want to know more about it's formation and how the other animals came to be there, including the water dragons.

This book was received for free in return for an honest review.

Andrea Norton says

Thank you, NetGalley and the publisher for providing me with a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

This review may contain spoilers.

I had to think about this book for a few days before I reviewed it. There is a lot that I loved about this story, but there was one thing that really bothered me: Stasia.

About Stasia... she's very snotty. She has an issue with what her dad does for work. She has an issue with his birthday gifts. Maybe it's because I'm a Daddy's Girl, but that really bothered me.

Also, I'm confused as to what a red tale is. Is it because of the dragons? The gems? I don't get it.

I think this should have been a three part series. This book was insanely busy and had SO much potential. Had it been a three part series, we would have gotten more answers, spent more time in Surritz, and not found the diamond until later.

I wanted certain events to take more time and feel that other events shouldn't have even happened.

It's worth noting that Nicola Mar has a way with description - the colors were wonderful. Maybe she'll do a follow up to this story and take us back to Surritz, because we really need more time in that world.

The dragons weren't the typical massive size that we see in other stories. They were pretty small, and I liked that. I loved the talking animals, how time works, and the beauty this book brought to my mind.

If you're looking for a quick read and like dragons, read this one.

Bee says

Istyria book blog ~ B's world of enchanted books

A Red Tale is a very busy but still enjoyable book. It had so many different elements to it that I don't even can give it a specific genre. There was so much going on! It was still an enjoyable read, like I said, but I wasn't really into the book the whole time. The fact that there is too much going on, throws me off a lot.

The blurb makes the global cooling seem like a bigger part of the story. In the beginning it was. There was a lot of focus on the cold weather and all that. But towards the end that's almost forgotten and we focus on the animals and stuff. The focus jumped back and forth between several things, but the plot keeps moving fast and we're introduced to many things at once and my head was spinning by the time I was halfway through it. There were several questions left unanswered and I hate it when that happens. I feel like this book would have done better as a series or trilogy. It's not a bad book, it was just a little busy for my taste. I can't say who I'd recommend it for because I'm not 100% sure which genre it even is. Fantasy-ish? Give it a try, you might be surprised!

Margaryta says

A Red Tale Thank you to Smith Publicity for providing me with a copy of the book to review, it was an unexpected journey with slight bumps in the road, yet one that I enjoyed going on.

This is one busy book. There are so many things going on and different genre elements at play, all coming together in a way that, though pleasant and interesting to read about, ends up throwing one off at several moments in the book.

Let's start off with the beginning and Stasia's relation with her parents and friends. I was still left confused about why Stasia and her father left the island of St. Michael, and what the relationship between her parents were. Little thing, yes, but it ended up being that these little things accumulated until I was working my way through it slowly and piecing the parts and details together.

The idea of global cooling is clever, playing one that already was present earlier, but from the summary I'd say it sounded much more important than it really was, or then the case would be that the direction of the story changed, because whereas in the beginning a lot of time was allocated to describing the cold weather

and how it changed from being the warm, tropical island, the focus at the end was on the animals and gems of the world of Surritz. There were several of these jumps, mainly in the shifts when it comes to time and recollection of the past. Even then the plot moved fast, introducing many things at once, and the focus went from Billy to Surritz to Amelie to Abe to the animals to the gems, etc. I wish each of these components were given a bit more time and attention rather than having them all circulate at once and make the story become a bit like a juggling act.

Other questions were left unanswered, like why people in the world of the book could reincarnate and live several lives. Was it a trait unique only to those on Surritz, or could people on St. Michael do it as well? Back story and more information would've been very helpful in this case, instead of making the reader simply go along with what's written. The same goes with the gems and their abilities to heal or act as mediators for travel between the two worlds. (I noticed how the dragons seemed to be especially anxious to get the stones, and it made me wonder whether this was a reference to Middle Age mythology of dragons being jewel hoarders. Even if it wasn't, it felt like a great coincidence that simply worked well.) It would've really strengthened the book if there clearer flashbacks in regards to the memories and at least little explanations of why some things, like the gems, were the way they were. Descriptions of Surritz would've been helpful as well, as it seemed to be a landscape very similar to, of not almost exactly the same as, the fantasy landscapes and worlds that exist in the fantasy-type YA.

The characters are something I can't complain about, for once. Usually I really struggle with lead characters, especially the female, but here I was pleasantly surprised and content with Stasia. She had natural reactions to situations, there was a balance of the romantic thought and constructive thought when it came to saving Surritz, and she was an overall pleasant character to read about. The other vast cast of characters that was introduced was done so in a way that made it easy to remember the names and background information on each one, something that, again, books with many characters often struggle with achieving.

One comment I would like to make on logistics of the book: why exactly is it called 'A Red Tale'? Perhaps that will be the one question that'll stick to this book for some time, one I'll hopefully be able to answer after I revisit and reread it in the future. Also, the cover of the book is a bit of a throw-off when it comes to the girl. (Stasia's age is another issue I encountered, struggling to pinpoint the number until I finally just decided to settle on an age range between 16 and 20). The byline at the top was another thing I'd say didn't fit the book as well as it could. These details are good in attracting attention of potential readers yet I do wonder if they'll end up being throw-offs or distracting factors that will create assumptions or wrong judgements.

My final conclusion is that, as a debut book, this was quite the interesting little gem (I just had to use that metaphor). It really stands apart from the other YA whimsical-type novels I have come across in the past, and has characteristics that put it en route to wonderful books of the same world, like *The Night Circus*. This book just wasn't there yet. There was too much going on and each detail and character had to fight for their chance in the sun within the electronic pages. There was undeniable charm, but some faltering as well. For me, I can overlook those stumbles and wholeheartedly say I enjoyed this book, no matter how confused I may have found myself while reading it. I hope the author keeps writing and her next work will be in a similar style as this one. I would definitely enjoy reading something else from her as well as see the writing grow.

Aimee says

Goodreads giveaway

Tena says

I won this Kindle version in a GOODREADS giveaway.

Katrina Southern says

I received a copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

I have to say I had quite high hopes for this one but unfortunately it didn't quite live up to my expectations. 'A Red Tale' tells the story of Stasia, a young girl haunted by strange dreams and the idea that water dragons known as 'Wayters' could potentially surface and cause chaos. As well as this, Winter has begun to take effect on the normally sunny Caribbean Island of St. Michael, indicating that Global Cooling has begun to take effect. It is up to Stasia to work out how all of these events connect, and whether she is able to stop them in time. Now there were some good points to the book, I liked how it started. Nicola Mar drew me into the story well and I was pretty instantly intrigued. My problems with the book came as it progressed. I found that the plot-line became increasingly difficult to understand or follow. So many elements were introduced and none of them were tied up overly well by the end. I almost felt like I was reading a stream of consciousness at points, rather than a thought-out chapter. I felt that some of the character opinions and actions were inconsistent and I didn't feel overly attached to those characters either. I thought the concept was pretty original though, I just think it needed a bit of fine tuning and a lot more focus.

For a full review, see here: <http://chasedbymyimagination.blogspot...>
