



The Electrical Venus

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Mim's life is with Grainger's Side Show along with a 'dwaff', a learned pig and Alex, a boy who has only one arm. Welcome to the world of Georgian entertainment. But this is also the Age of the Enlightenment when scientific discoveries and experiments are exciting society. When smooth talking Mr Fox joins the fair, Mim finds herself catapulted to fame as the Electrical Venus whose kiss will shock. But is this really magic ? or is she just a pawn in Fox's ambition?

This is an electrifying read and one for the adventurous reader, reminiscent as it is of the writing of both Leon Garfield and Angela Carter. Despite the cover which certainly attracts attention, this is not a fantasy nor does it involve magical realism. This is a well-researched historical novel that draws the reader straight into the eighteenth century. This is the time when Wright of Derby was painting, when reason and science are taking the place of superstition and belief. But you still needed a patron to succeed. Mayhew takes a bold decision to tell her story not just with one voice, but with three so we hear not only from Mim and Alex as they comment on their situation, their hopes, fears, their ambitions but also from an omniscient narrator painting the world they inhabit. The result is a rich, dense narrative that is as rich and dense as the setting. It is no surprise to learn that the story was originally conceived as a play it has such movement and immediacy. Both Mim and Alex are neatly defined and convince with their distinct characters and very particular voices; both are outsiders through their differences and this is a central theme as both can only find status by exploiting these differences. This is an exciting immersive novel

To conclude Mayhew provides extensive note on the origins of her tale, fascinating in itself, allowing a young reader to explore further without detracting from the freshness of her storytelling.

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