



The Nightmare Charade

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It's her junior year at Arkwell Academy, and Dusty Everhart just wants to be alone with her boyfriend, Eli Booker. But fate is literally keeping them apart. See, Dusty is a Nightmare, who can enter Eli's dreams to find clues to the future, but an ancient curse predicts that any romance between them is doomed to end in tragedy. Dusty and Eli are willing to take that risk, but the authorities disagree—and have assigned a chaperone to make sure their relationship is strictly platonic.

As if that's not bad enough, they've been recruited by the Department of Intelligence for Magickind Secrecy (D.I.M.S.) to use their dream-seer bond to help recover the most powerful object of black magic known to magickind. The Animus Mortem can raise the dead by stealing the souls of the living...which makes tracking it down a genuine matter of life and death.

To make matters worse, one of Dusty's friends is accused of murder and is counting on her to clear his name.

Dusty has too many dreams, too many commitments, and too many people looking over her shoulder, but a Nightmare seldom plays by the rules. Curse or no curse, chaperone or not, she has to go deep into Eli's dreams if she's going to find the truth—and discover a way for them to truly be together at last!

The Nightmare Charade Details

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From Reader Review The Nightmare Charade for online ebook

Lindsay says

Sixteen-year-old Dusty Everhart breaks into houses late at night, but not because she's a criminal. No, she's a Nightmare. Literally. Dusty is a magical being who feeds on human dreams. Being the only Nightmare at Arkwell Academy, a boarding school for magickind, and living in the shadow of her mother's infamy is hard enough, not to mention the crazy events of the past year. Dusty may have saved the day, but there are many days left in the year, and with an old foe back to seek revenge, she'll need all her strength to defeat him and save her friends.

The Nightmare Charade is more danger, more intrigue and hidden things, more secrets and lies. And the final reveal.

Dusty is back to investigating after a summer away from Arkwell. There are so many things on her plate this time around that I'm surprised she has time to sleep. So much of her days are spent worrying and wondering. Worrying about her mother, about Marrow, about finding time to be with Eli like a proper couple, about school. She's not given much time to get back into the swing of things. Instead, she and Eli are tossed head-first and nearly blind into a rather dangerous situation and are expected to solve it quickly. Her snark is still there, her word battles with people who bother her, but her worry and concern take over from time to time.

I was surprised at how easy it was to distrust most of the adults in this book, people like Lady Elaine and Detective Valentine. So few people are straight and honest with Dusty, so few tell her what needs to be said, give her access to the knowledge she needs to make sure she stays alive. How can they tell her that something isn't important, that she shouldn't worry about it? In this situation, everything is important. It's all extremely suspicious, not to mention frustrating.

There's a lot of emphasis on death this time around, particularly Dusty's. The book screams the massive possibility that she might not make it out alive this time. As it's the conclusion of the trilogy, I went in expecting some big reveals and some bigger battles, and with how the ending went, that's pretty much what I found. Nothing was easy for Dusty, or Eli, or even Selene or Dusty's mom, but that's good. There has to be consequences, even when it's magic. Sometimes the worst consequences happen when the battles are full of magic. The second book felt like it stuttered when it came to including the romance, which I felt was better balanced with the mystery and danger this time, but overall I enjoyed the series.

(I received an advance copy of this title to review from Raincoast Books.)

Amber says

A good conclusion, but I feel like I would have enjoyed it more if it hadn't been so long since I had read the previous book.

Louisa says

Man, such an excellent ending to the series! I enjoyed it so much, and how everything came together, that was just so fantastic! Though there are kinda some side questions in my mind, I'm OK with them

unanswered, because they weren't the big burning ones!

★MC's Corner★ says

Okay, I felt like this is actually the end... I think there's more of the story...

But I also think this is the last book.

MC's Corner

Note: Spoilers.

• I just love this series. Mindee Arnett introduced me 'Nightmare' on my paranormal list, which as far as I know it's original.

Its very genius and I want more. Maybe not Dusty but the world. It's a great concept.

• This is kind of book that I would enjoy much more if I watch it. Imagining it wasn't enough. I want to see it with my own eyes. They should make it a TV show or something. I will watch it.

