



Heartless

Marissa Meyer

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Long before she was the terror of Wonderland—the infamous Queen of Hearts—she was just a girl who wanted to fall in love.

Catherine may be one of the most desired girls in Wonderland, and a favorite of the unmarried King of Hearts, but her interests lie elsewhere. A talented baker, all she wants is to open a shop with her best friend. But according to her mother, such a goal is unthinkable for the young woman who could be the next queen.

Then Cath meets Jest, the handsome and mysterious court joker. For the first time, she feels the pull of true attraction. At the risk of offending the king and infuriating her parents, she and Jest enter into an intense, secret courtship. Cath is determined to define her own destiny and fall in love on her terms. But in a land thriving with magic, madness, and monsters, fate has other plans.

In her first stand-alone teen novel, the *New York Times*-bestselling author dazzles us with a prequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

Heartless Details

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Author : Marissa Meyer

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Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Retellings, Romance

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From Reader Review Heartless for online ebook

Nat says

Source

This review contains ***spoilers*** for the first half of this book.

Heartless is an epic retelling of Alice in Wonderland, with the focus being on The Queen of Hearts.

All Catherine wants is to be declared the office tart baker of the kingdom. She and her best friend, Mary Ann, dream of launching their very own bakery. Even their friendship hit it off upon discovering one another's mutual love for food:

“One wouldn’t know it to look at Mary Ann, but she had an appetite to rival Cath’s own. They’d bonded over their love of food years ago, not long after Mary Ann had been hired on as a household maid.”

Their solidarity kind of reminded me of the one Anna Bates and Mary Crawley (from **Downton Abbey**) had in the later seasons—aka my favorite one on the show.

But according to her mother, the Marchioness, “going into the men’s world of business” is unthinkable for the young woman who could be the next Queen, especially with a humble servant - Mary Ann - as her partner.

“But she and Mary Ann had been dreaming of it for so long, she sometimes forgot that it wasn’t yet reality.”

Meanwhile, at the royal ball His Congenial Kingness has chosen a bride, and Cath is thrown for the loop. The King of Hearts was about to propose to her in front of the whole crowd, but the idea of marrying him seemed preposterous to her.

“She would be queen, and queens . . . queens did not open bakeries with their best friends. Queens did not gossip with half-invisible cats. Queens did not have dreams of yellow-eyed boys and wake up with lemon trees over their beds.”

Thankfully, before he could finish his proposal, Cheshire steals the show at Catherine’s request, so that she can vanish unnoticed through the rose gardens. On her way out, she meets Jest, the handsome and mysterious court joker with a rhyming Raven.

And Jest also turns out to be the boy from her dreams... literally.

Cath had met a hazy, beautiful boy in her dream with eyes “bright like lemons ready to fall from a tree.” And so she informs this stranger that she’d had a dream about them, which the courage to tell a handsome someone you had a dream about them... can’t relate.

“‘So?’ he prodded.

She blinked. ‘So what?’

‘Was it a good dream?’

‘Oh.’ Her lips puckered in thought, but then she realized he was teasing her. She scowled. ‘To be frank, I

found it rather dull.'

'Ah, but you can't be Frank. You've already told me that your name is Catherine.'

'I've changed it.'"

A man after my heart. His humor was right up my alley.

Also, Jest giving her a piece of chocolate made my heart warm—*"I was saving this for later, and so I must have been saving it for you."*

Marissa Meyer sure knows how to make me fall quickly for someone.

It's truly been awhile since I've welcomed a book-romance with open arms. And I'm glad Jest, with his quick smiles and witty remarks, was the one I was waiting for.

Plus, when Jest stole her away for a midnight rendezvous - aka a tea party with the Mad Hatter - happiness coursed to the ends of my limbs. In that shared single night, one fun night, she finds out that:

- He was from Chess.
- He was on a mission that could end a war.
- He was the protector of a queen.
- Impossible is his speciality.

I was anticipating every little encounter they had.

But then...

I don't know what happened, but my heart just wasn't in it anymore. I gradually started losing interest in the characters and their arcs. I think I just need to take a break from fantasy for awhile and then eventually come back so I don't feel like I'm forcing myself to read my most anticipated read of the year.

Marissa Meyer is one of the most talented writers, and I'm really hoping that when I pick this book up again, I'll enjoy it more than I can now.

DNF @ p.232 (My heart is breaking just by writing this.)

ARC kindly provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

no rating for now.

Note: I'm an Amazon Affiliate. If you're interested in buying **Heartless, just click on the image below to go through my link. I'll make a small commission!**

This review and more can be found on my blog.

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

Cheshire's yellow eyes slitted as he held her gaze for one beat, two. Then he began to unravel

from the tip of his tail, a slow unwinding of his stripes. 'These things do not happen in dreams, dear girl,' he said, vanishing up to his neck. 'They happen only in nightmares.'

Honestly, I didn't have high expectations for this book after reading the "...she was just a girl who wanted to fall in love" blurb. Fortunately, I was wrong. This book was great. Don't get me wrong, it was unexpectedly dark at some points, but it was also *adownwable* because only a stone cold dead dying heart can resist the absolutely wuvable talking Cheshire Cat. Seriously, he was so cute. And apparently I do not have a stone cold dead dying heart.

