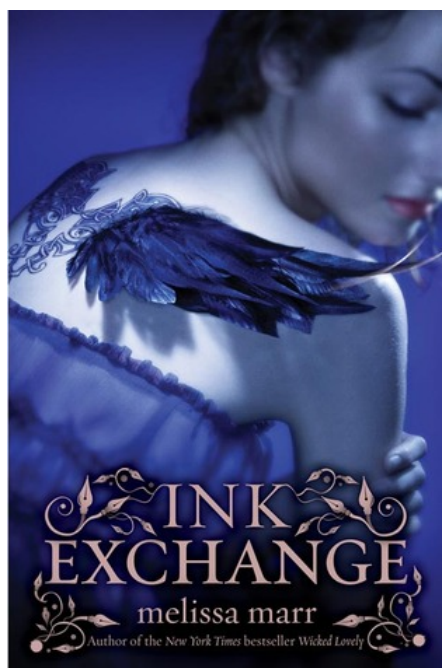




Ink Exchange

Melissa Marr

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Ink Exchange Melissa Marr

Unbeknownst to mortals, a power struggle is unfolding in a world of shadows and danger. After centuries of stability, the balance among the Faery Courts has altered, and Irial, ruler of the Dark Court, is battling to hold his rebellious and newly vulnerable fey together. If he fails, bloodshed and brutality will follow.

Seventeen-year-old Leslie knows nothing of faeries or their intrigues. When she is attracted to an eerily beautiful tattoo of eyes and wings, all she knows is that she has to have it, convinced it is a tangible symbol of changes she desperately craves for her own life.

The tattoo does bring changes, but not the kind Leslie has dreamed of, but sinister, compelling changes that are more than symbolic. Those changes will bind Leslie and Irial together, drawing Leslie deeper and deeper into the faery world, unable to resist its allures, and helpless to withstand its perils. . .

Ink Exchange Details

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Author : Melissa Marr

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Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Paranormal, Urban Fantasy, Romance, Fairies

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From Reader Review Ink Exchange for online ebook

Arlene says

Ink Exchange, by Melissa Marr, is the second book in the series Wicked Lovely. I love, love, love the faerie world Marr has created. Her attention to detail in how she creates her characters and the various faerie courts is magnificent.

Leslie is a seventeen year old girl who is struggling with the events of her recent past. She attempts to claim herself back by having a tattoo inked on her back. She sees this as a tangible symbol of change... change she desperately needs. What she does not know is that the tattoo will bind her to the Faerie King of the Dark Court, a sinister and dark existence that will show her there are greater dangers out there beyond the mortal world.

Marr brought several characters to the forefront in this book and crafted them so carefully that you can't help but falling for them. Niall was by far my favorite character in this book. His struggled to do what was right for Leslie, but at the same time not ignore what his heart was telling him; it was very moving. From him and Irial you learn that "...sometimes love means letting go when you want to hold on tighter..." Great sequel to Wicked Lovely! I can't wait to move on to Fragile Eternity.

Maria V. Snyder says

I enjoyed this book and was glad to be back into the world created by Melissa Marr. The only thing I found frustrating was the ending. The story is told in multiple point of views and it jumps between three people, but the main protagon is Leslie. For the climax of this book, Leslie has to make a hard choice and when she does, the readers aren't in her POV, but another's so it happens off screen and we're told about it. After all the things that happened to her, I felt cheated in not being able to see her struggle to make the choice. However, this isn't going to stop me from reading the next book, Fragile Eternity as I already have it on my shelf :)

Also I found it very interesting that she uses tattoos made with ink, blood and tears as a way to connect two characters. I did something very similar in Fire Study and my Glass books. And here I was thinking I had created something unique ;) That seems to happen a lot with books and readers might think writer's are copying each other (like everyone writing vampire books after the success of Twilight), but sometimes it just happens.

Julie Zantopoulos says

Re-reading this series has been pretty eye opening. It's not good. It really isn't but I love it for nostalgic reasons while being fully aware of how ridiculous and trope-filled it is. The writing...ouch. These troubled girls finding salvation in men who are dangerous, unhealthy, and rob them of choice is not something I'm enjoying reading about. The battling seasons/courts are laughable in their structure and depth. I can't help it, I'm flying through the re-read and loving how awful they are. It's like watching bad sy-fy movies...they're amazing because they're awful.