@gleekidMC

Jessi (Novel Heartbeat) says

[I was glad to see them finally get to *be* together. (hide spoil

Jenn says

Okay I'm going to admit outright that this probably should have been a five stars instead of a four but I'm pouting because she says in the beginning right before the book even begins that this is the last story in the series and it doesn't really feel done to me. I'm not ready to let go of Dusty and Eli and I don't feel I should have to.

****Spoiler (sort of) ****

Sure the initial love story obstacles and the initial villain present have been defeated in this trilogy so it probably wouldn't work as a continued YA series because I think the couple has been through enough but honestly you've got a dream psychic couple and a world that's almost always on the verge of war because of elitist groups plus the main characters outright admit Marrow's supporters are still out there. That really doesn't feel like a finished series to me. I'll admit continuing on might not fit with the expectations of the age category/genre combination but this pair and this world could make an AWESOME urban fantasy series that I really want to read. So it would be greatly appreciated if Arnett would WRITE it.

****End Spoiler/Rant****

Despite practically wanting to tantrum that this is the end of the series I really enjoyed the final book in the Arkwell Academy Trilogy. The story was extremely fast paced and I'll admit I would have liked a bit more time to indulge in this well constructed amazingly imaginative world. Dusty's newfound strength and confidence despite her many social, magical, and romantic struggles was a delight to read. She's grown so much as a character since the first novel it's would be hard not to be proud of her as a character. Each of the main characters - Dusty, Eli, Selena and Lance have grown as a characters, grown as "people" the way teens do as they're coming into their own person and forging who they're going to be and that was a delight to read.

Learning more about the sword, the phoenix, all of the elements that are an essential cornerstone in the Arkwell Academy world was a pure delight. Overall this novel was a rapidly moving adventure filled with magic, mystery, friendship and love was a delight to read from beginning to end. Highly recommended.

Shaina says

Did this really take me almost a month to read this? Didn't seem like it at all! I read 2 books between beginning this and ending this - so I guess that explains it.

I enjoyed this book. I'm trying to think of points to make but it all really blurred together for me. It was enjoyable, there are a few things I would have liked to see done differently though. The ending was kind of strange to me. It was a little bit repetitive if I'm being completely obvious - but its okay. I really like the characters in Mindee Arnett's novels and I'm sad to see this series end but all in all it was a solid finale.

Kinga says

I'm being very very very indulgent, so 3 stars. Upon meditation, I might change my mind and give it a 2 tomorrow.

Am I disappointed? Very. I loved the first two books and this...eh.

Most of the time it felt like I was reading the *second* book, it kind of gave that vibe. You know, with all the separation and waiting and waiting and more waiting. The Waiting is usually found in the second installment of most books.

By Waiting I mean the 300 + pages of nothing, of thinking, of *hard* thinking, the main chracter feeling stupid because she can't do anything.

Our main, Dusty keeps flashing her famous sword, Bellanax around like a flashy jewelry, being proud of it, of it's strenght, while doing nothing and biting back insults instead of fighting. Something like this:

Dusty: I have my sword, I am invincible! Look at me and fear me! (...)

three seconds later and a LOT of thinking later

Dusty: Okay, lets put down the sword and lets THINK more.

Dusty used to be more brave. I don't know what happened to her. And Eli. Eli is pretty good. At least he tries, at least when he's there. He felt like a not so important character. Rather like someone *who has to die sometimes*.

What I liked:

Paul. Because I belived in him. And you (view spoiler)

Mr. Corvus, wish he were a bigger part of the story.

The phoenix. I always love them.

Selene with her kick-ass-ness.

Pili says

From the first moment that I read The Nightmare Affair, I fell in love with Dusty and her slightly awkward charm and loved this school for different magickind and here I am now trying to review the final book...

Whenever we read the final book in a series we've loved and enjoyed, it's always a very bittersweet feeling and there's a lil trepitation about how well the final book will wrap up the story. In this case, I'm more than happy to report that we needed not fear! Mindee did a fantastic job to solve the big mysteries, move the story along, keep us turning pages like mad and worry about everyone because it seemed like no one was really safe!

I will try my best to remain spoiler free for not just this book but also the previous books in the trilogy, but keep in mind something might slip if I get overenthusiastic, as it might happen!