It was magical, and adorable, and I really can't pull out any big fancy words to describe it, because "magical and adorable" describes it so perfectly, and yet it wasn't sickening sweet. It was just right.

I have to admit, I have never read *Alice in Wonderland* in its entirety. I've watched the movies, of course, but they weren't particularly memorable to me, and so I think that's what contributed to much of this book's appeal. Talking animals and magic everywhere, yet so commonplace that it feels like home.

The beginning of this book surprised me with its frothiness. There is a lot of baking in this book, and the beginning was the equivalent of a strawberry cream puff, it was so lighthearted that the gradual darkening and the development of Catherine (she who is to be Queen of Hearts) almost sneaks up on you.

She stared at the girl in the mirror, the one who looked as though she had never known a smile. Even as she had the thought, her reflection's lips curled upward, revealing a delirious grin beneath her sullen eyes.

I can't say that this was the best book I've ever read. I feel like this was a very long book, and it could have been condensed without losing much of its content, and Meyer's writing style, while readable, is neither memorable nor special. Regardless, I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

Hailey (HaileyinBookland) says

Review/discussion: https://youtu.be/YSd8MDc98_0

Reread January 2017

Bumped rating up to 5 stars.

I decided to reread this in a 24 hour period because I want to write a paper on it (which is of course due in a couple of days). I loved it even more the second time around!

Original reading October 2016

4.5*

I loved this, but I did have a couple of issues. I was sent the audiobook to review (and do a giveaway on my channel soon!) from Macmillan so a big thank you to them! My video review will be up soon but for now, my 2 main points are: this did a great job of capturing the atmosphere of the original Alice stories, but it was lacking in the fact that it was a bit slow. The plot could have been refined a tad. But I highly recommend the audiobook. It is so so good!

Lola says

Like many people, I hate the Queen of Hearts. But perhaps that is too strong of a word, seeing that she does entertain me. Still, I dislike her tremendously.

Which is why I needed to read this book. I needed to see what made the Queen of Hearts become such a blubbering, humourless, merciless and heartless terror.

The first chapters boggled my mind, before I got used to seeing Catherine Pinkerton being so pliable, understanding and simply GOOD. But you know what, life is different on everyone.

I actually felt compassion for Catherine. All she wants is to pursue her dream of opening a bakery and cooking and baking all days long in company of her lovely maid, Mary Ann.

But her mother has other plans. She wants to make her the Queen of Hearts.

Although this is a slow-paced novel, it's important to know that Marissa Meyer does not info-dump us. She easily could have, taking lots of time to describe the world, scenes and situations the characters are put in. Instead, she assumes, to a certain degree, that we are already fairly familiar with Wonderland's elements.

And are we not? Never fear, this is not at all world-building-less. I, for one, am extremely glad for the lack of info-dump. Because, ultimately, this should be about Catherine Pinkerton.

And it is. I'd even go as far as to say that it's a character-driven novel of a sort, because there are indeed many, many interesting featured characters that make this novel, although the events are also very salient.

This was a treat, it really was. Marissa Meyer's novels are undeniably magical. I will, however, point out, for your sake and patience, that HEARTLESS takes a while to pick up. Up to that point, it's still magical, just very slow and seeming to go nowhere exactly plot-wise, because Marissa Meyer is building/presenting her characters.

I thought I'd warn you, so you don't expect to be thrown into the action right from the start. That's not how it goes for Catherine Pinkerton. After all, before she was the Queen of Hearts, she was a fairly simple, good-willed girl.

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emma says

UPDATE: I think...oh god...I think this book put me in a reading slump.

At a certain point, I really have to start blaming myself. Do I have no idea of my own interests? Because I truly thought this would end up on my all-time favorites shelf, my first add to an as-yet-nonexistent 2017 favorites list. Is that not a fair expectation? After all, Alice in Wonderland is my favorite book, Marissa Meyer one of my favorite authors. This came in the best Owlcrate subscription box of all time. The rating is

high. What went wrong for this book?

Note: this review is also up on my blog at <https://emmareadstoomuch.wordpress.co....> Okay, we continue!!

For starters, there's not an ounce of Wonderland in this setting. Wonderland is a masterpiece, a marvel, a beautiful place where nothing makes sense and everyone is mad. This was just the Lunar Chronicles, with a shitty half-hearted attempt at a mid-nineteenth century twist and various direct quotes and concepts from Wonderland forced in.

This was an uncreative disappointment. Meyer takes her ideas from Carroll ("six impossible things before breakfast," for example, is a recurring statement), from Edgar Allan Poe (a f*cking raven that randomly says "nevermore"? f*ck offfffff), from nursery rhymes (Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater receives shocking attention - to avoid spoilers I'll just say its incorporation is unBEARABLY dumb). When Meyer is left to her own devices, the Wonderland-ness of it all is dropped entirely, only to be forced in through a name-drop of the Looking Glass or the "Tweedle twins" in a few pages.

This really was just an insult to the setting of Wonderland. The Caterpillar, the marvelous creature with his hookah, is a COBBLER. Why don't you just hurt me physically, if you insist upon such emotional pain? There's a street full of businesses, balls, a standard court system...It's just the worst.

