



My Imaginary Ex

Mina V. Esguerra

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Here's what happens when you play pretend.

When Zack asks Jasmine to pretend to be his ex-girlfriend, she gamely agrees, thinking it would be fun. A few years later, she still has to keep convincing people that they were never together! Then one day, she finds out he's getting married—to someone she'd just met once! All of a sudden, things aren't so clear-cut anymore. Can Jasmine sort out her feelings (sometimes, she can't even tell real from pretend when it comes to her and Zack) before it's too late?

My Imaginary Ex Details

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From Reader Review My Imaginary Ex for online ebook

Maria says

I recommend My Imaginary Ex.

Here's what happened when you play pretend. Love sneaks up on you.

What's the English word for *torpe*? You know, that guy you're friends with who doesn't make a move on you because he's afraid to lose your friendship? Yeah, that's **Zack** personified. I'm not a fan of *torpe* guys, but I can make an exception with him. Besides, I always liked love stories between two people who started out as friends first. I should know. That's my love story right *there*.

And I agree that **Jasmine** is dense. But that doesn't mean I tolerate Zack's hot and cold treatment of her. Their story was sweet and cute, though.

The clincher for me here is that Zack was Kimmie's *Zack* from Love Your Frenemies. I was like, *Oh. So this is the jerk fiancé who left her for good after his Bachelor party*. I was so psyched! I got to know the story before Kimmie's "supposed" humiliation.

Anyway, I also like Zack's philosophy in life. See, he have different set of friends that he spends time with on separate occasions. When Jasmine asked her why he's like that, I remembered he looked at her like *she* was crazy. Then he said, "So that there's not one person who knows everything about me." Interesting, isn't it? ;)

Based on the book blurb alone, I thought i will like My Imaginary Ex (same thing that I didn't think much of Fairy Tale Fail, and I didn't like it), and I was right.

UPDATE:

While I patiently wait for a new copy, I borrowed Janus'. And yes, it was worth the trip to Ayala! LOL

A happy ending to an unrequited love? Count me in!

well, i was duped. i bought a copy for half the price and two chapters are missing! chapters 11 & 12 are doubly printed!!! oh, i hate you, bargain books. could've finish this tonight!!!

K.D. Absolutely says

Thank you to Mina, the author of this chicklit, for giving three copies of this book to me as a birthday gift!

This is my first time to receive books from an author. I liked this - 3 stars!

To be fair to the likes of *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf and *Under The Net* by Dame Iris Murdoch, two novels that I rated low, please understand that I am rating *My Imaginary Ex* based on the fact that this is a chicklit (Mina, no offense) so I am rating this based on chicklit standard.

All the books that I read for leisure since I was a small boy are now accounted in my READ folder here in Goodreads. Out of those close to 300 books, in my mind, I have only read 2 honest-to-goodness chicklits. This and the other one was the book selected as February 2010 Book-of-the-Month by The Filipino Group: *Bridget Jones Diary*. Mina V. Esguerra's *My Imaginary Ex* is by far better than that Helen Fielding's novel.

The story-telling is sweet, short and direct. For guys like me, reading a chicklit packed with emotions (which is a standard mostly in the works of female authors) is like being shot by a thousand bullets coming from different directions. Ms. Esguerra, not sure whether consciously or not, spares us with the usual irritating sweet nothings or tearjerker dialogues in her novel. The only emotion this novel was able to squeezed out from me was the finally-at-last feeling when I was in that part where the two main protagonists **Jasmine** and **Zachary** are having sex. They are the two lovers who started as friends and because of a lie told for fun at the start of their college years, their life and love had all these confusions and heartaches that were of their own doing. It is something that I cannot relate with but hey we don't always need to see ourselves in the story to like it, right? For one, this feels a lot like the movie *My Bestfriend's Wedding* but a good story can be retold several times and appear new depending on how the author's style. Mina gave it a good shot by localizing the setting and using the term "barkada" a couple of times. I am just proud that there is an English book like this that can compete with foreign chicklit. I thought all romance novels are in Tagalog that my mother even asks my lawyer-brother and me to buy and send her to the US. Maybe I should give one of my copies to my mother. I will surely make her proud as well.

