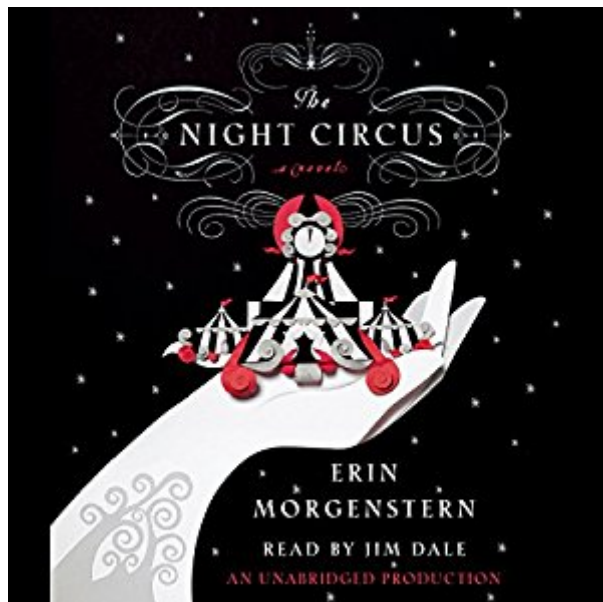


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# The Night Circus



## Synopsis

The circus arrives without warning. No announcements precede it. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not. Within the black-and-white striped canvas tents is an utterly unique experience full of breathtaking amazements. It is called *Le Cirque des rêves*, and it is only open at night. But behind the scenes, a fierce competition is underway: a duel between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been trained since childhood expressly for this purpose by their mercurial instructors. Unbeknownst to them, this is a game in which only one can be left standing, and the circus is but the stage for a remarkable battle of imagination and will. Despite themselves, however, Celia and Marco tumble headfirst into love—a deep, magical love that makes the lights flicker and the room grow warm whenever they so much as brush hands. True love or not, the game must play out, and the fates of everyone involved, from the cast of extraordinary circus performers to the patrons, hang in the balance, suspended as precariously as the daring acrobats overhead. Written in rich, seductive prose, this spell-casting novel is a feast for the senses and the heart.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As soon as I finished the *Night Circus* two things happened; first, it shot to the top of my favorites list and second, I simply had to reread it. I couldn't let the world go so quickly. This is the book I turn to when I want to be encompassed and surrounded by a luscious and fantastic world that is better than mine. I adore the characters, but the descriptions of the circus itself leave marks. When I think of wonder and magic, this world and its circus are what define those qualities. I've never read

anything quite like this, and I'm afraid that I might not ever find something as wonderful as it again, but I hold out hope. If you like Harry Potter, you'll probably like this, though it is very different. If you, like me, adore this book and are looking for something else to read, go try Crown Duel by Sherwood Smith, and its sequel Court Duel. If you want another wonderful way to experience this book: listen to the audiobook. It's read by Jim Dale, and it is magic.

“What kind of circus is only open at night?” (Morgenstern, 3) The Night Circus is enchanting and mysterious. Prepare yourself for a magical story of intrigue and whimsy. Erin Morgenstern will make you feel like you are a part of the circus. Welcome to Le Cirque des Rêves. “Trespasser Will Be Exsanguinated.” (Morgenstern, 51). The Plot: The Night Circus begins in 1873 as Prospero the Enchanter learns that he has a daughter to be left in his care; a daughter with a special magical ability. It is this ability that brings about a mysterious meeting and the beginning of a game. As the years go by, Prospero meticulously trains his daughter Celia in the art of illusion, while the man in the grey suit, from the mysterious meeting, trains his student Marco. Both are bound together to play an unknown game with unknown rules until a winner is judged. The Night Circus becomes the arena for this game, and the moves made by Celia and Marco affect everyone involved in the circus. As the years go by, the two begin to fall in love, finding it more difficult to keep playing the game. A choice has to be made, to finish the game at all costs, or to give in to love and let the circus end. Let me just start out by saying that The Night Circus is definitely one that you have to pay attention to the chapter titles and timelines. With that being said, I LOVED this book. I really took my time reading it and soaking it all in and I was astounded by the immense imagery and story building found in this book! Every single piece of information, and person you meet, has some sort of effect on, or part to play in, the circus. There are so many parts to the whole, and even going backward and forward in time with the chapters helps you to understand what is going on within the circus and the game that Celia and Marco are bound to. Between some of the chapters you can also find pieces of a 2nd person point of view story line that makes you FEEL like you are walking through The Night Circus! The plot, the circus detail, and the characters are amazingly written in this one! The first character we are introduced to is Prospero, or Hector Bowen. He is ultimately the reason behind the circus and the plot because of his choice to start the game with his daughter Celia. Though he is an integral part of the story, I found him greedy and cruel and felt that he cared more about the game and its outcome than he did his own daughter. In the beginning of the story we are also introduced to Mr. A. H. in the grey suit. He is also an integral part of the story, as he is the mentor of