Jessica ❀ ➤ Silverbow ➤ ❀ Rabid Reads-no-more says

Reviewed by: Rabid Reads

How do I love Bad Boys? Let me count the ways:

1. Okay, so I don't actually have reasons, I just love them.
2. But I should get an A for effort, b/c I sat here and thought about it for a good long while.

Iriel. GAH. Even his name is HOT.

The Dark Court thrives on chaos and Iriel is its King. His Fae are the natural balance to the restraint and order found in the High Court, but ever since Keenan found his Summer Queen and Beira (the Winter Queen)'s reign of terror ended, his own court has been weakening . . . Too much harmony, not enough fear and pain.

What's a responsible Fae monarch to do?

Find a way to feed on mortals' darker emotions, of course.

The problem is in the process. There are . . . unforeseen side effects. And that doesn't take into consideration that Iriel's chosen vehicle is one of Aislinn's best friends. EEP.

I still didn't bond with Aislinn or Keenan in this book. In fact, I think I liked them both significantly less. Aislinn could have prevented the whole thing if she'd just told Leslie the truth, and Keenan became the scheming, manipulative bastard I'd feared he was becoming in WICKED LOVELY.

BUT.

Iriel.

Also Niall. I honestly can't remember if I was intrigued by him the first time I read WICKED LOVELY, but I love how Marr developed his character in this second installment---as much as I love Bad Boys, I also have a significant weakness for Complex Lives-by-his-Troth Guys. Not to be confused with Nice Guys
whispers *who are boring*.

Even if you don't share my weaknesses, most of you can agree that both Bad Boys and Complex Lives-by-his-Troth Guys are better than frat boy dumb dumbs (like Keenan).

And Leslie is a heartbreakingly tragic heroine. So damaged, yet so strong. I may not have made the same decision she did, but I understand why she did it, and I love her for it.

The story was great. The characters were great. The folklore is great. The writing was great (<-----there's a theme in there):

What does it mean when nightmares dream of peace? When shadows wish for light?

I loved INK EXCHANGE by Melissa Marr as much as I *didn't* love WICKED LOVELY the first go 'round.

The contrast was shocking, and I can't think of a series where the payoff for sticking it out after a mediocre first book is better. Highly recommended.

Tatiana says

So, I gave Marr another try. I didn't like "Wicked Lovely" that much, but was told "Ink Exchange" was better. In some ways, it was.

For one, Leslie as a protagonist is more interesting than Aislinn. There is definitely more depth to her and although I don't get that whole idea of a tattoo being able to free you of your troubles, to liberate you, make you stronger, Marr makes Leslie relatively easy to understand. Again, there are interesting ideas about faery lore that I would like to know more about. The ending is also very logical and satisfying to me. Considering that there are no true feelings between Leslie, Irial, and Niall, feelings based on real knowledge of each other, feelings not induced by magic of some sort, Leslie's decision is a correct one.

But just like with Marr's first book, I find the writing style of this book extremely confusing. Once again, there is a lot of jumping from 3rd to 1st person narration, a lot of examining of one's feelings inserted in between the lines of conversations, a lot of hints, a lot of partial/incomplete descriptions. After finishing the book, I still don't know how any of the faeries look underneath their human disguises. I still don't know what are some fae introduced very early in the book are: the Hounds (I only know they are half-humans and assume they are some kind of guards), Ly Ergs, thistle-fey, etc. Still have no idea about the structure of the Dark Court, the exact position and role of Bananach. Have no idea what the High Court is. I am not sure if Marr expects me to already know all these things or I am supposed to deduce what I need to know from bits and pieces of mythology she gives throughout her book, sometimes in the very end of the story. I am convinced that if I need someone who have read all her books several times to explain to me what's what, the narration is just not that great.

Overall, "Ink Exchange" is an OK book. It could have been better without endless often redundant self-reflection and with better delivered, cohesive mythology. Not sure if I will read any more of Marr's book. Her writing is just not my cup of tea I guess.

