



## **Foul Is Fair**

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Lots of girls play Fairy Princess when they're little. Megan O'Reilly had no idea the real thing was like playing chess, guitar, and hockey all at once. Megan had known for a long time that she wasn't an entirely typical girl. But living with ADHD—and her mother's obsessions—was a very different thing from finding out she wasn't entirely human. Somewhere out there, in a completely different world, her father needs help. There's a conflict, revolving around Faerie seasonal rituals, that could have consequences for humanity—and if Megan's getting the terminology straight, it sounds like her family aren't even supposed to be the good guys. As she's further and further swept up in trying to save her father, Megan may be getting too good at not being human.

## Foul Is Fair Details

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Author : Jeffrey Cook , Katherine Perkins

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Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Paranormal, Fairies

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## From Reader Review Foul Is Fair for online ebook

### Nikki McCormack says

A fun romp through a fantasy world. The main character is a young girl with plenty of problems of her own when she learns from her friend that she is half fae and the fate of the faerie realm as well as her own rests upon their shoulders. I enjoyed this story and some of the settings were really fantastic. I would have liked to have more insight into some of the characters and their motivations/personal stories, but it is a quick and enjoyable read with some great unique characters.

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### Lee French says

Very different in style from Mr. Cook's Dawn of Steam series, this story takes teenagers on a quest to save the world from the machinations of sidhe faeries. It conjures up both Irish/Celtic legend and Hawaiian mythology, twisting them together seamlessly to produce a coherent setting.

The main characters, Megan and Lani, are charming and clever, and the depiction of someone with ADHD and her medications strikes close to home. Ashling the pixie is adorable. As usual, this author delivers highly believable characters even when they're outlandish and extraordinary.

Though the main characters are all female, this isn't a "girly" book. The genders of the characters are barely worth noting as they aren't dealing with "girl" problems. They don't spend lots of time talking about boys or makeup, or any of the hundreds of things that might turn off young male readers. Instead, these are carefully complex young women thrown into exciting action and adventure.

I liked this story very much and look forward to the next installment. Recommended for anyone who likes a good Young Adult adventure, especially if you're into faeries.

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### Sheala Vast-Binder says

Jeffrey Cook and Katherine Perkins have done a phenomenal job creating a Faerie world alongside a real one in Foul Is Fair. Using a wide cast of characters, familiar and unfamiliar, the authors take the reader on a wild ride to free the unSeelie king before time runs out. The book is a humorous, fast-paced introduction into a fantastical world which I hope to visit again soon!

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### Chelsea says

More reviews available at my blog, Beauty and the Bookworm.

Guys, I believe that I'm actually legally obliged to say this: I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. (How exciting is that? No one's ever given me something to review before!)

Now that that's out of the way, let's begin. Foul is Fair is a book about a high school student with ADHD (or some variant) who quickly turns out to be a faerie princess and needs to rescue her father the Unseelie King

before the seasons change on Halloween. If she doesn't, everything is going to go very, very wrong in Faerie and on Earth. And so Megan (our heroine) sets off with her friend Lani (who is a half-faerie, just like Megan is; both have faerie fathers and human mothers), the pixie Ashling, and the crow Count to rescue her father and save two worlds.

Now, let me get one thing straight right away: Megan's family are not "bad guys." The description of the book says that "if Megan's getting the terminology straight, it sounds like her family aren't even supposed to be the good guys." Whether Megan's family is actually bad is never really a serious question to be considered, because as soon as it comes up, it's easily put to rest. Megan's family is not bad. Faeries are not bad in general, just different. That one kind of rubbed me the wrong way, a little, because faeries traditionally come in two varieties, and those are evil and more evil. Well "evil" might be the wrong word. "Chaotic" might be more on point, and that faeries love chaos is brought up here (and the definitions do eventually get a little more complicated). But when it's hinted that the heroine might be more of an antiheroine...well, that's what I expect. Megan's not an antiheroine. She's much too "sweetness and light" for that. It didn't make me dislike her, or lower her in my esteem, but it did leave me feeling rather lackluster towards her. There's a reason for this, and that reason is one word: *Tithe*. *Tithe* is a book by Holly Black about a girl who turns out to be a changeling faerie and quickly becomes entangled in faerie politics. That heroine, Kaye, is much more ambiguous in her morals and actions and I think that makes her a more compelling character than Megan. There are a lot of similarities between *Tithe* and *Foul is Fair*, and the main thing that came to my mind, again and again, while reading *FiF* was that it's *Tithe*, but meant for a younger audience. You see, *Tithe* is marketed at young adults, but I think it really reads more as a new adult fantasy, or maybe even a light adult one. *Foul is Fair* shares many of the same central plot points but has younger, lighter main characters and adds in a quest for good measure--and lacks the romantic subplot, too. Again, this isn't a bad thing, but it means that if you've read other books in the genre, *Foul is Fair* is going to come off as very, very similar. I think that's just a problem with the genre, not necessarily with the writing. If you're going to write faeries, you're (generally) going to have to stick to certain tropes, or people will cry foul that you're "not doing it right." (Hahaha. Cry foul. Like the title. Get it? I'm so funny.) It also has this weird humor element that was also present in *Eternal Vows*, which made it sometimes feel like a parody more than a serious story.