Marco, Celia's opponent. Mr. A. H. is mysterious, quiet, and quite possibly a murderer. Our main character, Celia is definitely a favorite character of mine. She is strong, beautiful, and talented in her abilities. She also captures my heart because she is a major bookworm, and holds very high morals. It is no wonder that Marco falls in love with her! Celia's opponent Marco is a man of mystery. He was taken from an orphanage by Mr. A. H., so his background and origin are unknown. In his first encounter with Celia, he seems mildly intimidated and nervous. He becomes very restless in his training, and has slightly devious aspects in his game moves, but he plays the role of a co-main character well. Though we are introduced to many other characters, with them all being integral parts of the story and the circus, we have one other main character to consider. Bailey is introduced to us further in the story, and further in the future, and starts off as a circus spectator. He begins to build a relationship with the twins, Poppet and Widget (whom were born in the circus on opening night, thus being endowed with magical abilities), and in time, becomes a very important piece to the story. It is Bailey's childish innocence and ability to dream that ties things together and ultimately offers a resolution to the game. "When you were five years old you turned a laundry tub into a pirate ship and launched an attack against my hydrangeas in my garden." (Morgenstern, 87). I recommend reading this one slowly so you can take it all in. You will truly feel like part of the circus. Pay close attention to the dates in front of the chapters and let yourself be immersed into the imagery of *The Night Circus*. "You think, as you walk away from Le Cirque des Rêves and into the creeping dawn, that you felt more awake within the confines of the circus." (Morgenstern, 387).

As *Night Circus* begins, six-year-old Celia has been sent by her mother to a father she has never met. When Prospero, a successful magician, reads the suicide note the mother has pinned to the girl's coat and witnesses his daughter's innate magical abilities, he sees an opportunity to use her to play a game with a rival. The rival adopts a boy, Marco, from an orphanage to use as her opponent. Both magicians spend years educating their pawns in the art of genuine magic in preparation for the contest. When deemed ready, both young adults are sent to an enchanted circus, the venue for the competition. Neither child is told the stakes, the timeline, or even their opponent's identity. The premise is intriguing and the beginning of the book is exciting. Then the author delves into the development of the circus and its acts and exhibits. An entire chapter is devoted to describing each exhibit in great detail. There are other characters, but the author spends more time creating her fantasy circus than on developing them. In some chapters, Morgenstern attempts to place the reader

in the fantasy by starting with "You are in ..." These are interspersed with chapters described in third-person. The chapters are dated, but not chronologically, jumping repeatedly back and forth in a period between 1874 to 1902. This frustrated me, and it felt slow and choppy until the last quarter of the book where it picks up again. In spite of my frustration with the pace and format, the characters stayed with me after I put the book down, and I find I am more fond of Night Circus after finishing than I was while reading it. So perhaps there is a bit of magic there after all.

I really don't know what I can add in my review that hasn't been said about this book. This is not a book you rush through. It's a sumptuously written book; it's one you savor, one you take your time with and enjoy the nuance of each sentence. I loved the characters of Celia, Marco, Poppy, and Widget so much! I was captivated with them and couldn't wait to see just how the challenge would resolve itself. And then it resolved in a spectacular though heartbreaking way! But seriously, can I go live in the circus?? It sounds amazing! I would settle for be a Revuer (not sure how to spell it??), following the circus around from town to town. There's just so much about this book that was amazing, and I'm honestly shocked that it took me so long to read it. I don't know what is the matter with me. I would eye this book in the store for years and not get it. Why, past self? Why? This was probably one of my favorite reads this year!

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