Kudos, Mina! Well done!

BTW, how does a wild Keri Russell hair look like?

Nenia ? Queen of Literary Trash, Protector of Out-of-Print Gems, Khaleesi of Bodice Rippers, Mother of Smut, the Unrepentant, Breaker of Convention ? Campbell says

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This book is the cutest thing ever. I just want to cuddle it like a puppy and never let it go. Normally, I like darker romances, but I've been getting really into #romanceclass lately (#OwnVoices Filipino chick-lit), and when MY IMAGINARY EX showed up for *free* in the Kindle store, I knew I had to download. It's the OG of these contemporary Filipino romances and so many of my friends had nothing but good things to say about both the author and her work.

Jasmine is a shy, introverted girl who works in HR. One day, she gets an invitation in the mail to her childhood friend, Zack's, wedding. His two ex-girlfriends, Lena and Marjorie, immediately stage a girls'

night/female coup at a coffee shop to drop one heck of a bombshell: his wife-to-be, Kimmy, is cheating on him, and they want Jasmine, his oldest and dearest friend, to break up the wedding.

There's another reason behind their motives, too. They all believe that Jasmine was his first girlfriend, and therefore his first love, due to a lie Zack and Jasmine spread around when they were young students in college. When Zack wanted to date Lena, he found out that she didn't want to date anyone who didn't have a relationship history, and asked Jasmine to lie to her for him. Jasmine created a relationship "canon," held as fact by their friends for so many years that sometimes even she has to remind herself that they never dated.

As the clock to the wedding date counts down, we learn about the history of Zack and Jasmine in past POVs, as well as their current status now in the current POVs. And what we, the readers, find out is that buried underneath all of these harmless but mounting lies is a potentially heartbreaking truth.

I loved this book. Loved, loved, loved it. It shouldn't have worked, but Esguerra carried it off like a pro, and it ended up feeling like one of those breezy summer movies that has everyone walking out of the theater feeling really good (think *The Proposal*, but set in the Philippines). Jasmine and her friends were so adorable together and their relationships were so strong. The evil girl, Kimmy, was handled respectfully (and the author even added in an author's note in the back that in this 2017 revised edition, she removed some of the girl-on-girl hate because she doesn't want to be an author who hates on women - which made me want to hug everyone). And Zack. Oh my God, Zack. He is not perfect and can be so frustrating, but I can totally see why Jasmine ended up falling for him.

Also, there's a pretty hot sex scene in here that results from a *very* comedic misunderstanding.

MY IMAGINARY EX softened my heart made me want to go frolicking through fields of clover. It was so cute, and *so* well done, and I desperately need more of this *Chic Manila* series in my hands, asap.

4.5 to 5 stars

K.J. Charles says

The first Chic Manila book is as enjoyable as the rest, and yes I am reading in totally random order. This is the one that features Kimmy from Love Your Frenemies as villain, so it was fun to see things from the other side. It's a very charming friends-become-lovers romance, given a twist because they pretended to have dated in high school, since when all of their partners have believed them to be still hung up on their respective first

loves. The growing confusion in the heroine's mind as to which memories are real and which are a decade-long elaborate lie is hilarious.

Emily Crow says

Actual rating: 2.5 stars

Jasmine and Zack have been friends since college, when he persuaded her to tell people they used to date in high school because he wanted to impress a girl. Nearly a decade later, everyone still believes their lie, but it's not until Zack becomes engaged to another woman that Jasmine realizes she's in love with him. It's a cute premise, but there was not enough character development to make it work for me.