One thing I did really like about this was that the authors (Are they both authors? I'm not actually sure. Books with more than one name on the cover confuse me.) include supernatural mythologies that aren't necessarily British or Irish. Lani, for example, is a half-menehune, which I gather is a type of Hawaiian supernatural being that really likes to build things. Mythologies like gods and titans are also tied in, though they aren't present; they're explained as being "sealed away," though how faeries bested gods I'm not really sure. That was a bit unclear. But it does work to explain why some "supernatural" things are present and others aren't: in this world, they're all real, they're just not all there. And of course, trying to include everything would have probably just resulted in a hot mess.

I'm also probably a weird person, because my favorite character in this wasn't even a main character and was definitely a bad character--as bad you can get in this one, at least. Peadar. Peadar is a redcap. He, at one point, tries to kill Megan. He'd probably like to kill Megan (and company) at other points, too. I loved him. Not because I wanted him to kill Megan, but because he came off as the most faerie-like faerie in the whole book to me. He's not evil, per say, but what he's built to do is not what we humans would define as good. He's willing to work with others, for the right price, but there's a general menace about him that I absolutely loved. I wish he'd had more page time or that other characters had the same lurking menace about them. That's what I look for when humans (or even partial humans, or faeries who didn't know they were faeries) get involved with faeries, because those intruders are so terribly, terribly out of their league. With Megan and company, everything just seemed very...easy. I mean, objectively it's not easy to get an enchanted sword from a bunch of iron golems, but it still seemed easy. They got a little beat up, sure. Someone dislocated an arm at one point. Another person got slashed by a golem and another got burned by iron. But it still had the feeling of it being easier than it should have been. Again, maybe this is just because of the age group the

book is aimed at. Maybe I'm too old for these types of stories now. But everyone they encountered seemed to want to help in one way or another, at some point in time. Some of these people had ulterior motives, but none of them were really that menacing, and we never really had to fear that things wouldn't turn out right.

So, what did I think overall? I liked it. It was a light read, a fast one (it only clocked about three hours total, though I split that up over several sessions due to other stuff going on) and it was well-written, without a lot of glaring mistakes or plot holes. But it did lack the dark edge that I absolutely crave in faerie stories, and everything came across as just a little bit too easy to me. I will reiterate: this may be because I'm not in the target audience. This comes across as a book aimed at the younger end of the young adult spectrum, and I don't quite fit there anymore. So yes, it was good. Terribly memorable to me? Not really. If I was going to pick up something like this again, I'd probably reach for Tithe before this one. But it certainly wasn't bad.

A solid 3 stars--with a note that Cook also authors a steampunk series, which might be more up my alley. I have the first book of that, and am looking forward to it.

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### **Annie Twitchell says**

\*I received a copy of this book from the author in return for an honest review\*

It took me a couple chapters to really get into it - possibly because I was also listening to Charles Dickens the same day, and the writing styles are so different. Once I got into it, I really enjoyed it. The story wove itself around themes of family, figuring one's self out, and the occasional Mortal Peril. Mental illness was done well, I thought. It's part of Megan but it was only a part, and I found her a well rounded, engaging character.

Lani is just generally awesome. I would love to have a best friend like that.

There was one place where it switched POV and I had a hard time following along, but as soon as it switched back to Megan, I was right back in it again.

The plot in general was easy to follow, with some twists I hadn't expdcted, especially the ending.

Not my favorite fantasy, but Tolkien leaves big shoes. This is urban fantasy, and one of the better ones that I've read in that sub genre.