And I've decided I only want one thing from this world. (The real one, not Wonderland.) There is one difference I'd like to make, one change I need to instill, and I can die happy. This is about to get predominantly featured in my Goodreads bio, because that's how important it is. And that goal?: STOP INCORPORATING THE JABBERWOCK AS A MONSTER INTO YOUR ALICE IN WONDERLAND RETELLINGS. I can't even convey the sheer FURY this makes me experience. First Tim Burton, then Christina Henry, and now THIS? THE JABBERWOCK IS NOT A CHARACTER FROM WONDERLAND. THAT'S A POEM, YOU ABSOLUTE IMBECILES. When you make your Wonderland protagonist fight the Jabberwock, you're spitting in the face of literature. Spitting. In. Its. Face. I am shaking with anger. It's not even original anymore. It's become cliché in addition to boring, stupid, and further Carroll-stealing. COME UP WITH YOUR OWN VILLAINS, YOU UNCREATIVE MISCREANTS.

I'll force myself to move past the crimes against Wonderland that have been committed here and discuss the shortcomings of the story itself. For starters, it's a trope. It's a poor little rich girl story, a pretty teen member of the court throwing a tantrum over an arranged marriage. I just don't care much about stories like this. Give me some stakes! Sure, she wants love, whatever, but like...can there be some risk to this boring plotline? Snore.

Plus there's a surprise appearance from the worst romantic cliché of all time: the *you're not like other girls* appeal, made famous by the manic pixie dream girl character archetype and everything written by John Green. I haven't seen this piece of garbage in a while! A surprising amount of time, actually. But just when you'd think that all these old-ass weirdos writing books for us youths had finally caught onto something, here it shows up again. "*You're different from the other lords and ladies here. I'm sure that any other girl would have started throwing rocks at me if I showed up at her bedroom window.*" As if their boring romance weren't awful enough already!

Oh yeah, that's another thing. This isn't even a good love story, in my humble yet pretentiously delivered opinion. (Is it better if I'm aware of it?) Unless I'm misremembering or was in a relatively fragile emotional state for all four books + the novellas, the Lunar Chronicles series contained some stellar romancin'. (Get it? Stellar? Like, that series takes place partially in space? Okay, fine.) I didn't get that here. As a reader, I felt

like they met a couple of times and then I was suddenly supposed to buy them as a Titanic-level epic love story. Which I, like, didn't. So.

And I didn't even like either of the characters in the romance. Jest was super flat to me - is anyone else noticing a phenomenon in which an author makes a male love interest super physically attractive and mildly funny and then just dusts off their hands and says, have at 'em, fangirls? Like, it's a little more complicated than that. Jest was a total snooze for me. Which is better than Cath, I s'pose, because that gal was on my last nerve for 90% of this book. (I guess I have durable nerves?) Is it weird to say I hate the way her mind works? I was sick of being stuck inside her cyclical, repetitive complaining. Plus she makes dumb choices, and goes from as cavity-inducingly-sweet as the in-depth descriptions of her pastries to having a legit anger management issue in a hot second.

Yes, the whole point of this book was to provide a backstory for the Queen of Hearts, letting the reader in on what happened to change her from ~normal chick~ (albeit not like other girls, lol) to total villain. And in some ways that happened? Those ways being that we were given a plotline. But the emotions changed in one massive leap. (Like the definition of bipolar disorder so misleadingly given in *When We Collided*!)

On a sidenote, can someone tell me what "Her cheek fluttered" means? Because that's a line from this book. One that made me, alone in my room, go *What?*

But this book was also just boring. It never grabbed me. Maybe that's because I found both the setting and the characters lacking. It honestly could be my fault. But heaped upon all these other problems I had, I didn't even get to have a good time while reading this. It just felt sooooo long.

In terms of positives, I liked that Jest wore eyeliner. More of that in male love interests, please.
#EveryoneWearEyeliner2k17

Bottom line: This was another instance of Meyer giving a villain a meh backstory through the loss of love, but this one's problems hit me closer to home. If you don't worship at the altar of Alice as much as I do, you may be able to get past some of its flaws...but this was one of the most massive disappointments I've been hit with in a while.

Natalie Monroe says

4.5 stars

"When pleased, I beat like a drum. When sad, I break like glass. Once stolen, I can never be taken back. What am I?"

Slow clap for Marissa Meyer for **another amazing fairy tale retelling**. Looking at the blurb, it's hard to imagine Catherine, who just wanted to open a bakery and fall in love, would ever become the short-tempered, unpredictable Queen of Hearts we all know.

The transformation is incredibly well-done. You know it's coming, that there isn't a happily ever after, but that shit-hits-the-fan moment still gets you in the gut.

Meyer mentioned in an interview that she wanted fans to be able to jump straight to Lewis Carroll's work straight after reading Heartless and I can assure you the lady knows what she's doing. The Wonderland setting is **wonderfully mad and whimsical**, as it should be. It flows seamlessly with the narrative without any huge info-dumps.

The dialogue is just beautiful—and Wonderland-worthy.

"You've had me mesmerized from the first moment I saw you in that red dress, and I don't know what to do about it, other than use every skill at my disposal to try and mesmerize you back."

Old characters, like the Mad Hatter and the Cheshire Cat, appear with extra additions of Meyer's own invention. We even get a peek at Carroll's "sequel."

