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Ever since her mother died and her father lost his shoemaking skills, Fortunata has survived by telling fake fortunes. But when she's tricked into telling a grand fortune for a prince, she is faced with the impossible task of fulfilling her wild prophecy—or her father will be put to death.

Now Fortunata has to help Prince Leonato secure a magic sword, vanquish a wicked witch, discover a long-lost golden shoe, and rescue the princess who fits it. If only she hadn't fallen in love with the prince herself !

Fortune's Folly Details

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From Reader Review Fortune's Folly for online ebook

Kim says

I seem to have been on an "original fairy tale" kick lately; not that it's a bad thing, if the books are as enjoyable as this one!

Fortune's Folly is about a young girl, Fortunata, who falls in with a group of performers and is taught the fine art of fake fortune telling. When she makes a prophecy for a young prince, she doesn't know that the specifications of the prophecy must come true in order for him to take the throne. Fortunata finds herself accompanying Leonato on a journey to find a magic sword, recover a golden slipper from a wicked witch, and find the princess so he can marry her. But Fortunata is developing feelings for Leonato herself. . .

I've always loved fairy tales, but it used to be difficult to find ones with the kind of strong and clever heroines I also enjoyed. *Fortune's Folly* combines elements of traditional fairy tales---including Cinderella, Rapunzel, and The Elves and the Shoemaker---with a heroine who is definitely clever. Fortunata, though not dishonest by nature, when forced to it is ingenious at reading people and figuring out what fortune they would like to hear. She is resourceful and attentive to detail; there are touches of magic here, certainly, but nowhere does a true *deus ex machina* appear to rescue Fortunata or her prince. Instead, Fortunata herself takes charge of her destiny, persevering through her own intelligence and effort. She makes mistakes along the way, perfectly believable and human mistakes she manages to correct and learn from.

And Fortunata is far from the only appealing character in this book. I liked the stammering Prince Leonato, Fortunata's father, a shoemaker who has lost his touch, and her mentor, Alessandra. The setting is rich, an imaginary Renaissance Italy, complete with a pseudo-Venice and Rome, and described in Fagan's supple prose. The first person narration is lively, there are touches of humor and suspense, and, like many a good fairy tale, a romance to tie it all together. If you enjoyed *Howl's Moving Castle*, *Talking to Dragons*, or *The Rope Trick*, you'll probably love this one as well!

Katie says

This was cute, but I guess a little slight in the end. I generally enjoy stories that walk the line of "Is this magic or not?", so I enjoyed that aspect, but everything wrapped up too quickly! And the love story wasn't developed enough.

Ash says

A magical tale with a perfect heroine, a stuttering but sweet and handsome prince, with a quest to fulfill a prophecy, to find a weapon, to defeat a witch, so that they can retrieve a golden slipper and save a princess. This is obviously no easy quest.

Quick Overview: Fortunata has had a hard few years since her mother died. Her father, once called the finest shoemaker in Valenzia can no longer make a shoe that is anything less than hideous. Since her mother's

death her father says that the fairies no longer clean his tools and leave their magic, but Fortunata is smart enough to know that there is no magic. Through a series of unfortunate events(or fortunate, depending on the way you see things) Fortunata must lie by telling fortunes. When she is forced into the situation of telling the fortune of a prince, she must see that her wild fortune comes true or her father will die. On this great quest to fulfill the prophecy though, Fortunata finds that she has fallen in love with the prince, but the fortune must come true if she wants to save her father and she must make sure that the prince finds his princess. Even if it breaks her heart.

Without a doubt, Fortunata is my favorite character of the story. She's smart and resourceful, and even if she falls in love with the prince she never goes stupid ga-ga over him. I loved how all the things in the prophecy came around. It was funny to see how some of the tasks play out and without giving anything away, I laughed out loud at how the sword is retrieved. Prince Leonato was sweet and even if he felt immature at times I loved how he showed an enthusiasm for life and how that helped Fortunata. The ending felt a little too easy. I thought that the villains would fight harder. Honestly though, it really didn't bother me that much. This is a great original fairy tale that I think younger readers would enjoy as well as older YA readers like myself. The story is nothing less than magical.