Reading challenge: #14, 4 of 4

Karin says

Welcome back to the world first created by Melissa Marr for Wicked Lovely. A world where faeries exist and roam among humans without their knowledge. In this companion novel to Wicked Lovely, we get to know Leslie, one of Ash's best friends. Since Ash and Keenan defeated the Winter Queen and gained power, peace has reigned between the Summer and Winter Courts. Ash doesn't go anywhere without guards and her closest friends are guarded too.

Leslie has had a rough home life ever since her mother left. Her dad is usually drunk and rarely comes home. Her brother is high all the time on a variety of drugs and brings dangerous people around the house. Leslie learned that the hard way and has the scars to prove it. Leslie enjoyed the time she isn't at home whether that means she is at work or at school.

Niall is Keenan's, the Summer King's, right hand. He often guards Leslie and feels his desire for her

growing each time he sees her. He doesn't realize she feels the same way about him. If he knew, it would only make it harder on him to not be able to have contact with her. Niall can't physically touch humans. His touch is as addictive as a drug. It leaves humans begging for his constant embrace until they eventually go mad.

Keeping his distance from Leslie becomes impossible when Irial sets his sites on her. Irial is the King of the Dark Court and feeds himself and those connected to him by taking the emotions of fear, lust, anger, greed, and jealousy from other fey as well as humans. Since the peace between the Summer and Winter Courts there hasn't been enough of the dark emotions to sustain the entire Dark Court.

Irial has developed a way to feed through a human. His blood and the tears from the Dark Court Faeries are mixed with ink used to tattoo the person he'll use to feed. Leslie has decided getting a tattoo is a way she can reclaim some control over her life and decides on the symbol that will link her to Irial and eventually lead to her death. Niall must break his rule about human contact in order to keep Leslie safe and ends up falling in love with her.

The battle between the Dark Court and the Summer Court revolves around Leslie. Unfortunately, she doesn't know what is going on since Ash doesn't want her to know about the Faery world. Ash thinks if Leslie doesn't know, she'll be safe. Instead, Leslie gets the tattoo and feels the immediate draw to Irial where she is used to feed the Dark Court.

Niall is willing to do everything he can to ensure Leslie's safety once she is under Irial's control even if means breaking his ties to the Summer Court. Can Niall get Leslie's life back? Can he win her love? Will she be any better with him than with Irial? Read INK EXCHANGE to find out. You won't be disappointed. INK EXCHANGE is just as captivating as Wicked Lovely. I can't wait for the third book.

Anna says

In her essay "The Collapsible Woman", Vanessa Veselka talks about how society expects all victims of rape to break and collapse. She argues that we don't know how to deal with survivors rather than victims. But clearly Marr knows how. Like the previous book in this series, the human characters are so real, full of all the strengths and weakness that make up real teenage women. This book is particularly compelling because it deals with darker issues like rape and addiction in a real way. Marr makes it clear that things are rarely black and white and that recovery from addiction and abuse is a process. The ending might not be as satisfying for a reader looking for a happily ever after with things tied up nice and neat, but I appreciated the realism (even though it's all about faeries) of this book's ending.

Crystal Starr Light says

Bullet Review:

In some ways better than "Wicked Lovely", in some ways worse. Leslie is a way cooler character than Aislinn, and I like her struggles AND the choice she makes at the end. On the other hand, super-emo Faerie boy Niall made me laugh at how emo he was while Irial makes feminist me rage. I'm also not happy how violence and possession are mistaken for romantic intentions.

2.5 stars graciously rounded to 3 (mostly because of Leslie and her final choice). While this is an OK series, it's dark and rather dull. I won't be pursuing sequels.

Full Review:

Leslie is Aislinn's friend, but she has absolutely no clue about the world of Faerie. Not that she really cares - she's too preoccupied with her alcoholic father and drug-addled and horrible brother (who drugged her and let his druggie friends rape her). What she wants most is a tattoo and to snuggle up next to the hot Emo Faerie guy that hangs around with Keenan, Asilinn and Seth. But Irial, the Dark King, has other plans.