"I heard the most delightful tale at the party today," he said, dabbing his napkin at the corner of his moustache, "about a little girl who discovered an upward-falling rabbit hole just off the Crossroads, and when she started to climb, her body fell up and up—"

Yes, like the blurb promises, it is rather **romance-centric**. But what did you expect from an origin story of the Queen of *Hearts*? There are certain tropes, such as Jest's dark secret that adversely affects their relationship or the semi-love triangle, but Meyer has a way of making them forgivable.

Catherine's decisions, silly and reckless as they may be sometimes, are presented in a relatable manner. They're teenagers, and teenagers make mistakes. I did all kinds of stupid shit when I was sixteen. Heartless makes you remember that feeling; it's hard to judge them too harshly.

One teeny thing did bother me (Other than the mixing-up of "lose" and "loose" in that gif):

(view spoiler)

But overall, it was **magnificent**. Magic. Madness. Heaven. Sin.

Bibi says

Arrrgggh... I can feel the knives being sharpened. *gulp*

So, can we talk about this book first before you send the knife my way?

Heartless is an imagined prequel to Alice in Wonderland but with its main focus being the "Queen of Hearts", she of the famous "Off with their heads" quote.

Alice in Wonderland is a fantastical story written in 1865 by Lewis Carroll, who created the glorious dystopian world of Wonderland replete with a talking cheshire cat, a bumbling rabbit, knaves, Jabberwocks and much more. I truly liked and enjoyed Alice in Wonderland; the book and the movie.

As this is my first Meyer book, I went into this with zero bias but with an expectation of getting, at the least, a fabulous intro to this best-selling author's work and at most, a thrilling account of the QOH's descent into madness. And yes, there is a good reason. A very tragic one, in fact.

So, who was the QOH? The book blurb -below- does a spiffing job of summarizing the story perfectly. Emphasis by me.

Long before she was the terror of Wonderland—the infamous Queen of Hearts—*she was just a girl who wanted to fall in love*

Catherine may be one of the most desired girls in Wonderland and a favorite of the unmarried King of Hearts, but her interests lie elsewhere. *A talented baker*, all she wants is to open a shop with her best friend.....

Then Cath meets Jest, the handsome and mysterious court joker..... *she and Jest enter into an intense, secret courtship*. Cath is determined to define her own destiny and fall in love on her terms. *But in a land thriving with magic, madness, and monsters, fate has other plans.*

Let's talk about the parts that were underlined.

One. (view spoiler)

Two. Desired by whom? (view spoiler)

Three. Gosh, I'd never wanted a pie so badly. (view spoiler) So, yes, mad props to Catherine for her baking skills.

Four. Jest. The mysterious Joker who mesmerizes Cath, both with his talent and his beauty. (view spoiler)

Meyer had taken enough literary liberties with this story and could have done so much more

with Jest. So much more. (view spoiler)**Their love was supposedly forbidden therefore I expected frothing emotions and escalating tensions. I wanted to feel that heart-pounding despair evoked by young and desperate lovers who could not exist without the other.**

Had Meyer not spent more time invoking the spirit of the original AIW, had she not included any and every character from that book, Jest and Catherine may have had more time together building their longing for each other. Between the croquet matches; the uninteresting balls; Catherine's never-will-happen dream of opening a bakery; and the detailed descriptions of the aforementioned endless list of creatures; these two had less than 5 intimate moments. 5! In a book with 450+ pages!

Of the 450+pages, nearly 360 pages were nothing more than a retelling of the original AIW, the story only picks up momentum at the 80% mark but by which point,

I. WAS. FRIGGING. BORED. OUT. OF. MY. MIND.

(view spoiler) And thus, we finally are gifted with the whys of her apparent madness. Ultimately, Meyer does serve up a plausible accounting of the Queen's descent into madness, but like I said, during the entire journey to that conclusion:

I. WAS. FRIGGING. BORED. OUT. OF. MY. FRIGGING. MIND.

C.G. Drews says

I'm so disappointed I'm actually MAD. argh. Especially when it *started* off so so well with immense amounts of baking and the promise of the bizarre and creative nonsense that every Wonderland retelling should hold. BUT THEN IT WENT AND DISAPPOINTED ME SO BAD.

So again: argh.

But hush hush, don't fret, I'm going to do *lists* of good vs bad because that's how we roll in the Shire Wonderland.

And also, just to be clear: IT WASN'T ALL BAD. I had high expectations due to my love of the Cinder & Co and also because I'm a *rabid* lover of Lewis Carroll's Wonderland. Sadly, the only Wonderland story that's impressed me so far is Splintered (IT IS MY ACTUAL FAVOURITE THING). Everything else...meh. And Heartless falls into the puddle of squash too.

L I K E S:

- There is literally so much CAKE AND DESSERT.** Hi, hello, my name is Cait and I LOVE FOOD. Specifically cake, but ya know, I love dessert in general. And book where the protagonist's #1 goal in life is

to BAKE DELICIOUS THINGS makes me very very very very very *very* happy. (I'M HAPPY OKAY?!?) This book is literally the foodie bookworm's dream come true. There's so many descriptions!! Food plays a big part of the plot!! It makes you so hungry!! I think I ate a few pages!!! I love this!!