Read for Unapologetic Romance Readers 2018 challenge: #OwnVoices category

Cienne Olaes says

I usually just get tears from reading when the storyline is a bit boring and I am just simply forcing myself at least for the sake of getting to the end of it. The tears were of course induced by drowsiness. A professor once told me that there is a connection between feeling sleepy and lacking capacity to understand during class. I have to do the long introduction because the first thing that I love about "my imaginary ex" is the fact that characters are gradually introduced, it lets the audience get the feel of each individual personalities, for a moment get creative and imagine it as if it's a scene from a movie, or at least a time spared to feel as if you knew the characters personally. I can only handle 3 to 4 characters introduced first time in a chapter, if it exceeds the number there will definitely be confusion in my head. The attachment was perfectly built as the story progresses, in short, I never lost focus on the lead characters, that by the time I hit this particular line: "Because it looked like everyone knew it but us, and that made me want to cry", a tear fell from my eye, as if I was Jasmine.

I guess I will never get over Chapter 11, I was so moved by Zack's sweetness as Jasmine reminisces. I felt like for a moment I stole the Jasmine part and played it myself in the movie, like I was the one experiencing everything.

And then it's past midnight, way past bedtime but I kept turning one more page, too eager to know what happened next. I struggled to keep my strong personality intact but when time brought me to this line, "Can we talk now?" I finally became aware of the big lump in my throat. It stayed there as I quickly read through and until there were real tears, overflowing this time.

I think this isn't just about finding love, to me the impact of it is inspiring, from having been beautifully and creatively written, to hoping and never losing the grip no matter what, to having the courage and no longer staying stuck waiting.

Favorite line from Zack: "I hated that guy from the start and I never lied to you about it. I let you stay with him because you kept choosing to go back. Even when I was just there the whole time."

Joselito Honestly and Brilliantly says

The sex scene here goes like this:

"His mouth captured mine in a kiss. It was not at all gentle--it was forceful, hungry, the kind of kiss that had been waiting nine years to happen.

"How we ended up on the bed is a matter of debate. I remember grabbing handfuls of his shirt and pulling him down, falling back on the bed. He remembers lunging at me, and that he had gotten the white tee over my head even as we landed on the center of the mattress. He claims that I should have been kinder to his shirt instead of ripping it off. I maintain that if I could have been kinder that night it would have been to his upper back, which I may have dug my fingers into a little too deeply.

"His tongue and hands had their own agenda, exploring my collarbone, the hollow of my neck, my breasts, the curve of my waist. His breath on my skin alone trumped anything we had made up in our canon--this was real, and I felt stupid for having relied on a made-up version for so long.

"His scent was embarrassingly familiar--I remembered all the times I met him fresh from a shower, every time I sat next to him in the car, every platonic embrace we shared. How could I have ignored it then, and yet couldn't seem to get enough of now? I hungrily pressed my lips to the skin on his shoulders. His hands gently caressed my face, then I started to float back to reality when I realized that he was talking to me.

"...sex with Tim?' he was saying.

"Don't stop,' I managed to stammer.

"I said did you ever have sex with him?"

"I don't think that we should be talking about--"

"I just need to know if you've done this before."

"Shit, you should have just asked. Yes. Does it matter?"

"I need to know how gentle I should be."

"I snapped out of my stupor and rolled my eyes. "We've been waiting for this for nine years, Zachary. How gentle do you think you should be?"

"He laugh. 'Finally, we're on the same page about something."

First of all, men don't laugh when they have an erection. Especially when it's already inside ("don't stop..." Jasmine supposedly said). They can't even think of joking during that moment. The scene is supposed to be intense, the first time Zack and Jasmine were doing it. The initial kiss, in fact, was "forceful (and) hungry" and there was a ripping of his shirt.

Secondly, when a guy is about to devour, or is already devouring, a delectable joy quivering naked before him, he does not commit the mistake of interrogating her about her past sexual experiences or her former lovers. That would surely be like water dousing a raging fire. Maybe an inexperienced, insecure one would, but not Zack here who has had several girlfriends before already, the last of which was a certified sex fiend.

Thirdly, the reason why Zack asked Jasmine about her former boyfriend Tim in the middle of their lovemaking was supposedly for Zack to know whether he should go gentle with Jasmine (virgin) or not (not anymore). This is hogwash. An experienced guy like him would know, even before entering the portals of heaven. In any case, he can always go gentle at first and then proceed at the desired pace depending on what he'll be able to confirm.