Would probably recommend for ages 17+

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### **Kaelin Lipscomb says**

Throughout my life, I have never been able to say that any one book is my favorite. It was always "This is my favorite for this" or "This is my favorite one for that" and I now know the reason. The characters have never been as relate-able to me as those in this book, namely Megan and Ashling. For the first time, I was actually able to fully relate to a character and it moved me to tears.

Thank you, Jeff, for this gift. Thank you for properly writing a character that has ADHD and properly

writing how that mind can work.

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## **Ed Ashford says**

Foul is Fair is a fun adventure that follows Megan, who starts out the story so heavily medicated that she's absent from her own life. Her friends manage to pull her off the medication and alert her to the faerie world, where her dad is apparently royalty. He's also missing, and now Megan is going to have to travel into the faerie realm to rescue him. There's faeries and illusions and magic of kinds, not to mention a good round of political tension between the seelie and unseelie courts.

The characters really shine in this book. Every one of them has a very distinct and unique personality, along with their own quirks that get in the way while traveling. It would be hard for me to pick any favorite, because I really did manage to fall in love with the entire crew. Cassia was very amusing to me though, as I kept picturing her as Garnet from Steven Universe - but with horns. I also loved Cassia's fierce and terrifying "kittens," because isn't that how all house cats see themselves? The dialogue of these characters started out feeling almost a little awkward, but it resolved itself as the characters further talked with each other and became familiar with one another.

Probably the biggest downpoint of this book for me was that some of the plotting seemed a little awkward. I thought at first that the biggest focus would be on getting to Megan's dad, but then it was more about getting the sword, and then the plot suddenly flipped at the last minute, and everyone went home to the mortal realm to regroup. That was a bit of a disconnect for me, since it pulled away a little from the buildup of tension and made things feel a lot calmer all of a sudden, since they were back in a realm without magic, and therefore, without the same level of threat there was in the fae realm.

Nonetheless, Foul is Fair is a fun adventure with a satisfying ending that I would definitely recommend. I would lean more towards recommending it as a children's book based on the plotline rather than young adult, though some parts of dialogue might be a little mature for children's. Still, this book is like a mashup of what would happen if Percy Jackson met Labyrinth, so if you like both of those stories, you'll probably love Foul is Fair.

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## **Leslie says**

Spectacular in multiple respects! I love fantasy because of the whimsy, the heart, and the wisdom that goes into and comes out of it. They say a reader will get out of a book what the writer puts into it, and this one is no exception. I found careful consideration, fascinating and detailed research, and an attention to storytelling that turns what appears to be a simple, lighthearted adventure into a fight for survival and a race against time, and an important lesson in recognizing the value and worth in everybody. I loved learning about the mythos behind Seelie and Unseelie creatures, and I am definitely Team Megan! Can't wait to see what else Cook and Perkins come up with as the series continues!

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## **D.R. Perry says**

Foul Is Fair has so much to love. The characters are realistic and dealing with everyday problems as well as paranormal ones. This is a great YA adventure, with diversity and high suspense. I'll be reading the whole

series!

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## Lindsay (LindsayHWrites) says

Originally posted at <http://fullofbooks.com/foul-is-fair/> [Edited for formatting and one typo]

**Rating:** Four Stars

**Genre:** Fantasy, Coming-Of-Age, Action and Adventure

**Age Recommendation:** Young Adult or upper Middle Grade

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*One more noise drew her eyes to the other side of camp as realization set in: they were surrounded. Then her eyes settled on a familiar face: the baseball cap, the jagged grin, and the eyes. As the redcap advanced on her, flanked by two others, Megan froze in terror.*

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*Foul is Fair*, by Jeffrey Cook and Katherine Perkins, tells the story of a girl named Megan who finds out that the medical conditions that define her life are not at all what she thought. In fact, they are just proof that she is actually related to the Unseelie King, and that she has been medicated to keep her from finding out the truth. Her best friend, though, is also from the Faerie world, and knows that Megan's father (who has almost always been out of the picture), has been kidnapped. Megan finds that she has no choice but to go along on an adventure to find a sword that can help save him.

*Foul is Fair* kicks off Megan's story in a particularly interesting way: we know next-to-nothing about her family until she begins to learn who she is and where she is meant to belong. I did struggle a bit when it came to all of the lore introduced within the novel, but it is described through dialogue rather than description, which was fairly interesting. Typically, fantasy lore seems to be told rather than shown, and this is definitely an exception to that rule.