• **There IS quite a bit of the goodness of Wonderland's nonsense.** Not enough though, which is annoying to me because hello??? WONDERLAND???? There were talking animals and rhymes and a king with the brain capacity of a peanut, and of course the famed croquet with flamingos and mad hatter's tea party (!!!) so YAS for mad books.

• **I REALLY LIKE NONSENSE THAT IS BIZARRE AS LEWIS CARROLL'S ORIGINALS!!**

• **Did I mention food?** Because omg so much.

• **Jest was actually a gift to this universe.** He's the love interest, in a sort of "forbidden" romance as he's the King's jester and the King is courting Cath (our protagonist) so like for "propriety's sake" she could never be with him. BUT THEY'RE SO CUTE. Jest has lemon yellow eyes (shh I don't know either, but it works) and he's a wickedly good magician, but keeps his tricks simple and fun. And he's adorkable and charming and sweet and dude. DUUUUDE. I love Jest.

• **Cheshire was also awesome!** I wasn't a fan of Hatta (the Mad Hatter) because I couldn't really tell what he was on about. But Cheshire was a delightful jerk and SO much like a normal cat + magical abilities.

• **There's actually a really good female friendship!** Cath is BFFs with her maid, Mary Ann, and they make these dreams of starting a bakery together and they're really close and it's awesome.

• **I love how it included some other fairy tale elements!** It relied heavily on the Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater rhyme and also the raven from Poe's poem!

DISLIKES:

• **Okay silly things first: the paperback font is insufferably tiny.** Like please pass me a magnifying glass, two microscopes and the hubble telescope SO I CAN SEE THE DARK TINY FONT.

• **It wasn't nearly mad enough.** I was here for people to be screeching with madness but they bordered more on just the "insufferably stupid" lines instead of "intriguingly mad" which I was hoping for.

• **THE PLOT WAS SO DUMB IT MAKES ME ANGRY.** Remember the Lunar Chronicles with kickass women fighting oppression and punching things and making clever plans and sacrificing things for people they loved??? HAHAHAH FORGET ABOUT THAT. The *entire plot* of Heartless is: **a spineless whiney girl tries to avoid marrying the king but not by doing anything active, just by whining about it in her room a lot.** Dude. Duuuuude. DUDE. WHAT IS THIS. It started off so well and interestingly with Cath being all "I WANNA BE A BAKER!" But it quickly dissolved into 400+ pages of her being a *wimp* who NEVER DID ANYTHING FOR HERSELF or stood up for herself or thought for herself. She was as interesting as a vanilla cupcake. With no frosting. Like seriously.

• **Why did the king even want to marry her???** Surely there were other girls in Heart who could bake?? Because that seemed to be the only interest he had in her: "ooh she makes cupcakes I shall marry her". WTF DUDE.

• **Following that, why did Jest care about her??** And yes he did sprout the "You're different, Cath!" line which made me want to throw a lemon at his head. Can we let that line die? Please? Thank you? But he keeps saying how she's brave and strong and clever and literally she just makes macaroons and goes along with her bossy/awful parents' idea that she should marry this king she doesn't want to marry. **I still think she and Jest were CUTE together.** But I honestly don't get whyyyyy he liked her.

• **I mean, this'll come as a shock but: I didn't like Cath.** She felt so pathetic. Plus she could NOT do a thing for herself, like make a decision or a stand, until *she had a boy supporting her*.

• **Where is feminism??** Did it take a nap whilst this book were written?

• **Speaking of which: it's got a Victorian England setting so hELLO SEXISM AT EVERY TURN.** Look I avoid Historical Fiction because I can't stand how sexist it is. I get that it's historically accurate. But we

have a fantasy worlds with magical pumpkins and a Jabberwock eating people and we can't have equality???????? The whole thing was 100% sexist the whole way through and I just got so frustrated. Especially when Cath never fought it.

- **This is also silly but...I didn't like the names!?** I mean, *Cath Pinkerton*...does not strike me as a name for the Queen of Hearts. And like Mary Ann and Margaret and Jack and Peter and Abigail....I'm sorry. Did we FALL OUT OF WONDERLAND AND INTO NORMAL TOWN???
- **It was terribly slow.** See aforementioned point of the only plot is "avoid avoid avoid marriage".
- **It was literally 300 pages before anything REMOTELY stabby happened.** So yeah it's a prequel and Cath isn't lopping off heads yet, but I mean the most exciting action scene was a cake getting cut basically.
- **The Jabberwock could've eaten more people???** Like. Maybe Cath.
- **I'm hungry.** And I have no cake. #sadface
- **The ending SHOULD'VE punched my feels but it didn't because I was so annoyed.** I just had a bit of a "oh well that was obviously going to happen" moment instead of "OMG I'VE BEEN DESTROYED!!" Because Cath is an idiot and doesn't listen to obvious things. (view spoiler)

- **I'm disgruntled.** In case you couldn't tell.
- **It needed more OFFING WITH HEADS.** Let's be real.

ALL IN ALL: It was wildly slow, disappointing, and plot-lacking and not NEARLY enough things got beheaded. Although the cake makes up for it a lot. I tell you: go into this book with snacks handy. And it was clever and creative and I loved that about it! I always love Marissa Meyer's writing style/voice and it was easy to get through despite HAVING NO INTERESTING PLOT and I loved the touches of magic and ~~I can't wait for the sequel. Because hopefully it'll be a lot more bloody. hahahaha....what is wrong with me omg.~~ **EDIT: APPARENTLY THERE IS NO SEQUEL AND I'M CRYING.**

(But seriously I like dark bloody retellings.)