Lastly, the sequence is topsy-turvy. A guy wouldn't go from the collarbone, neck, breasts and waist to his hands "gently caress(ing) (her) face." If ever a guy would gently caress a girl's face, it would either be at the start of the foreplay, before or in-between kisses, or after the lovemaking, during the cuddling (which girls like). When he had gone from the neck, breasts and waist downwards, the last thing he'll think of next is to "gently caress" her face.

The verdict, therefore, is this: the author hasn't done it before, at least not when she had written this novel. Maybe she's even still a virgin up to now and if any of you guys, my loyal goodreads fans, is entertaining any romantic thoughts about the author, here are what the novel reveals more about her, which can be of use during your courtship:

1. she has a hair fetish. She notices everybody's hair;
2. a car is a must. Tim and Zack both have cars. She likes to be driven around;
3. you must be athletic. She won't go for chubby guys;
4. she has an extra sharp sense of smell so you better smell good always;
5. she has a crush on Zac Ephron. Her character Zack has the same hair style (although not blond) as Zac Ephron; and
6. she's intelligent but although she may pretend to like intelligent guys also, Zack is actually the dumbest male character I've seen in modern literature. Read the novel and you'll agree with me.

This book is worth buying (Php150.00 only), reading and mulling over. It is practically everything: romance, suspense, intrigue and a chic lit (chicanery literature) to boot. Mina V. Esguerra has all the necessary tools to become a great writer only that she's still young and needs more experience.

Lottie Eve says

I am a very girly person and I love fun, cute love stories. Love stories that are written well never fail to make me absolutely giddy. I am not afraid to admit the my girly self squees a lot when I encounter a cute story. One day I was struck with the want of a cute love story and so I picked up My Imaginary Ex. Do you know what happened when I read it? I squeed. (Is squeed even a word?)

My Imaginary Ex is a fun, amusing friend-to-couple tale that is very different from the norm. When Jasmine was in college a boy named Zack asked her to pretend to be his ex-girlfriend because the girl he liked only dated boys who had dated before. After the lie was created it just kept growing and growing. Years later, people still think that Jasmine and Zack used to date each other!

One day Jasmine finds out that Zack is getting married to a Kimmy, a woman she has never met. After this happens things quickly turn complicated when two of Zack's past ex-girlfriends* meet up with Jasmine and tell her that she must stop the marriage! Jasmine must figure out how she feels about Zack before time runs out.

I admit that My Imaginary Ex had a story structure that took some time to get used to for me. The story has many flashbacks that show how Jasmine and Zack's relationship was in the past and how it got to it is in present time. When I did get used to it I found that it worked really well. I was able to find more about Jasmine and Zack which would only make me root for them as a couple even more.

The characters in My Imaginary Ex were fun to read about. Jasmine is a bit dense but she is a nice character to read about overall. I could tell that Lena and Marjorie really cared about Zack even though they were driven to break up with him in the past. It is not everyday one gets to read a love story where the ex-girlfriends do the matchmaking! Zack is the kind of a guy who is afraid to confess to the one he loves in fear of ruining the friendship between them. He doesn't let people know much about himself but he is still sweet. He did have a interesting way of getting his crush Lena to date him in college :P

I love stories where friends turn into a couple so Jasmine and Zack's relationship worked well for me. I know this sounds really cheesy but I do want the love of my life to be friends with me first before we start dating so I guess that was probably why I liked this story so much.

My Imaginary Ex was a fun, short book to romp through and I would definitely recommend it for someone who is in search for a cute story. This book fulfilled my girly want for a love story. At first, I was afraid to read this book because I knew that I would compare it to Fairy Tale Fail which was by the same author. Thankfully, this book was still good. (Fairy Tale Fail is still better, though!)

Now if you need me I will be browsing through the store in search of Love Your Frenemies which tells Kimmy's side of the story!

Ranee says

Welcome to the Friend Zone!

Zack and Jas had a nine year stay in the friend zone until they finally succumbed to love without the "platonic" beside it. Well, okay, it was not really a real friend zone per se, they were a couple in denial. And as the saying goes, sa hinaba-haba ng prusisyon, sa (Anito)simbahan din ang tuloy.