It seems like eons ago since I read *Wicked Lovely*, a book that I read and mysteriously rated 4 stars, even though I distinctly remembering feeling iffy about the whole thing. I really didn't like it enough to continue, but I had heard that book 2 was better so I bought it.

Fast forward to today and I realize I need to clean out a ton of these books from my library - particularly all these sh!tty YA books. So I beebopped to my library and picked up audiobooks, because I can read them way faster than paperbacks or hardcovers.

A part of me likes "Ink Exchange" more because it is way more memorable (I barely remember the plot of "Wicked Lovely" - and for those who are thinking about starting the series here, I say go ahead, background details you need will be provided and it's about a totally different character anyway) and Leslie is a far more interesting character. In "Wicked Lovely" you think Leslie is going to be yet another Regina, a blonde, blue-eyed, popular high school b!tch:

Instead, Leslie is a bruised and battered girl. Her family is torn apart after her mother leaves - her father an alcoholic and gambler, her brother a drug dealer, who thinks nothing about setting his sister up for rape. It's tragic and disheartening. No wonder Leslie flees to "Pins and Needles" (horrible, cliched name BTW) for a tattoo. No wonder all her conversations are light and frivolous.

The problem ultimately with the novel is that it is less about the protagonist Leslie and more about the Irial/Niall dynamic. You see Irial and Niall were best buds back in the day, sleeping around, partying, that sorta thing. Only Niall grew a conscious and become emo:

I swear, I can hear Amy Lee in this picture

And Irial decided that consent was optional:

Seriously, this isn't sexy. AT ALL.

Both guys want Leslie, only Irial will be creepy and force her to go with him. Which is why Niall, Asilinn, and Keenan, the three people that know that Irial is looking at Leslie, don't tell Leslie about her stalker.

Because THAT'S gonna turn out well.

Why are we not surprised that Leslie is captured, her emotions are stripped away from her to fuel Irial and his people, and she is basically forced to do numerous things against her will - such as watch as fellow mortals are forced to have sex and are killed?

This book is unnecessarily dark, and Leslie is forced into doing things more than she makes the choices she purports she does - until the end, that is.

(view spoiler)

I would have preferred that Leslie became the Shadow Girl and REVELED in it. She rose to her position of evil and became a force against Keenan and Aislinn and Donia, forcing the Summer and Winter courts to band together against Irial and Leslie. Now THAT would have been interesting.

But instead, it's a man's story disguised as a woman's story, where the woman is coerced and forced to do things against her will. All the while being as sappy and overdramatic as possible - because if you don't have Amy Lee wailing in the background, you aren't doing it right.

Oh, and the narrator is sh!t. He sounds like a droning history professor...or economics teacher.

"Bueller. Bueller. Please save this book..."

"Ink Exchange" is not a bad book, but it's incredibly dark, dreary and more importantly: BORING. Having a slightly better protagonist and an interesting faerie mythos doesn't make up for its many faults. I'm sure many will love this, and it is better than many other faerie/pixie stories, but I can honestly say I am done with this series. I have zero desire to find out "what happens next".

Angie says

Wicked Lovely, Melissa Marr's first novel, was on my Best of 2007 list and I've been very excited about the sequel, *Ink Exchange*. The storyline follows Aislinn's friend Leslie. Leslie is surrounded by a fog of secrets and unable to break through the fog because of something that happened to her while Aislinn was caught up in her own set of the tumultuous events in *Wicked Lovely*. The gulf between the two girls only grows wider as they find themselves unable to talk about how they have each been irrevocably altered. While Aislinn negotiates a tricky truce between Keenan and Seth, Leslie is left to fend for herself, waitressing tables to pay the bills, and avoiding going home for any length of time. She is also storing away a little cash to get a tattoo as a symbol of taking her life back and escaping the terror that's dominated it for too long.