(Not fluffy popsicles like the first 80% of this was.)

Alienor ✕ French Frowner ✕ says

With all due respect to the hatter, I am so mad, that's not even funny. That's what being trolled by a novel feels like, I guess. Above that, I am so, *so* disappointed. Indeed, it's no secret that my reading time has been seriously reduced over the previous months, making me wonder if I should stay on GR, because what's the point?! Heartless, though? It sounded so amazing that I made room for it, school and politics be damned. I wish I would have loved it, but apparently it wasn't meant to be. Sigh.

Me : You don't get to be so addictive for 40% and crumble into nothing, you fucking book!

Book : WATCH ME

Me : Or I guess you do, but then I'll go all "*Off with its head!*" and we wouldn't want that.

Book : i don't give a daaaaaamn *OFF WITH ITS HEAD! OFF WITH ITS HEAD! OFF WITH ITS HEAD!*

shatters to pieces

Me : *watching the confetti, stunned into silence*

HA. This is incredibly hard for me to explain because I was very, very, VERY lenient during the first 40%. (What? It happens!)

It went like this :

? **I already knew how it would end?** No problem, sometimes it's the journey that counts, right?

? **Both Jest and Cath suffered from a serious case of instalove?** Oh well, I like them enough. Let's forget that.

? **The writing was decent at best?** What, at least it's addictive. The stories and characters are what matter to me anyway, okay?

...

And unfortunately, I genuinely believe that **the lack of depth of both the writing and the plot doomed the novel** in the end. Even with a fantastic premise, Heartless couldn't hold my interest after the first half, mostly because its characters started to ... *fade away*.

Where was the unapologetic and sarcastic Joker I enjoyed so much in the beginning? Where did the funny and interesting Cath hide when I had to suffer from countless descriptions of how dumb that fucking King is (but with whom she's gonna stay anyway - because of REASONS)? **The character's growth was all over the place** and if I completely understand that we humans do go round and round in circles sometimes, it didn't feel genuine here and the ropes were so thick I could touch them.

Also, WHERE WAS CHESHIRE? Damn, I missed that cat in the second half.

The fact is, we already knew the end, so it was not a matter of WHAT but a matter of HOW. **Too bad the HOW consisted in throwing some unnecessary and predictable drama in the pumpkin cake.** (See? I don't even make sense anymore).

Where was the thrill, the tension, when the characters' decisions started to stop making sense to go through the predictable road? For me, Heartless ended restrained because of Alice in Wonderland, and that made for the most illogical and sudden events. It's like the author suddenly remembered that she couldn't do what she wanted, and needed to get her characters where they ought to be ASAP.

What about my emotions?? No, really? Given what happens, I should have cared. Key word being should, because I sure didn't. I kinda laughed, because I'm a psycho??!

Where was the world-building, when everything seemed stolen and rearranged to suit the forbidden love arc? We get tons of Wonderland - and I mean TONS, so much that we guess many plot points because of it - but also a little Regency thrown in the mix, because ARRANGED MARRIAGE! WE NEED IT! **Bleh.** Of course I understand that a retelling borrows stuff to the original, I mean, that's the whole point. Yet when it only makes me want to reread the original *instead*, it's not a good thing in my opinion. Especially when I don't even like the original that much (too weird, even for me *hides*).

? Truth is, in the end, **Heartless isn't a bad book, but lacks subtlety and layers, like a pretty, nice, empty shell.**

For more of my reviews, please visit:

Mikee Andrea (ReadWithMikee) says

“Now mine eyes see the heart that once we did search for, and I fear this heart shall be mended, nevermore.”

A big thanks to Macmillan and Fierce Reads for giving me the opportunity to snag a beautiful box and ARC of Heartless at YallWest!

(Review will be posted once we are closer to release day)

Heartless was beautifully tragic. I have no words to describe just how broken this book has left my heart.

That ending... Ugh. HEARTBREAKING.

FANS OF THE LUNAR CHRONICLES:

Beware. You might have a new favorite coming soon. ;)

Cait • A Page with a View says

I was really looking forward to this one but feel very... underwhelmed right now. I didn't necessarily dislike anything about this book, but I didn't particularly connect with very much either.

The story follows Alice in Wonderland really well (like with the difference between the Red Queen and Queen of Hearts) and includes familiar figures like the Cheshire cat, the Jabberwock, and the mad Hatta and his tea party crew.

The basic plot is that Catherine is the eventual Queen of Hearts and is passionate about opening a bakery at the beginning of the story. Her controlling mother wants her to marry the King, but Cath is interested in Jest, the mysterious joker with his own motives.

It WAS a pretty clever storyline that took Cath from a kind girl to a heartless queen screaming "off with his head." I liked the fun twists, especially with Peter Peter and his wife. But the pacing was a bit slow for me and I thought the story as a whole was just rather... dull? The one part I did love was how Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" was worked into the story with the Raven saying lines like "nevermore" and other quotes!

I think the story just adhered a little *too* closely to the original material for me and I wanted to see something a bit more creative, like with Queen of Hearts by Colleen Oakes or The Lunar Chronicles.

