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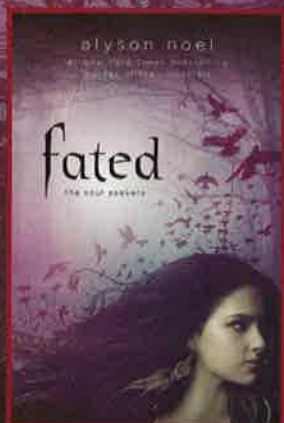
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Alyson Noël

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WITH WORDS!
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292 NEW BOOKS REVIEWED & RATED

Alyson Noël Makes Magick

By Lauren Spielberg

Fate smiles on this YA author as she starts a brand-new series

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What the — ?

My limbs lie useless, stretched out to either side, and after lifting my head, trying to get a grip on my predicament, that's when I discover that someone's restrained me by tying me up.

“She awakens!” a female voice shouts, bearing an accent so thick I can't tell if her tone is one of fear or relief. “Miss Jennika — please, to come quickly. It is your daughter, Daire. She is up!”

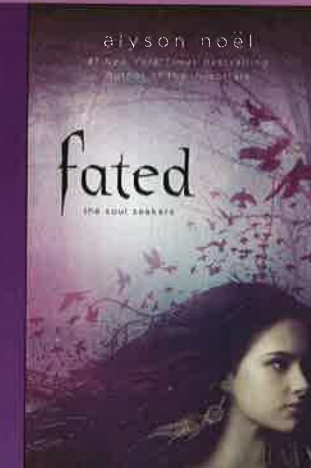
Jennika! So my mom's in on this?

I roll my head to the side, taking in blue color-washed walls, terra-cotta tiled floors, and the ornately painted octagonal table that serves as a convenient drop spot for my banged-up tin of Rosebud Salve, my silver iPod and earbuds, and the water-warped paperback I've been lugging around. Watching as an old woman wearing the traditional long, black, hooded *djellaba* rushes from the room that's served as my home for over a month, returning with a frantic Jennika who drops down beside me, and brings her cool palm to my brow. Her familiar green eyes, nearly exact replicas of mine, appearing lost, set adrift, among her shock of bleached platinum hair and pale worried face.

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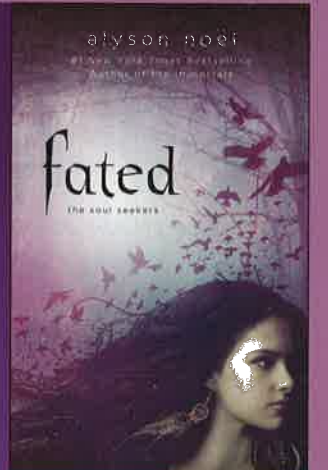
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★★★★½ GOLD PHENOMENAL — In a Class by Itself. ★★★★★½ FANTASTIC — Keeper. ★★★★★ COMPELLING — Page-Turner. ★★★★★ ENJOYABLE — Pleasant Read. ★★ PROBLEMATIC — May Struggle to Finish. ★ SEVERELY FLAWED — Pass on This One.

Paranormal

FATED

Alyson Noël ★★★★★½

TOP PICK! Noël has done it again! With fantastic characters and an amazing plot, this book will suck you in and leave you breathless. Fans of her *Immortals* series, as well as Rachel Vincent's *Soul Screamers* series, will fall in love with *The Soul Seekers*. Noël is a master with words, and readers will realize anything is possible in her world. With passion and thrills around each corner, this book is a must read and a definite keeper in my collection.

SUMMARY: Does fate exist? Daire has never had a typical life, with animals following her and strange people appearing everywhere, but the worst is her visions. When she is sent to her grandmother's she learns that she is a Soul Seeker; she can travel between the real world and the world of the dead. This makes things complicated, especially as Daire realizes that the mysterious boy from her dreams, Dace, is real. To make

matters worse, she cannot figure out if he is allied with the enemy or not. What is a girl to do? With fate, one can never tell. (ST. MARTIN'S GRIFFIN, May, 320 pp., \$18.99, ISBN: 9780312664855, HC, 12 & Up)

Meera Patel

Science Fiction

UNRAVELING

Elizabeth Norris ★★★★★½

TOP PICK! Man! This is one awesome book. In Norris' debut, she takes an oft-used premise in YA today (girl dies, then wakes up) and turns it into a rip-roaring, sci-fi adventure. The plot twists and turns at the end of almost every chapter. Janelle is a great heroine, tough but relatable. There is officially a science fiction romance trend happening in YA, and this reviewer is officially loving it!

SUMMARY: Walking home from the beach, Janelle Tenner is hit by a pickup truck and dies. She just knows it — only she wakes up in the hospital with the memory of loner Ben Michaels healing her. Trying to get to the bottom of things,

Janelle snoops into her dad's FBI files to find that the driver of the truck (a type of car no one's ever heard of) died of terrible radiation burns. Then there's a bomb that no one knows how to defuse ...

(BALZER + BRAY, May, 464 pp., \$17.99, ISBN: 9780062103734, HC, 13 & Up)

Marie Bongiorno

Mystery

GHOST FLOWER

Michele Jaffe ★★★★★½

TOP PICK! Readers may remember Jaffe's most excellent adult novels (both historical and mystery) and her latest YA offering is just as awesome. The author weaves a luxurious mystery, starring rich teens, that will make any old-school Christopher Pike fan giddy with glee. You'll be thinking about this one long after the last page.

SUMMARY: Eve is a down-on-her-luck runaway when she meets siblings Bain and Bridgette. They have an alluring proposition: they want Eve to impersonate their missing cousin Aurora (whom Eve looks

Who's That Girl?

MICHELE JAFFE ON SEEING DOUBLE

DDOUBLE TROUBLE! This month, author Michele Jaffe's *Ghost Flower* (Razorbill) tells the story of Eve, who takes over the rich and missing Aurora's identity, in order to gain the girl's inheritance. It wasn't a stretch for Jaffe, who's also written adult fare, to pen such a daring undertaking.

"Writing a novel is essentially taking over someone's identity, getting into another person's head and guessing how she would respond, what she would say and think and do," Jaffe tells us. "So writing about Eve's assumption of Aurora's identity was a kind of delicious way to explore what I do anyway for every character. Some of the tricks she uses — notes on index cards about who people are keyed to images — are things I do when I'm trying to flesh out my characters. Basically, as a novelist, I look for the

seams of identity, the crucial places that define a person and how she will act. Writing about

Eve becoming Aurora, I got to lay some of those out for readers."

Jaffe also told us about another case of mistaken identity she's got strong feelings about: the question of who really wrote Shakespeare's plays. The author, who covered the topic in her dissertation, jokingly asked us, "How long do you have?" before launching into this explanation of the Bard's true identity: "I believe there (probably) was someone called William Shakespeare. But almost none of the plays were published while he was alive, and the one that was, *Hamlet*, came out in a very different version than the final play — for example, there's no 'To be or not to be' speech."

She's got a lot more to say on the subject, and promises anyone who finds her at Chicago's RT Teen Day can ask her all about it (you know, if



you're interested). But how will you know Jaffe? She says her personal celebrity doppelganger in high school was Minnie Driver (though Minnie is more generously endowed). But to impersonate Jaffe, the author swears it's pretty simple.

"Some characters are more complex than others. I am a not-complex character, so to impersonate me all you would need is a big wig and a taco. OK I lied: four tacos." Sounds easy enough to us! — Elissa Petruzzi

For more, visit MicheleJaffe.com.