Turns out she's not completely alone, though. Aislinn has commissioned Niall, Keenan's friend and right hand man, to watch over Leslie, haunting her steps in order to protect her from the Dark Court faeries who seem to have developed a sudden, unhealthy interest in her. Chief among Aislinn's worries is Irial, the Dark King himself. But, unbeknownst to any of them, Leslie has chosen Irial's tattoo to ink on her back, a process which will link the girl and the Dark King, allowing him to feed off human emotion through her, and thereby keep his people from starving. Add to that the complication that Niall is falling in love with Leslie. Irial is falling in....something....with Leslie. And Niall and Irial have A History. A long, dark, twisted, and surprisingly moving one.

The thing about *Ink Exchange* is, just when you think it can't get any worse, it does. With a vengeance. A sort of hazy, starburst kind of worse. Until you want to run screaming onto the page, snatch Leslie (and Niall, and, yes, Irial, too) in your arms and stash them away somewhere warm and safe and dry until they're able to heal. Short of being able to do that, you keep reading. I liked Leslie. I liked her a lot. And I hated that she had so few choices available and that, for the majority of the book, she was being manipulated left and right. By those who loved her, wanted her, and hated her alike. It made me mad. At all the characters, even as I loved them. Even my beloved Seth who seemed to see clearer than anyone, except perhaps Irial. And it made the ending a very satisfying one. But it wasn't an easy read. And it wasn't a pleasant one. And I still, epilogue be damned, have the aforementioned urge to run in and save them all. But I will wait. Somewhat impatiently. For book three.

Laura says

I found this book to be much more adult than "Wicked Lovely". Melissa scores a homerun with this book and completely recommend teens and adults to read it.

Melissa has a wonderful voice and a great sense of the faery world. I applaud her.

Ardis says

I didn't like the first one, Wicked Lovely, so I don't know why I read the second one, other than I wanted to give the author a second chance...

The teen librarian where I work told me that the teens are eating these books up, but I can only figure that the appeal is the fact that teenagers are being picked to be fairy queens; I don't get it.

These books are badly written, the world the characters inhabit is undeveloped, and the author spends too much time on the build up only to leave us with hurried, pat endings.

Kristi says

Ink Exchange is the companion novel to Wicked Lovely, which basically means that it is not the sequel to Wicked Lovely, but is still set in the same world and has many of the same characters as Wicked Lovely.

Personally, I like Ink Exchange better than I did Wicked Lovely. To be fair, WL was one of the first fae novels that I'd read, along with the Holly Black series, so I was just getting to know about the glammers and the sight and all that fae lingo.

Ink Exchange is definitely the darker novel of the two, this one is basically about addiction. It revolves around one of Ash's friends Leslie, Irial, the king of the Dark Court, and Niall, Keenan's adviser.

I love this world that Marr has created where faeries and mortals co-exist. She paints a beautiful world full of mayhem and chaos! And I love that she doesn't give a happy fairy-tale ending, well the ending that I wanted to see anyway, and yet I find that it was very satisfying.

The characters in this novel are fantastic. You have the Dark Court, which obviously is supposed to be bad, but are they really? Every character is flawed, they have these wonderful qualities and yet they also have these bad qualities. It's refreshing to be unable to label who's good and who's evil.

There was a lot more depth than I was expecting. My first impressions of Leslie from Wicked Lovely were extremely off. She is one of the most complex characters and it was totally unexpected. I really recommend this one for dark fantasy fans.

kari says

I'm not really sure what to say about this book. It disturbs me that the protagonist, Leslie, who has survived a horrible sexual assault is, by the end of the book, repeatedly used both emotionally and sexually for weeks by the Dark Court king. Yet we're supposed to think this is a healing thing because her proximity to the Dark King feels so good that she forgets everything except being with him. But she wouldn't need him or feel anything toward him were it not for the tattoo using his blood that was put on her back and he knew that she'd need endless sex with him once it was done.

I found this story truly distasteful, particularly since this book is YA. I'd expect this plot in a novel with adult characters, not teens. The fey have lived hundreds of years and they can't find adults to interact with?

Creepy, and not in a good way.

The most sympathetic character was Niall but his backstory is never truly told and his relationship with Leslie fizzles.