We knew to expect a mystery since we're talking about the Dream Team after all! (is it cheesy? Yes, but hell I love it!) But things are getting darker and creepier and even more dangerous than ever before! Do you see that barge/boat on the cover? You won't look at it in the same way after you've read the book, let me tell you that!

Not only we have our main guys fighting to be together as the star-crossed lovers they're now (some revelations happen here) but we also have more distrust and misdirection than ever since our new bad minion can be anyone!

We also get a good look at profiling and discrimination done through how different kinds of magickind are treated by each other. Easier to digest when it's not presented as obvious as it'd be through our normal reality but will give plenty of food for thought if applied to our every day life.

High stakes, evil that can be anyone and anywhere, and loved ones that keep on disappearing make for a tense read and if we add the very disquieting dreams that are the only clues our Dream Team has, along with some memories from the sword... Guessing who the bad guy is, turning the page hoping things can be fixed somehow, it all makes for a tense and at the same time fun read, because no matter how high the stakes are, there is always a lil bit of humour in these books, and I'm really thankful for it!

Very well deserved 4.5 stars to this final chapter! Fantastic way to end this trilogy full of charm, fun and plenty of mystery!

Penny Raspenny says

I can't believe I've wasted so much time in reading this.

Dusty was really annoying and incredibly dumb in my opinion. I couldn't relate to the story in any way and it must have been one of the few times I have literally *read* a book and not fallen into it. It felt like there was no real connection between the characters and their actions, and the plot wasn't structured well enough for my taste. Not to mention the fact that the trilogy is centered on a pair of dream-seers (two people who are warned about future events in the dreams they share) who **never actually predicted anything from their dreams**.

Oh, well.

I will rate with two stars because I reserve the one-star-ratings for really bad books. I didn't hate this but I didn't exactly enjoy it either.

Ileana says

This was an amazing end to an amazing series! The way the entire 'last battle' played out, it was amazing in many ways.

I loved this series from the very first book and I have been waiting for the nightmare charade for a long long time, and I finally got it. I can't tell you how amazing it feels to be back in such an amazing adventure with Dusty and Eli.

It is a really complicated story and has many plots, but again the main point is Marrow. The person who revived him must be found.

And to be completely honest, I always know who the actual culprit was, I just didn't want to believe it...

But he's the evil dude and you've gotta deal with it I guess...

But other than that, the book was an amazing hit, and I absolutely loved it!!

Sadly the series is over...

Oh well! Life...

Anita says

Actual Rating: 3.5 Stars

The concluding book of this young adult *Arkwell Academy* is a pretty great round up of the trilogy altogether. My thoughts about this last book is really no different than what I'd thought of the first two books: *The Nightmare Charade* is very enjoyable, and it has a lot of great potential to expand upon its world. I still feel like it's missing something to make it rank more in the awesome category, but I DO have to give the book props for managing to keep my attention so well. Whether that's because it's a mystery, or simply because of how easy it is to read, I'm not sure; however, I DO know that I gleaned a good amount of entertainment from it, and even got some *feels* wrenched out of me towards the end.

The truth, though, is that there is little about this book I can think of to complain about. Maybe that Dusty still seems so easy to push around by her teachers and her ex-boyfriend. Or maybe that there were some moments wherein I got a little lost as to what was going on (although that could have been because I was listening to the audio book and lost focus at some points). The ending certainly felt a little more angst-ridden than I would have liked, but I sort of saw it coming miles away.

The main villain--the guy who killed the previous book's villain, as well as kidnaps two Nightmares--was a bit of a surprise to me, however, and I DID find myself a bit blindsided; though whether this was in a good way, or a bad way... I'm really not sure.

Once again, the characters, our kids, are great when they get together to investigate the murder and kidnappings--Dream Team, indeed. I'm just glad there's so much camaraderie between our main couple and their "side-kick" best friends.

And maybe I've thought of one more thing to quibble about: Our two main characters kind of fall flat compared to the two "side-kicks," if I were really to be honest with myself. Dusty has a way of sounding kind of dull in her narration, and aside from the fact that Eli isn't a typical, young adult novel broody teenage

boy, he's actually a bit ordinary and boring. While it's true that I like that he's not the standard YA main male character, I also wish there was more to him in this book--he feels less interesting than he did in previous books.