I was trying to keep this story separate from Marissa Meyer's previous series and not put any unfair expectations on Heartless, so I hope my love for TLC didn't raise my rating of this book or made me disappointed by comparison. They're very different stories and I still think Marissa Meyer is queen of retellings even if this particular book wasn't totally my cup of tea!

Emily May says

"These things do not happen in dreams, dear girl," he said, vanishing up to his neck. "They happen only in nightmares."

His head spiralled and he was gone.

This was so good. Meyer's writing and stories just seem to keep improving, and her latest foray into the world of Alice in Wonderland was exactly the right combination of prophecy, romance, Victorian-style female repression, and weirdness. It was unputdownable.

Also: I really really want macarons right now.

I mentioned this before, but I'm starting to understand why I enjoy Meyer's retellings so much. **She gets the balance just right.** Her fairy tales contain characters and references that make them instantly recognizable (the phrase "fairy tale retelling" isn't just thrown around as a marketing tool). Without having to be told, anyone could read this book and understand where it gets its inspiration. However, that's also just what it is - more *inspiration* than *retelling*.

This book can be enjoyed **whether you like the original or not.** It stands on its own with a full cast of strong characters, and its own unique plot that doesn't just feel like the same old story told with some modern slang thrown in. It's perfectly weird without being too weird (to be honest, the original gives me a fond nostalgic feeling, but it's a bit too nonsensical for me).

Heartless is about Catherine - daughter of a Marquess, talented baker, and likely future bride to the King of Hearts.

"You're the daughter of a marquess. Look around. Look at the things you have, the life you're accustomed to. You don't know what it's like to work every day so you can feed yourself and

keep a roof over your head. You don't know what it's like to be poor. To be a servant."

The story propels itself forward on feelings of anger and frustration. All Cath wants is to open a bakery and unleash her goodies on the world (just a warning - this is not a good book for dieters!), but the expectations placed upon her as a woman won't allow it. The stifling nature of this world is palpable and infuriating, making you turn the pages in angry desperation.

Not only does Cath not want to be a court lady, but her heart most definitely does not belong to the insipid King of Hearts. With a **sexist society to raise your blood pressure** and a **forbidden love story to make your heart beat faster**, just throw a murderous Jabberwock in and it's easy to see how the pages start to fly by. But if this seems a little tame to you after all the craziness of *The Lunar Chronicles* - have no fear! Madness and nastiness are just around the corner.

Meyer knows just how to tick all our boxes. *Heartless* is a nasty, evil book, but we also have the hilarious Cheshire, the sexy Joker, the yummy food, controlling parents, and strange riddles. The ending is perfect, but it makes me sad that this is just a standalone. Not that it feels unfinished... just that **all great books leave us wanting more, you know?**

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Virginia Ronan ♥ Herondale ♥ says

"It had been a hazy, beautiful dream, and in it there had been a hazy, beautiful boy. He was dressed all in black and standing in an orchard of lemon trees, and she had the distinct sensation that he had something that belonged to her. She didn't know what it was, only that she wanted it back, but every time she took a step towards him he receded further and further away."

And so it begins! The transformation of Lady Catherine Pinkerton of Turtle Rock Cove into the Queen of Hearts! When I started to read the book I was really surprised how nice and relatable she was and even halfway through "**Heartless**" I still kept wondering how she'd ever be able to turn into the Queen of Hearts.

Well, she obviously was able to, but I wasn't really happy with the transformation. Which is the reason I'm very conflicted about this book. *lol* On the one hand it had two of the best character introduction scenes I've ever read and I'm still in awe of the atmosphere Marissa Meyer created, (view spoiler) but on the other hand the ending and everything that happened over those last 50 pages felt more than just a little rushed.

"But the rose felt like a whispered message, a hushed glance across a crowded room. Something precious and not to be shared."

I mean the love story is building up and even though it's still kinda insta-lovey I decided that this time around it's okay for me. After all, the entire book is a standalone and there's only so much you can pack into a single book. And seriously if you ever meet **Jest**, you'll fall head over heels for him too. ;-P I mean how could you not? He's cute and charming, intriguing and bold, but also shy and very handsome. I swear his golden eyes and black curls immediately caused me to think of another awesome character I hold close to my heart and yes I was a goner the instant he entered the scene!

"A laugh like that is richer than gold to a man in my position. I'll make it my life's work to hear the sound

again. Every day, if it pleases you. No – twice a day, and at least once before breakfast. A royal joker must set the highest of expectations.”

As for the other characters: I really liked **Raven** (Haha no surprise there!!!) and I thought **Catherine** and **Mary Ann** were really sweet! Their wish to open a bakery resonated with me (Yes, I love to bake too. Especially cupcakes and huge cakes) and I swear I got hungry whenever I picked up the book. Their thoughts about the perfect macarons and pies and whatever else they wanted to bake had me drooling all over the place and if you’ve a sweet tooth like me you can actually consider this to be a trigger warning. *LOL* I bet I gained a few pounds just reading this book. XD

Anyway, enough of sweets or I’ll have to pillage my “chocolate drawer” again! ;-P Let’s continue to talk about the other characters of this book. Like for instance the **King of Hearts**! Boy was he a little, giggly and incompetent man! I mean nothing wrong with being funny, but the way he acted he seemed to be the only true Fool in the game. >_<

“I can’t compete with a king, and I won’t compete with the man who’s given me employment, who’s offered me a place in his court when he had no need to. I don’t mean to make your choice more difficult than it already is. He’s a good man. I believe he would do his best to be a good husband.”