Cook and Perkins also offer a rather diverse cast of characters, from the expected magical creatures to LGBT representation. Megan, as mentioned, has a medical condition - ADHD - and the families shown aren't necessarily the nuclear family unit one is expecting. Needless to say, this story would appeal to a wide variety of people. This novel also rejects the trope that a main female character has to rely on a love interest to get anything done, which is quite a relief. Although I cannot say if Megan takes to someone in the later books, this first installment clearly shows that Megan and her friends - gender aside - can be just as fantastic without someone stepping in to lead the way for them.

There were a few occasions where I had trouble following the action as described, but things always seemed to be explained in hindsight, so I never felt confused for too long. I would guess that some might have trouble with the names of characters or the terminology given for pieces of lore within the tale, but I don't think that it particularly affects the story or a reader's ability to enjoy following Megan's adventures. Between the action and humor of *Foul is Fair*, it is quite likely that the reader will be more interested in seeing how the team gets from one task to another.

The writing is likely designed for Young Adult readers, though I would wager that it would be suitable for

Middle Grade as well, although there are suggestions of fairly adult themes. Nothing explicit is stated, however, so it is entirely likely that it would be a good transition from Middle Grade to Young Adult if a young reader wanted to move on to something with a bit more weight and a bit of a stronger vocabulary.

This is the first book in a quartet, called the Fair Folk Chronicles. Books three and four are set to be released this year, as the first two have already been made available. Cook and Perkins are publishing these independently, so they are likely most easy to access via Amazon and on e-readers.

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## Nils Visser says

Foul is Fair starts with a dedication to Terry Pratchett. Then it ends with the acknowledgements. Sandwiched in between is a tale which I read in a single sitting (unintended) much to the chagrin of my bladder which is still convinced a restroom stop could have been planned in. The basis of the story, earthling girl discovers she is a faery princess, would usually serve to send me running five hundred miles screaming hysterically about well-trodden paths before sitting down to write a few books of my own based on that very same concept (I did, please try them). Fortunately Megan is a girl-less-ordinary who is a captive in a mundane world where she can only blend in by a wide selection of colourful medication approved by four out of four doctors who all know what is good for her. In this she has my instant sympathy. Once that has been established the reading experience is as if Screaming Lord Sutch marched into my head dancing the Monster Raving Loony Party conga conga. And, hey, we've reached the acknowledgements again.

I am very much minded of Tom Robbins's seriocomedies and suspect that Cook and Perkins don't exist at all. Instead Robbins got together with Neil Gaiman to devise a plot for which Brian and Wendy Froud collaborated with Arthur Rackham in Goblin Market modus to provide imagery whilst William Kotzwinkle provided a range of perspectives after which the whole was dictated to Lewis Carroll off his head on a cocktail of steroids and magic mushrooms. Stephen King wrote: Sometimes stories cry out to be told in such loud voices that you write them just to shut them up. Fair is Foul certainly feels as if Cook & Perkins were bitten by that bug as we helter-skelter through a magical surreal yet familiar landscape in which we very much understand Megan who "wanted to memorize each sight to draw later, but always found her eyes wandering on to the next oddity." As a reader I sometimes wanted to linger to savour the sights, smells and sounds presented to me but the narrative pace was unforgiving and relentless in its tenacity to helter-skelter into the next scene. It left me pleurably dizzy at times but Megan, fortunately, is made of sterner stuff. I was much reminded of Malcolm Reynolds, strolling into absolute chaos which would send regular punters onto the streets with 'the end is nigh' signs only to make a general understatement or two which is both comic and efficiently practical. I am glad Firefly was mentioned in the book. I actually cheered when I came across it. Out loud. To consternation, etcetera.

Back to Faery, it's more or less all explained by Megan's "Right, nothing is what it seems." Its diverse. It's surreal. It's familiar. It's weird. It's unpredictable and sometimes has vorpal teeth, tens of thousands of them or a single one, it doesn't matter, what matters is that it can be dangerous, prickly and vindictive. This is fairyland as it ought to be, with the logical substance of Alice's Wonderland providing a dreamtime whirlpool of quicksand as support. Meaning there is none, just let yourself go with the flow.

I loved the magic. The magic is musical. It's musical magic. The magic of music and the music of magic (this bit will only make sense to you when you've read it). I loved Megan's friend Lani and her family and I am going to stalk the authors and be a nuisance until they give me Cassia's phone number so I can meet up with her and get disembowelled by her kittens. I am also going to have to get that bust of Pallas to see if I can entice Count to come in so that Ashling, who is good at explaining stuff, can describe to me the precise makeup of the rollercoaster ride I've been taken on. Basically, there's nothing I don't love about this book.

