



## Karina's Silver Shoes

*Denise Leitao*

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## **Karina's Silver Shoes** Denise Leitao

She's got the fate of a kingdom in her hands—or rather, in her shoes.

14-year old Karina is not sure what she wants, but she knows what she's found: fascinating silver shoes. Fascinating, dangerous, and potentially evil. On the upside, they do bring cool visitors.

When two princesses ask her to go to Whyland, a kingdom in a parallel dimension, to destroy the shoes, of course Karina accepts. Who would refuse a free trip to an alternate world?

Advised by a wise master and threatened by a beautiful stepmother, Karina goes on a journey with a princess to defeat a powerful witch. But Whyland is nothing like she expected. Karina finds herself stuck in a kingdom she doesn't understand, with no clue on who to trust. Before saving anyone, she'd better save herself—if she figures out how.

From Brazilian / Canadian writer Denise Marques Leitao comes Karina's Silver Shoes, a teen parody of fantasy and fairy-tale tropes with many female characters, friendships between girls and women, and some subtle romance.

## **Karina's Silver Shoes Details**

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Author : Denise Leitao

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# From Reader Review Karina's Silver Shoes for online ebook

## Angala Fox says

I voluntarily reviewed an Advance Reader Copy of this book. This was a great fairy tale retelling. I loved the strong characters and the way the author told their story. Definitely a must read.

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## Jessica | Booked J says

*"You don't understand," the woman said. "There are many things anyone could do. Each person is faced with infinite possibilities. It doesn't matter why you choose one or the other, or why life draws you one way or another. What matters is not why, or what exactly, but your choices along the way. Perhaps any girl could have done it. But not all of them would have done it."*

As a note, a review copy of this novel was provided in exchange for an honest review. This does not effect my opinion in any way. Thank you! Review also posted here.

Before you look at my lower rating and think, "Oh. It's not worth it." remember that taste is subjective. While my 2.5 star rating may seem off-putting or even intimidating to you, just remember that not everything is bound to be everyone's cup of tea. Further, note that at the end of the day there were a lot of elements I really loved about *Karina's Silver Shoes* and that ultimately it was a very unique tale that is perfect for middle grade readers!

Earlier this month, I had a very similar problem with *The Last of the Firedrakes* by Farah Oomerbhoy in the sense that it just wasn't my favourite read. In the case of *Karina's Silver Shoes*, I do think that--perhaps--I was merely out of the targeted age range. I was charmed by a lot of things--the uniqueness of the plot, the magic, the fact that it was unlike any YA I've read in recent memory and of course the character of Karina herself.

So what went wrong with it? That is the question.

But I don't want to imply that there was anything directly wrong with Denise Marques Leitao's prose because there genuinely was not. I thought her writing was velvety smooth and there were a lot of plus sides to it and the story. It's neither the pacing nor the prose rather, the worldbuilding and the lack of development in its characters that made it less than appealing for me. Aside from Karina, I felt like I knew little about any of the characters or the very realm that she travels too.

While the scenes were pretty full of action--there were a lot of qualities that were mundane and lack-luster. Cayla, Nia, Dorian, Ayanna, Lylah, Sian, etc, didn't feel altogether alive. Not in the way that Karina did. I cannot stress this enough--while this isn't necessarily a horrible trait for YA fantasy, or in particular, middle grade fantasy, it just wasn't living up to what I can sense the story--the writing--was capable of.

There was this odd sense of choppiness that came with certain things in *Karina's Silver Shoes* that was keen on contributing to my lack of attachment to, well, anything. And the ending seemed a bit rushed and open-ended; a bit unsatisfying for my preference. I'm not certain if there are planned sequels on board, but it didn't feel like where the story should end. I just felt like it could have been more--that Denise was only just getting

started on it and the realms and what happens next, you know what I mean?

Ultimately... *Karina's Silver Shoes* didn't hit the right mark for me. That doesn't mean it's bad or that it is a book you should avoid. I definitely think a lot of younger readers will love the novel and its general path of mystery, magic and a journey of a lifetime.

\*\*It may make them want to buy a pair of magical silver shoes.

\*\*\*Seriously, Karina--hit me up with your YARD SALE LUCK, GIRL.

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### **chloe ???? ?? ????.\*? says**

Hmm, this book. It's totally unlike other YA books I've read before. I was expecting something more fantasy-ish and teen-ish (if you get what I mean?) I think this book should be classified as Middle Grade instead of Young Adult.