Kate says

I SO wish this book had been around when I was ten years old (never mind that you were probably, like, four at the time). *FORTUNE'S FOLLY* is the kind of book that made me a reader -- the kind of book I would have disappeared with into my room for hours on end, until I knew everything would be okay, because these characters from another time and place feel so very, very real.

Thankfully, I haven't grown up all that much. I still love stories like this, and most of all, reading this ARC, I was excited for my students and my daughter because they're just going to love Fortunata, a heroine who doesn't wait around waiting to get saved. This book has an enchanting romance, to be sure, but in no way does Fortunata compromise her sense of self or forget where she came from. In fact, she's the one who does the rescuing, with bravery, cleverness, humor, and pure will that will leave kids cheering.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Joan Stradling for TeensReadToo.com

Life is difficult for a shoemaker who has lost his skills, and even more difficult for his daughter, Fortunata. When they are forced to leave their home, things get even worse. Nata is forced into telling fake fortunes for a living, and before she knows it, she's tricked into telling the fortune of a prince.

If the fortune doesn't come true, Nata's father will pay the price. Fortunata's only hope is to make sure the prince secures a magic sword, vanquishes a wicked witch to recover a lost golden shoe, and rescues the princess.

If only fulfilling the fortune were as easy as telling it.

Though often predictable, I enjoyed reading about Nata's journey in FORTUNE'S FOLLY. The characters were fun and the fairy tale-type story was engaging enough to keep me reading. It wasn't a thrilling adventure, but I'll read more of Fagan's work because I like her writing style and ability to make me empathize with her characters.

Lisa Vegan says

This is a wonderful fairy tale for older children. It's not a twisted fairy tale, but a story that takes itself with just the right amount of seriousness. It's a terrific story with interesting characters.

I love the main character, a girl on the cusp of womanhood, who's a skeptic and doesn't believe in magic. Fortunata makes a very unusual fairy tale character in part because of her lack of belief.

The ending was exactly as I expected, but that did not in any way diminish the fun of reading this, especially because the journey from beginning to end took some unexpected turns. There was plenty of suspense and many emotionally touching moments. There was some depth to the appealing characters and the villains.

Unless I missed something, there was one little plot hole I'd like to have had filled, but it wasn't one that ruined the story as a whole for me. This is a really fun read. I'm sure it would have been a favorite of mine if I'd read it at ages 10-12.

Ann says

Fortunata and her father fall on hard times and must travel with a heartless group of performers to make a living. Fortunata is taught the art of fortune telling and makes her living thus. But, when she finally has to tell a very grand and important fortune she must make sure the fortune comes true or risk her father's life.

There were some good things about this book that I really enjoyed. The endings were far less predictable than I'd expected, and for that I was grateful (and surprised!) I did like the characters, and thought Fagan did an admirable job of making them unique from each other.

The second half of this book definitely moved faster than the first. It started (for me) slow and fairly uneventful. That said, I did feel the ending was wrapped up too quickly, and would have liked the "ta-das" each to have a bigger moment.

And, unfortunately, for much of the book I couldn't get past the fact that our heroine was telling lies. Yes, I understand that she had to do what she could to feed herself and her father, but it just seemed odd that there wasn't *something* else she could have done. And one of her fortunes was quite dangerous for those entwined in it, making it very hard to justify (IMO). I think Fagan tried to justify Fortunata's lies, and tried to have the resolution come to a satisfactory close - and while it all *almost* did, it didn't *quite*.

Also, we don't really learn (I don't think) Fortunata's age until about half way through the book! From the cover I would have guessed her to be about 12 or 13. Turns out, she's more 16-17. Which, is fine, it just does

change one's outlook a little. And, sometimes the events felt a little trite to me, which was too bad because there really was some good characterization anyway.

