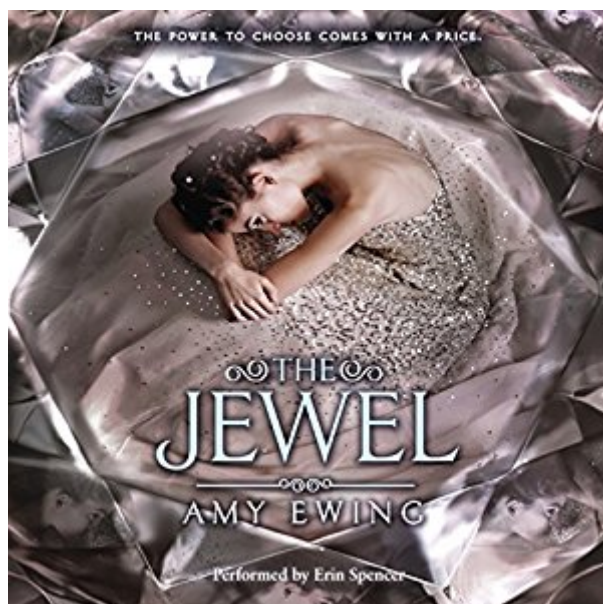


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The Jewel



Synopsis

The Jewel means wealth. The Jewel means beauty. The Jewel means royalty. But for girls like Violet, the Jewel means servitude. Not just any kind of servitude. Violet, born and raised in the Marsh, has been trained as a surrogate for the royalty - because in the Jewel the only thing more important than opulence is offspring. Purchased at the surrogacy auction by the Duchess of the Lake and greeted with a slap to the face, Violet (now known only as #197) quickly learns of the brutal truths that lie beneath the Jewel's glittering facade: The cruelty, backstabbing, and hidden violence that have become the royal way of life. Violet must accept the ugly realities of her existence...and try to stay alive. But then a forbidden romance erupts between Violet and a handsome gentleman hired as a companion to the Duchess' petulant niece. Though his presence makes life in the Jewel a bit brighter, the consequences of their illicit relationship will cost them both more than they bargained for. Debut author Amy Ewing expertly crafts an enchanting story full of riches, rivalries, and riveting twists and turns that will keep listeners on the edge of their seats until the very end.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First things first, look at the cover! It's gorgeous! Before I even looked at the blurb, I knew I'd read this book based on the cover alone. I'm a sucker for the girls in pretty dresses trend. And this one knocked it out of the park with that! Moving on! The Jewel sounded eerily similar to a book that I read and loved last year, Perfected by Kate Jarvik Birch. As I read The Jewel, I realized that it was

more like the love child of *Perfect* and *The Hunger Games*. While I enjoyed the latter two more, I still found *The Jewel* to be a satisfying read. There were parts of it that were easily predictable, but that didn't take away from the story for me at all. It's rather simple to figure out how the story is going to unwind early on. But Ewing managed to sneak in a few twists that were much needed and enjoyed. The pacing was well done, and I found myself reading this book as much as I could throughout the day. Violet, or lot 197, is a pitiful girl. She is one of few girls selected to be a surrogate for the royalty of her nation against her will. I found it absolutely barbaric how she and the other surrogates were treated. It's truly frightening to consider a world where the life of one is so easily discarded in such an open way for the advancement of an "elite" group. I had a lot of sympathy for Violet, and I was constantly hoping that her situation would improve. There was an array of secondary characters that left a lasting impression as well. My concern for Violet was matched only with my concern for her friend and fellow surrogate, Raven. The glimpses of Raven's treatment that I got while reading were enough to cement my disdain for the royalty. The romance in this one was a bit of a let down.

I really enjoyed the first half of this novel and was entertained but disappointed with the second half. Amy Ewing creates an interesting environment in *The Jewel*, where it appears that the entire world is a city surrounded by the sea and separated into different layers that denote a person's class. At the heart of the city is the Jewel, where all of the rich people live and where Violet is trapped as a surrogate years after they discover she has the magical abilities that are necessary for surrogates to have. She was put up for auction, stripped of her name, and told to forget about her past. I did enjoy reading about Violet, for the most part. She struggled to remember her family and wants nothing more than to return to them. She hates the system, obviously, but isn't trying to take it down so much as she's hoping she can slip through it and return to the life which was stolen from her. I liked her little rebellions, even when they weren't the smartest choices. It showed that Violet was still in there, even though potential escape seemed hopeless. As soon as the love interest was introduced (surprisingly late into the book), she turned into someone I didn't like. While I understand that both she and the interest have had limited, restrictive lives, so perhaps that's why there was so much immediate attraction . . . He becomes all that Violet can think about. She's no longer worrying about her family or herself; she's only dreaming about his eyes and risking everything in silly ways. She could have still had the romance without being so ridiculous about it, which was frustrating to me and ended up making me severely dislike the latter half of the book. Some of the twists were very predictable but I'm still interested in seeing what happens with this series next.

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