I enjoyed reading this book not because I liked Zach nor related with Jas. Actually, I related more with Zach (but not pertaining by his being torpe) and not quite sure if I have a bit of Jas in me. I have so many guy friends from high school, college, med school and even now in my training hospital. I am surrounded with men, literally. I experienced being a third wheel in a date, bridge to someone else's relationship, sober friend after a break-up drinking spree, pro bono therapist and etc. I was the "go to" gal. But I also have many amigas, and many mare. I have a couple set of barkadas, from each crossroad of my life and all I cherish. Point is, no one knew Zach completely, like me. If one is tasked to do a biography of me, none could finish it without passing the pen to a different friend. If all my friends gathered in my funeral, and each tasked to give a eulogy, there'd be always something new to share (I could hear it now, the many "really, I never knew that" or "No, that can't be the same person"). But one thing's for sure, that if someone stood there and said, Ranee is bouncy, all would certainly agree.

Alona says

Friends turned lovers is one of the most used and abused plots of all time. I know you've read it in one or two

romance novels you have. You've seen it in most Romantic-Comedy movies and drama series you watched. You've probably heard it in one of your *chismisan* moments with your friends. It happened to someone you know or it happened with you. Hey, it happened to me. So what sets *My Imaginary Ex* from the rest? Simple—It's how Mina V. Esguerra tells the story.

In a Romance Novel Workshop I attended last year, the speaker said that all possible romance plot was or had already been written. The only difference is with how the author weaved the story and made the readers believe that it can happen. Mina V. Esguerra delivered a realistic story and she did a good job in making her readers easily relate with her characters.

Reading *My Imaginary Ex* for me is like riding a train back to memory lane. It reminded me of how my boyfriend and I started. Jeff and I have known each other since high school but we were not schoolmates. We were both members of our town's church choir and he was my best friend's boyfriend then. We were never friends until college. He was the only person I know from our block so... that's how it began. He became one of my best buddies together with Erwin (the guy I came with during the F2F 2 for Little Prince) in college. We are still together and we just celebrated our 5th year anniversary a couple of months ago. (Enough about me, let's go back to the book. BTW, I added few personal photos in this review on my blog.)

I liked the way Mina jumps back from past to present to show how Jasmine and Zac started their friendship. I'm not fond of reading novels with flashbacks alternating with the present but Mina wrote it in a simple and direct prose which made it easier to understand, plus the scenes from the past are connected with what's happening with Zach and Jasmine in the present.

The only reason I'm giving this **4 Stars** is because I was sooo in love with *Fairy Tale Fail*, I can't help but compare my reading experience with the two. Nonetheless, *My Imaginary Ex* is an enjoyable quick read.

Challenge:

Book # 31 of 2012

Review also posted @ Off the Wall.

Geri Reads says

I have a confession to make: I've been slacking off. I actually finished this book a few hours after I started it and yet it took a while to rate and review it. It was so good!

One of my resolutions this year was to read romance books written by Filipino authors, featuring Filipino characters, and set (more or less) in the Philippines. I've had the pleasure of reading Mina Esguerra's previous books and I've always enjoyed them. *My Imaginary Ex* has all the things I love about a Mina Esguerra and then some.

My Imaginary Ex is a friends-to-lovers story with a bit of a twist. See, it all started with a lie. Zack really wasn't Jasmine's ex but there was that time in college where Zack ask Jasmine to pretend to be his girlfriend. It was just one time but the lie snowballed into something beyond their control. Now Jasmine is the ex that Zack could not get over.

I fell in love with Jasmine and Zack. Their friendship is so weird but so relatable and their road to happily ever after wasn't a smooth one. I read the new updated version and I understand that the author added some scenes for context and lengthen the story a little bit. I haven't read the original version but judging from what I've read, Ms. Esguerra did a great job not just with the story but the characters. Ugh. I love her characters so much. They're so imperfect. They make mistakes and do things that make you shake your head in exasperation but it is what made them interesting to me.