I was also very bothered that the tattoo artist who put the fey king's blood into the tattoo on Leslie without her knowledge pays no price for doing this to her. No one is angry, Leslie comes to acceptance of what he did and that's it. He helped the Dark King trap her and use her but no one seems to care. Humans have died because Rabbit did this to them in the past but since Iriel comes to care for Leslie, we're supposed to think that makes it okay, I guess.

One of the things that continues to bother me about Marr's storytelling is being thrown into the story without ever having the action explained or clear until the book is more than half over. Even when the book is finished I still don't know what a Ly Erg, glaistig or the Bananach are and I feel like I need to read these books with the encyclopedia of fey creatures sitting beside me. If you're going to create a whole world, kindly explain how it works and what the creatures are.

For me, a disappointment.

Katerina Kondrenko says

5 out of 10

????? ?? ???????/review in russian

Cruel and dark story. I really liked Niall, actually I liked only Niall, so you can see why I didn't love the book. Still have no time for reviews =(

Wicked Lovely (????????? ?????????):

- Wicked Lovely (????????? ?????????) #1/5
 - Ink Exchange (????????? ??????????) #2/5
 - Stopping Time (????????????? ??????) #2.5/5
 - Old Habits (????????? ??????????) #2.6/5
 - Fragile Eternity (????????? ??????????????) #3/5
 - Radiant Shadows (????????? ?????) #4/5
 - Darkest Mercy (????????? ??????????) #5/5
 - Faery Tales & Nightmares (????????? ? ??????????)
 - Desert Tales (????????? ? ??????????)
-

Elizabeth says

I really liked Marr's first, *Wicked Lovely*, and while I liked this, too, it just didn't grab me in the same way. I loved the first half/ two-thirds of *Ink Exchange*, once the ink exchange took effect, I felt like the story got convoluted.

The story focuses on Leslie, a close friend of Aislinn, the main character from the first book and the reigning Summer Queen of the faery courts. She has a very unhappy home life, complete with druggie brother and absentee father, and one of the few things that gives her pleasure is hanging out at the local tattoo shop. She desperately wants a tattoo, which she feels will give her ownership of her own body, and help her feel some control amid her chaotic life. Unbeknownst to Leslie, Rabbit, the shop's owner, is the half-fey son of the Hound of the Dark Court. He has an agreement with Irial, the Dark Court's king, to use a special faery ink with certain tattoos as part of an ink exchange. The ink exchange allows Irial and the rest of the Dark Court to feed on the dark emotions of mortals, which have grown scarce since the peace made between Summer and Winter in the first book.

Leslie ends up picking the tattoo that represents Irial himself. As she begins to get the tattoo, her friends from the Summer Court notice that she's attracted the Dark King's attention, and Niall, who is Keenan's (the Summer King) right hand man, is asked to guard her more closely. Niall is also interested in Leslie, and he and Irial struggle over Leslie's mortality and her role in the faery world.

Leslie, having been kept in the dark about all this, completes the tattoo, making her Irial's Shadow Girl. Once she is a part of his court, she struggles to maintain her sense of self, even as she witnesses atrocities against mortals. Eventually, she must make the choice between remaining with the Dark Court or breaking her tie with Irial.

I did like that the story wasn't just about hooking Leslie up with the hottest faery out there, but about her making choices about her own destiny. I also liked seeing the POV characters from the other book from another perspective. I think my favorite aspect of the book was that the various faeries and faery courts are not depicted as good/bad, black/white entities. The reader can find Irial sympathetic, and Keenan distasteful. Gabriel (the Hound), who I initially thought was going to be very one-note, actually ended up being a dynamic character with depth. Niall, like Leslie, has to make tough choices about his own path, and it's always nice for me when an author doesn't go easy on their characters.

I think what I didn't like was that I didn't have a firm grip on Leslie as a character- the faeries were much, much more fully realized- and thus when she was with the Dark Court and time was passing in a haze, the plot got very hazy for me, too. It seemed almost like it took too long to get Leslie there, and then things were rushed and not fully explained. I also found it a little convenient that it was one of Aislinn's closest friends who happened to choose Irial's mark. I could understand her catching faery eyes because of her closeness to the Summer Queen, but it was little too coincidental that she ended up being the Shadow Girl. I just wish Marr would have spent more time on developing Leslie as a character, and devoted a few more pages to explaining what the hell, exactly, was going on at the Dark Court.