In contrast, Lance and Selene are both pretty awesome and cool, especially Selene with her badassery, trying out for the Gladiator team and flying around with her Siren wings, owning the battle with just her badass, badassery alone... Selene was always a great character from the beginning, and I love that she stays true, as the supportive best friend throughout.

Note to author: Selene needs her own book.

As far as the romance between Eli and Dusty is concerned, while I'm glad that the two of them never faltered in their feelings or their determination to be together in spite of the Dream Seer Curse, I DID feel like Dusty dwelt a little too much on Eli and their love and their entire "Fated to be Torn Apart" scenario.

Otherwise, *The Nightmare Charade* is still a readily enjoyable book that doesn't have all those over-exhausted YA cliches to bog it down. I'm certainly content with what I got out of it, book, series, and all!

Halloween Bingo 2017

This book may also work for these other squares:

- **Murder Most Foul:** The murder actually happens off-stage, and only mentioned at the beginning of the book, so this might be a stretch.
- **Amateur Sleuth:** Dusty, Eli, Selene, and Lance are definitely not law enforcement, as young teenage students investigating a murder, a kidnapping, and the possible rebirth of an old nemesis.
- **Monsters:** There are any number of creatures mentioned in this book, including Dusty, who is a Nightmare (or a half-kind Nightmare), which is a creature who feeds on people's dreams. Then there is Selene, who is a Siren; and a phoenix is even presented; mermaids are mentioned... I mean, basically, The Arkwell Academy is a school for different kinds of magic creatures. (On a separate note, I may or may not use this book for the **Monsters** square instead, depending on my mood.)

Alexa says

mith says

maybe i'm falling in a slump, maybe it's what i'm reading? i don't know.

in any case, this book doesn't feel like the others in the series--it's... boring. slow. the characters seem lifeless and don't have the spunky, fun energy i remember them having--one of the reasons i rated the predecessors so highly.

and, also? the romance was really getting on my nerves. it was all "I need to be with him", "We belong together!", "They can't keep us apart" and a lot of other, eye-roll inducing romantic trope you can think of. i've been semi-cynical to these types of romances so naturally.

anyway, from what i've read--2 stars.

DNF

THANK LORDE FOR CONSISTENCY. still in love with the name, wow.

—•—

I love the name--but why is it coming out in August? These books came out earlier in the year and aw ;-;

Valeriane says

To be honest, I read the previous books so long ago that I don't remember if I loved the series that much. They didn't make a lasting impression on me, but I did like them enough to put this book on my TBR and write the release date down in my agenda, so I must have liked them.

I won't beat around the bush : **I'm disappointed in this novel.** I expected to be enraptured from the first page, and to read the book in one sitting, as I often do. I expected a good, captivating mystery. I expected to, at least, be entertained or curious. **I can't tell if it didn't work on me this time for some reason, if I lost interest in the series or if I was oblivious before,** but it felt childish (Dusty's behaviour and characterisation, the voice/narration...), unoriginal, easy and safe. I didn't feel like there was ever really a challenge, a threat. I didn't care if Marrow came back to life and wrecked the world. I'll admit I was interested in finding out who his helper was though.

I couldn't have cared less about Eli and Dusty's love story and fate. I mean, they're cursed and the adults won't let them make out. *Boo-hoo, let's pout and kiss in public anyway because we're rebels.* Please, do tell Romeo and Juliet to move on: new star-crossed lovers just moved into town. In the wise words of Cher Horowitz, "As if". Really, tell me, what's the appeal of Eli anyway? Paul seemed like a much more interesting and complex character to me.

The cast of secondary characters was faceless and bland, they didn't do much. Not enough to make me care anyway. It might be because the book itself wasn't action-packed, the pace picked up roughly in the last quarter.

And, here's my problem: by then, I just didn't care. One thing I can say for sure, it lacked the humour and thrill of the other books. In my opinion, it's **one of these book series that failed to sustain its story and charm in a trilogy format.** I felt like the book was both too short and too long.

Also, ever since I've seen this series being compared to Harry Potter, I can't get it out of my head and unsee the many similarities. They're really quite uncanny when you think about it.