So, all in all an enjoyable book, but I felt it could have been better.

Kristin says

What an enchanting tale. All the elements of a fairy tale, along with action! mystery! and romance! There's truly something for everyone in this book.

Deva Fagan's writing is so eloquent and evocative, and her main character is delightful and clever. I loved watching Fortunata stay ahead of danger and find a future for her father and herself. In fact, all of Fagan's characters are so fully formed and well rounded, including the bad guys. Add in a richly drawn environment and a high-stakes plot, and Fortune's Folly is definitely a treat worth savoring.

Jane G Meyer says

(writing this with my daughter)

Plot summary--Fortunata searches to find ways to keep herself and her father alive...

Major themes--love, lies/truth, servitude, magic,

Writing style and plot flow--first person, uses the word huzzah a lot, writing gets quite sappy near the end, plot moved along well, with plenty of conflict and resolution--and a few nice plot twists

Comments: Many references to the saints, but they don't feel real to the reader--more like superstitious figures--just a cultural way to speak... Liked both the father of Fortunata, his simple way of being and believing, and Allessandra, who loved the protagonist and decided to run away from a bad situation... Didn't really feel inspired at the end by the characters--not toward nobility, action or greater love... Felt Fortunata's continual dishonesty was tiring. She didn't believe in what she did nor did she take the risk to get out of the predicament. Better to die--to risk yourself--to walk away from the deception than to stay in it... She obtained the prince's love through lies, and we feel that at the end of the book, though she apologized, she wouldn't have done it differently if she'd had another chance. She was sorry that the prince found out, that her lie was uncovered, and she was sorry that her circumstances were such that she felt she had to behave in a certain way, but she wasn't sorry enough to become a different person... Also, the love that Fortunata developed for the prince seemed quite shallow. Would have liked to see the author work on that a bit more...

Kathryn says

It's taken me awhile to formulate my review for this one as I have a lot of mixed feelings. Overall, I enjoyed reading the book but not nearly as much as I hoped I would. Interestingly enough, some of the things I most enjoyed at certain points were also things that frustrated or annoyed me at others. For example, I thought the premise of Fortunata having to lie and tell fortunes to keep her and her father alive was really interesting--but I felt she carried those lies farther than she needed to with people that she should have been able to trust. While perhaps a realistic portrait of what many would have done (taken the easy way out) it's not something I would like to see in a heroine. And this story does seem fairytale-ish enough to set up Fortunata as our heroine. Also, the writing style seemed old-fashioned at times ("he mounted his steed" and other such phrases), and while at times I found this charming and a great help in making this story seem like the fairytale it was meant to be, at other times I just found it a bit wearing and uninspired. In terms of plot, I was really intrigued and I think this is what kept me eager to read the book--I was really curious how Fortunata was going to get herself out of her predicament and to her "happy ever after" which seemed inevitable (again, this being a fairytale!) But, in terms of character, I really didn't care that much. None of the characters seemed three-dimensional to me, and, I never felt empathy or a fondness for our heroine (certainly not enough for me to forgive her aforementioned ill use of someone). Even the prince, whom I'm sure was meant to be a little beyond the typical fairytale type, was not deep enough despite his kind heart, wise political views and "endearing" stutter. It's not giving much away to say that there is a love story involved somewhere along the line and, while I'm sure my adolescent self would have been swooning away (and it was sure nice to see a G-rated romance), there was not enough depth for my adult, married-woman self to feel that there was a true meeting of the minds and souls going on here. Too, I felt a bit confused as to the target audience for this book--on the one hand, it seems geared for middle grade, but then Fortunata herself is seventeen which seems to indicate an older/YA audience. With all of these gripes, I DID still find pleasure in reading the tale and I absolutely loved the last few pages! The final line had me all misty-eyed despite myself ;-)

Then again, maybe I'm just not cut out to read fairytale novels, since I didn't get on the bandwagon with Shannon Hale's *The Goose Girl*, either, and practically everyone else loves it. That said, if the premise of "Fortune's Folly" sounds interesting to you, give it a try!