I understand why Jest didn’t want to go behind his back but I’m also convinced that Cath should have been honest with the King. If she would have been honest and forthright right from the beginning, nothing bad would have happened. Yes, it’s hard to refuse a king but it’s even harder to live with a lie. I know her parents made it exceptionally difficult to stay true to herself and I felt this on a spiritual level, but when it comes to matters of the heart there always comes a moment when you have to draw the line. If you ask me, Cath missed that point and that’s why things had to end the way they did. *sighs*

“I have a personal rule about not entering into business with spineless creatures. No snakes. No slippery eels. And worst of all, no fickle women. Play coy all you like, Lady Pinkerton. Cling to your belief in your own innocence. You know as well as I that you’re going to break at least one heart before this is over, and I want nothing more to do with you.”

Those were harsh words, but I think Lady Catherine had to hear them. Oh **Hatta**! I loved him so much! I know some of you will say: **”WHAT?!”** now and I don’t blame you for it. He was more than just unfriendly to Cath throughout the entire book and there were moments even I wondered why he was so mean, but then at the end it all made sense.

All this hostility towards Lady Pinkerton, the loyalty he felt for Jest! It was so sad to watch the story unfold and to know that Hatta eventually would become mad. The way it finally happened broke my heart though. I definitely didn’t expect it to work out like that!! >_<

“She is a rose, Jest. Lovely on the eyes, yes, but such thorns are not to be ignored. She belongs in a King’s garden, not yours.”

(view spoiler)

And if we’re already talking about weird and crazy things: Those **three sisters of the well** were so damn creepy! *lol* Am I the only one that instantly thought of Samara from “The Ring”?! Haha!

I swear Lacie, Tillie and Elsie were so damn scary!!! (Despite their rather harmless sounding names. XD)

So yeah, all told I really enjoyed the book, but the ending... Well, let's just say I'm not happy with it. All this build up and then things were resolved so fast and I was blinking at the page thinking: **WTH?! Are you kidding me? This is how it all goes down?! This is it!?**

I really wish I could give "**Heartless**" four stars. Jest and Hatta would deserve it, but those last 50 pages ruined it so much that I can't give it more than 3 stars. It just wouldn't feel right to give it four. *sighs* Still, I enjoyed the book and I can recommend it, just don't expect all too much when it comes to the final reason and revelation! I guess then you should be safe! ;-)

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

Kindle US \$2.99 today 11-27-17

OMG! I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FIND THE WHITE EDITION OF THIS BOOK TO GO WITH MY BLACK ONE AND WHAT A WONDERFUL SURPRISE TO FIND THAT IT CAME IN MY NOVEMBER OWL CRATE BOX! IN THE PICTURES I PLACED THE BLACK ONE NEXT TO THE WHITE ONE THAT WAS AN OWL CRATE EXCLUSIVE, JUST SO YOU COULD SEE WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE TOGETHER! I LOVE THEM BOTH. ALSO GOT OTHER GOODIES IN THE BOX AS USUAL! YAY! OWL CRATE FOR GETTING THE SECOND COVER (white) AND ME GETTING IT TOO. LOL

Lets freaking do this party people!!! Yasssss!!! Woot!!!

This made it to my favorites lists! And just look at the gorgeous cover!

I was lucky enough to get a magnetic bookmark and a recipe! ♥

This is one of the best, if not the best, retelling of Wonderland I have ever read! Although, I don't think I have ever read a prequel to the Alice story but Marissa Meyer pulled this one off brilliantly. In my opinion anyway.

I am in love with Jest!

I love all of the characters, even the evil characters are written beautifully! I am just in love with this book and oh the name "Heartless" had meaning on so many levels. You will find out when you read it.

All Cath wants in life is to have her own bakery with her best friend. But that is not to be, she can't do something as lowly as that, her parents want her to marry the King of Hearts. Sigh, Cath doesn't want to marry him, he's just, no . . . no . . . no . . . if she were to ever get married it would be someone she chose and fell in love with and she could bake and make the most wonderful tarts and pies in the world. She already does in their part of the world anyway.

Then Cath meets the wonderful Jest and has to figure out how she can love him and do what her parents and the King want at the same time. <--- Not a spoiler, it's pretty much in the blurb.

There are wonderful creatures in the book as there always is in Wonderland. Rocking-horse flies, with are really little rocking horse flies that are really horses and they fly (lol). Talking candles, animals, and everything else in between. We have Hatta who makes the brilliant hats of course, we have rabbit and the jabberwock and things and stuff and what not. It is just filled with great things.

But not all things in fairy tales have a happily ever after. It's very sad and I hated it but it put a new insight on things to come. Even so, I still loved the book so much! ♥

and thus it begins . . .

I hope a lot of people will love this book as much as I did ♥

MY BLOG: [Melissa Martin's Reading List](#)

Gillian Berry says

I REQUIRE THIS BOOK IN MY LIFE IMMEDIATELY.

Marissa's announcement