My recommendation? Feed your head. Read this book. Then read it again and again and wait impatiently for the second part.

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### **Laurie says**

‘Foul is Fair’ has some of the common tropes of young adult fantasy: the teenager who finds that she is not completely human, but a fairy princess; being thrown suddenly into another world full of dangers; the main conflict revolves around the Sidhe, Irish fairies. But this novel is different from most. Megan has ADD, and her mother has her medicated into a state where she can concentrate on her schoolwork- which sadly removes the artistic part of her personality. There are more magical beings than just the Sidhe; Hawaiian magic is also present, as is a pixie (originally a Cornish being), some golems, and a being who is most likely from Greek mythology- or not. This made it a lot more interesting for me; I enjoyed seeing the different traditions working with each other and refusing to be pigeon holed.

The action starts almost immediately; we have no backstory at the beginning. We only learn about Megan’s mother and father as the story goes on. Megan and her best friend Lani- who has grown up knowing about the other worlds and magic- work together very well, each using her strengths. Megan’s long absent father is being held prisoner; Megan, Lani, and Megan’s new friends must rescue him. No one ever stands still for more than an instant; the story moved so fast I read it in a day. Given the age of the protagonists, I’d say this book is marketed to young adults, but I had no problem getting pulled into the story. There is no ‘heroine is smart; adults are dumb’ line in this book; everyone is pretty equal (except that Megan’s mother keeps such close tabs on her it’s suffocating). At the end of the story, Megan is back in her mundane, medicated life with her OCD mother. I can’t wait until the next volume comes out- Cook and Perkins has to get that poor girl off all those pills permanently!

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### **P.S. Winn says**

I found this to be an interesting read and I think one that a young adults will like. Megan O'Reilly is pretty typical as a teenager, although she does take medications. Megan lives alone with her mom and has since her dad left years ago. She is friends with Lani Kahale, what Megan doesn't know is that, not only is her friend special, she is also. When Megan sees a crow with what she thinks is a butterfly on it, her world is going to change. Both the crow and the Pixie she mistook for a butterfly, are a part of another world and so is Megan. That is when the adventure begins, taking Megan to a new world and new secrets, especially concerning her dad. The author does a great job creating this fantasy adventure.

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### **S.K. Wee says**

A whole universe of magical beings is opened up for Megan. This story is populated with such a variety that it seemed almost overwhelming. There’s faery, of course, but along the way Megan is led by her friend Lani through the magical world. She meets a pixie named Ashling, sidhe, satyr, and fauns. She must also learn to battle many others. Megan is charged with recovering an ancient, magical sword so she can rescue her trapped father, who she has no memory of.

The pacing bogged down in a few places but I think that had more to do with learning about all the different

species of magical beings. Firmly into the teen, young adult genre, this book is well-written with a richly realized magical realm. Highly Recommended.

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## Ivy says

‘Foul is Fair’ is an amazing fairy tale, but not like you’re thinking. Action packed, full of amazing characters, and an intense plot, it is a must read.

Megan is a normal girl. Except she has ADHD and takes carefully controlled medication. Until her best friend switches the orange ones out for Vitamin C and Megan begins seeing a butterfly riding a crow—a fairy with torn wings riding a crow, to be exact.

This sends them on a whirlwind journey to Faery, a place that both is and isn’t as it seems. Chased by gigantic hounds, red caps, iron golems, and betrayed in the worst way possible—it’s a lot for two teenage girls, a satyr and her two leopards, and a boy from the past.

Getting real for a moment: I connected to Megan in a way I’ve never connected to another character in my life. As stated before, Megan has ADHD. I also have ADHD. It’s a thing I’ve struggled with my entire life. From medication through my childhood years, to coping without it willingly through my rough teenage years, and then still coping as a young adult.

I’m in my early twenties right now, and every day is a struggle to do what I’m supposed to do without going off on tangents. I’m constantly fighting with my own mind, and to have a character who embodies this in certain ways is amazing. Many things, Megan doesn’t show, but what she does is so important. She’s easily distracted, prone to tangents, and smart as a whip. Okay, so the last isn’t conditional to ADHD, but it is a huge factor for many of the people I know. We’re super smart, but the ADHD affects our lives, and especially affected our grades when we had such things.

All in all, if you love the fae, action, and well-rounded characters, pick up ‘Foul is Fair’. It’s a page turner.

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