That said, I would read another book set in this world. I loved the first one, and this one was okay (good-not-great), so I would give Marr another shot before saying *Wicked Lovely* was a fluke.

Lyndz says

3 & ½ stars

I wanted to give the prequel to this book *Wicked Lovely* 3 & ½ stars but I opted for 4 stars in the end because of the cute little excerpts that Marr included at the start of the chapters about fae folklore. I found them charming. Unfortunately those little quotes were not included in Ink Exchange. I thought that omitting these took from the atmosphere of the book. Should something like that had been included, I would have easily given this one 4 stars as well.

I wanted to like this book, and I did, but I didn't feel that it as effectively captured the "spirit" of the fairy world as did *Wicked Lovely*. I should bring up that one of my contentions with *Wicked Lovely* was the fact that it has such a predictable happy ending. And to give Marr some well deserved credit on Ink Exchange; this one did not. The ending was well done but far from a happy little fairy tale ending with a pink bow on the top. Don't get me wrong; it was wrapped up nicely, but the bow was probably not pink satin, but dirty black lace, and has strands of barbed wire sticking out of it.

Leslie, the protagonist, was indeed a strong female character but frustrating at the same time. One of these characters that you like but you keep going, "are you some sort of an idiot?" and smacking said book against your forehead at the decisions she is making. **Potential spoilers ahoy: (in italics)** *[[As in Wicked lovely, our different but fearless female protagonist Leslie has the undying love and attention of 2 hot male suitors. - Every little girls dream. (Cue gagging.) Anyway, this time, both guys are of the fairy variety. Niall and Irial vie for Leslie's love throughout the book. Both Niall and Irial are dark fairies, and as such, they have the ability to make mortal females become physically and emotionally addicted to their touch.]]/End spoilers* I don't think I will ever get the song **Your Love Is My Drug** by Ke\$ha out of my head now. Thanks a lot for that by the way Ms. Marr. ??*Because your love, your love, your love, is my drug. Your love your love your love...??*

All in all, Ink Exchange is a cute book, of all the YA teenage love-triangle books I have read, this is one of the better ones. I would recommend it if you like YA and/or you have a thing for books about fairies.

Cecelia says

This book surprised me (and not in a good way). Perhaps because I didn't feel as many dark undertones in the first book, *Wicked Lovely*, I expected this work to be an entertaining, dark-ish, YA fantasy with themes of finding love, belonging, dealing with authority/power, etc. What I encountered was a disturbing novel which addresses themes of extreme violence, questionable ethics, addiction and domestic abuse in a very surface/shallow way. I made myself push through to the end, even when I realized a couple of chapters in what kind of departure this book would be from any comfort level I've ever had. It didn't get any better. I'm hoping that the next installment in the series, *Fragile Eternity*, will pick up the engaging relationship themes with a balance of fantasy and care that drew me to the first book.

Tandy says

To finish or not to finish? I'm having a hard time deciding if I want to truly finish this book. I maybe have 100 pages left and I have no desire to finish. I don't care what happens.

As I'm reading this book, it gives me the feeling of what I guess it would feel like to be on drugs. The ups and downs, the darkness, the hopelessness. This book is dark and leaves me with sad ugly feelings.

Jen says

Edit (re-read in 2018): I still love this book. I still love Irial , but I love Niall even more than I did the first go-round. I have to dock a star for the audiobook. The narrator was just “meh” for me. Leslie is such a strong character that is just BREAKS ME inside, reliving her backstory and all she’s endured. The ending of this book is so satisfying to me, because I love the prospect of a new beginning—even if I’m reading an old book.

HOWEVER, the audiobook did teach me that I was pronouncing basically everything incorrectly, so that was a fun reality check and a good way to take me down a few notches.

Most definitely one of my surprise favorite 2010 reads so far. It was more of a 4.5 or a 4.75, but due to the characterization, I'm willing to overlook the slight drag in the middle.