Nana says

I love, love this book. I think the story is lovely and honest. I love the characters a lot specially the prince and the fact that he is not perfect and he has fears to conquer. *Fortune's Folly* is the kind of book that shows me why I love literature so much. I hope to see more of this author.

CLM says

Great fun! A resourceful and clever heroine with a sense of humor, a hero with hidden depths, some interesting/unusual minor characters, an unexpected plot development or two, and a blend of magic and would-be magic...

Cara says

Fortunata has a name with a lot of weight and meaning to it, and unknowingly she will have a profession to fit it. Nothing has been the same since Nata's mother died. Her father can no longer make his legendary beautiful shoes, and they struggle to keep food in their bellies. Things change for them when Nata angers a Captain and they must flee Valenzia. This is where the real adventure begins and we see how she transforms to the All Knowing Fortunata.

This romance, adventure, fantasy story has all the traditional things you see in fairy tales. We have a prophecy, a good hearted prince, a magical sword, ghost appearances, a gallant white horse, the bitter relative, greedy men, caring women, reunions and lots of close scraps. What made it original was how practical Fortunata is, how much she does **not** believe in magic, and her ingenious ways of trying to make the fortune come true. She struggles to do what is right and what she thinks needs to be done. You never doubt that she has the best interest of others and you like her all the more for it. Prince Leonato is the poster boy for sweetness, and is so eager to do right by the kingdom.

Some people would say it's kind of predictable, but it isn't entirely and it will please it's targeted audience. I could try to complain about how what happened to the villains wasn't entirely explained, but in all reality though I didn't care that much what happened to them. The detective in me just didn't seem to want to come out to work I guess. I do have one legitimate complaint. Would anybody really believe that nobody but Fortunata would see that the Prince only stutters on words that begin with S? I doubt it.

I had to add that I thought the message was ironic but certainly fitting.

Angela says

This was a fast and very entertaining read that got better and better as the story progressed. It is definitely more on the Middle Grade side of YA, but still enjoyable to me as an adult. However, I am most excited to read it to my girls when they get a little older.

Fortunata is a great character - full of spunk and determination to do what needs to be done. I loved all of the different fairy tales whose various trademark elements found their way into this story. **FORTUNE'S FOLLY** is full of adventure with mystery, humor and a little romance thrown in for good measure.

Here's one of my favorite "lines" from the book, towards the end:

PAGE 197:

"There were so many variables I froze with fear if I began to consider them. What if the girl was too slow, what if someone else happened by, what if the guards altered their routine?

"But it was our best option. I had given up worrying about whether the slippers would fit. We would get her out and then see. And if they didn't, Saints help me if I didn't chop the girl's toes off to make them fit."

Valerie says

I loved this book. It was what some would call charming. It was clean, funny, magical, and best of all happy.

Nata, as her father calls her, is very down to earth. She stopped believing in magic ever since her mother died. And who could blame her because her life has been anything but a fairytale. All she has left in the world is her father, who is so kind and believing, but near useless since he can't make a decent shoe. So it is up to Nata to keep them surviving and in order to do so she has to make terrible compromises. I don't blame her for anything she did. In her circumstance I doubt I could do better. Fortunata is a strong, smart, and loving protagonist.

The journey that Nata takes with the prince and his companion doesn't actually get started until you reach page a hundred or so. But I didn't mind in the least. Fortunata is on her own journey during those first hundred pages and I was just as interested in her solo journey as the one she takes with the prince. I don't think I'd be giving anything away when I say that the prince stutters (you find out the first time Nata meets him). Like you would expect a prince to be, he is handsome but he doesn't have too much confidence in himself. I thought I wouldn't be able to take him seriously because of it but he has his princely moments and he slowly gains confidence in himself.

Fortune's Folly is the kind of book that you just know is going to come with a happy ending. You're just not sure HOW it's going to happen. So if you need to cheer up this book is perfect.