There's one character in this book who is going to have her own story. She's a bit of the antagonist keeping our star-crossed lovers apart but there was definitely more to her than just being the villain. I loved that the author avoided slut-shaming and othering this character just because she's the antagonist. So that's definitely a plus in my book.

My Imaginary Ex definitely checked all the boxes that I want in my romance book. It has a trope that I loved with complex characters that you want to root for in spite of everything.

Kristy Mauna says

This is my third Mina Esguerra book and she is just the absolute BEST!

I can always expect to be swept off my feet by her swoony romance novels. Her characters are always enjoyable and easy to relate to. I just love, love, LOVE every single one of her stories! <3

Nenette says

Thanks to Mina for sending copies of this book to Doni, and thanks to Doni for sharing. I'm giving this 4 stars for four reasons: it's simple, short, sustaining, and complete. Nice one, Mina!

Reev Robledo says

I know I vowed not to read any chick literature in the next decade but I had about two hours to kill on a bus ride so I decided to bring this along. I even covered the cover with a white sheet of paper so people won't see what I'm reading! True story. Haha.

I always try to put myself in the shoes of the author's market especially if the genre is not something I would normally consume. My Imaginary Ex has bestseller (in fact, it already is) written all over it.

The premise:

Two exes caring so much for the guy who broke their hearts that they don't want him to marry the wrong girl and scheme to "re-unite" him with his supposedly high school flame.

My initial thoughts: Yeah, right. Preposterous! Implausible! Now, mind you, this is **exactly** why I enjoyed the book. :)

The interplay of the past and present made it a fun read. Zack and Jasmine's long friendship seemed genuine. I bought it. The story is quirky, light, fun and engaging—a Mina V. Esguerra (bankable) trend. I imagined it

to be a rom-com of sorts. The story would make a great TV short or webisode. I really wish someone would capitalize on Mina's storylines and adapt them for the screen.

Here are some sentences I remembered:

"If Lena's defiance were a balloon, it started to deflate."—I found the metaphor cute.

"Like first girlfriends always get the mistakes. They fix their guys up then the next girlfriend benefits. It's not fair."—True. I hate it. But it's true. :)

After reading *Fairy Tale Fail* (my first Mina V. Esguerra novel and first chick-lit novel since reading my sister's SWH collection eons ago), I'd want to give this one star more—but that's only because I'm comparing.

I'm starting to figure out the Mina V. Esguerra universe where her characters cross each other's paths. Perhaps I will read one or two more of her novels this year. By the way, one thing I noticed about Mina's books is that there is always a portion that describes food—I like it. Haha. Makes me hungry.

Chachic says

Originally posted here.

Zack and Jasmine went to the same high school but they were never that close. They reconnect when they bump into each other in college and they become good friends. Zack then asks Jasmine to pretend to be his ex because he's never had a girlfriend before and the girl that he likes doesn't want to be with someone who's never been in a relationship. Jasmine agrees, not knowing the consequences of that little lie. Fast forward to the present day, Zack is about to get married to a girl that none of his friends and family really know. It's up to Jasmine to confront Zack but before she can do that, she has to sort through her own feelings first. *My Imaginary Ex* was pretty easy to read even though the story is interspersed with flashbacks to fully flesh out Jasmine and Zack's friendship. The story sort of reminded me of *My Best Friend's Wedding* because it has a similar theme with the movie.

I'm not a fan of best friend love stories probably because my high school boyfriend was my best friend and we didn't really get our Happily Ever After together. Don't get me wrong, we're still good friends but now I feel like I have a certain fondness for love-hate relationships more than best friend love stories. Does that make me sound weird? :P In any case, I'm sure there are more people who will appreciate the friendship that is the foundation of Jasmine and Zack's relationship. While I didn't get to connect with the characters in this one as much as I did with the characters of *Fairy Tale Fail*, it's still quite an enjoyable, light read. The characters are believable and the author does a good job of describing the life of a young professional in her mid-twenties, living in Manila. Mina mentioned over Twitter that Summit is going to release another book of hers any day soon. I'm looking forward to that!