I will admit that I was reluctant to read this one. I am a huge fan of Wicked Lovely and will not lie when I say that I put effort into holding off on Ink Exchange. I walked past my bookshelf everyday, made eye-to-spine contact, grunted and scurried away. The idea of alternate characters did not sit well with me, especially considering that Leslie was so boring and one-dimensional in WL.

I. Was. So. Wrong.

Leslie's got serious issues. I sympathized with the poor girl because she was no damsel-in-distress. She had a backbone, but she was also so damaged, which is realistic. I'm glad that Melissa Marr did not paint a world of problems only to have Leslie act totally functional throughout the book. Lots of the reviews I've read stated that getting a tattoo is not a way of coping with a difficulties in life, but I disagree. At least from a teenager's point of view. Of course getting a tattoo does not solve life's problems, but in some deluded way, it makes sense to a 17-year-old attempting to grasp at any "sense of self" that she can. I can't explain why, but I recall being that rebellious teenager.

At any rate, my favorite character was Irial, hands down. There's just something about the evil-doer-unveiling-a-hidden-sensitive-side that makes me cheer for them. And Irial *swoon* was such an intriguing character.

SPOILER

I'm a little sad that Leslie didn't end up with someone at the end of the story, but I feel like Marr went against the grain with the lack of happy ending. Which, AGAIN, is sad but realistic. The girl wanted nothing to do with faeries. She wanted to pick up the pieces on her own and didn't want anyone's help. She gave up Niall and Irial at her own discernment, which is so different from the route that some YA novels take.

END SPOILER

Seriously, this book stayed with me long, long, long after I finished it. It's been about a month now and I still think about it. And I'm really excited to buy the Fragile Eternity paperback with the continuation of Leslie's story in it, called "Stopping Time."

READ THIS BOOK!

Danielle (Life of a Literary Nerd) says

This book was so engaging to me. I was yelling, laughing, frustrated, and engrossed in this book. It seemed like I was telling my sister my thoughts every 5 pages, and we discussed what the characters were doing, their motivations, and our desires and frustration as the story moved forward. The story left me wanting more in the best way.

Pros:

-Tie to book 1. I love that this book starts with a scene from book 1, told from Irial and Leslie's POV. It really helps to make this story feel connected to book 1, even though the main characters are different in each story.

-"Love triangle" done in unique way. Like Wicked Lovely, Ink Exchange had a love triangle done in a compelling and unique way. (view spoiler)

-Leslie puts herself first. From choosing to get the tattoo to reclaim her body, to choosing to (view spoiler) Leslie is all about self-empowerment and creating her own happiness. Even if she isn't sure of the best ways to engage in it.

-Complex faeries. I think it is cool to see the parallels between the faeries we're told are bad (Irial, Gabriel) and who we're told are good (Keenan, Niall). They all have their own motivations that inform their actions and actively work towards their own self-interest. There really isn't good court vs bad court. They are all selfish and manipulative and deceitful, but have real moments showing compassion or care for others.

Cons:

-Ash being vague about the threat Leslie was facing. I understand she didn't want to take away Leslie's choice about knowing the fey world existed, but her inaction - when she knew Irial was showing interest in Leslie - was also making a choice for her. In trying to protect Leslie from the fey world, she couldn't protect her from the fey world. It was a complex situation and Ash handled it okay, but it could have been better.

-Keenan continues to be manipulative, impulsive, and selfish while thinking he's superior to other's who do the exact same thing. I'm not upset that Keenan is volatile or rash or paranoid about becoming weakened again. Those are all characteristics that follow what we know about his character and Summer court fey in general. What is annoying is that it seems that he and others around him, see him as a better person than someone like Irial who shares those qualities. Don't get me wrong, both are bad people, but it seem that Keenan is given somewhat of a pass.

-After Leslie's tattoo was completed, some parts of the story were hard to follow. I know that Leslie was in a haze, unsure of what was really going on, but It was a little too unclear in some points.

Ink Exchange was a really fun reading experience for me that carried me through many emotional stages and kept me turning the page. The story's resolution is satisfying and leaves you wanting more of this world.