I don't like Karina. In the story, she is supposed to be fourteen years old but she doesn't act like a teenager. I mean, she's so immature and stupid! She keeps being whiny and doing childish things. She can't even climb a ladder. She also thinks that the fact that she is the owner of the magical shoes makes her very important.

The princesses' families are super complicated. I drew a family tree to let myself understand better, but still, I was super confused. And we didn't really get to know about the king. Why are the people starting a rebellion? It was never mentioned in the book! #confused

I feel like this book's a draft instead of a final product. There are several grammatical and spelling mistakes. I'll list out a few:

"witch" → "which"

"slippers" → "sleepers"

"wish" → "whish"

"peek" → "peak"

I didn't really like this, but if you like middle grade or adventure, it might work for you! This is Denise's first book and I sincerely wish her all the luck in its success.

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### **Manon says**

**\*2.5 Stars\***

*I was provided an ARC via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.*

Karina's Silver Shoes was the story of Karina, 14, who runs into silver shoes at a garage sale and can't help but buy them. Soon, she realizes that the shoes have power. That same night, she is visited by a strange being and also two girls claiming to be from another dimension. She then hurries to follow them to that other

dimension and starts a dangerous and complicated quest.

I really wanted to like this... Sadly, I couldn't...

Karina was really annoying, I couldn't relate to her at all.

Everything went so fast, there was barely time to understand how things worked. I couldn't connect with the side characters, their supposed allegiance kept changing every twenty pages.

The whole story just felt messy, from beginning to end.

I was mostly bored despite the never ending twists, and most of the characters were really annoying.

The writing also seemed pretty simple, almost childish to me...

This was a complete miss for me, but I think a younger audience might enjoy it.

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## Leah says

The description of this made it sound like a wonderful, witty and promising young adult book. The first chapter made me wonder if I was reading middle grade by accident.

I don't like leaving stories unfinished, especially if I have to give an honest review. It's not fair if I stop at 30% and give it a two star rating. That said, at 100%, my recommendation didn't change. I have never rolled my eyes so much while reading a book. I was under the impression this was meant to be a satirical take, but it missed the mark entirely. Karina, the main character, is sadly one of the most annoying and naive MCs I have ever come across. So many times throughout the book, my eye rolls were prompted by her internal thoughts. At times, she said so many ... stupid things. It's been a while since I was fourteen, but I'm pretty sure I was making the connections she was making at age 8.

The story itself was so lacking. The numerous spelling mistakes and grammar issues throughout were highly distracting. About a hundred pages could have been lopped off, and then we wouldn't have been treated to the conversations, "You should go." "No, you should." "Wait, you stay here. I'll go instead." "I trust him." "I don't." "Well, I do." "Can we trust him though?" Over and over and over. I actually skipped several pages, just to get to the part where they reach a decision, and I missed nothing in between. The events that unfold are quite slow, boring and without much detail. I was often confused over who people were and who was on what side because it either wasn't explained well at all, or I glossed over it while reading and couldn't bother to go back.

That's not to say there wasn't great promise with this book. There is! But every time it started to get good, someone \*cough\* Karina usually \*cough\* would say something so naive or unbelievably obvious that I was ripped right out of it.

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## Caitlin says

**\*I received this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review\***

I unfortunately **DNF'ed this book 43%** of the way through it-I tried to push it until the 50% mark as I really dislike not finishing a book unless it is definitely not my type of book, but by this stage I was so disinterested in the plot and the characters.

The book focuses on Karina's and the magical world she is thrown into after finding a pair of magical silver shoes at a garage sale. And while this book seems to be categorised as YA Fantasy, the writing style and storyline felt very Middle School to me, probably adding to why I just felt so disconnected from the characters and plot. There were hints of an interesting dynamic between the Kingdoms, the Rebels and the mysterious Lylah, but nothing was fleshed out for anything to have any meaning.

Nearly half way in there is little world development or character development and I was so confused about what is happening, what is at stake and why everyone is so terrified of these seemingly harmless silver shoes! The two princesses that visit Karina and whisk her away to their home (it is not even established whether this is on Earth, another planet or a parallel universe) are so one dimensional and even though Karina is the main character we know little to nothing about her and as a protagonist, she is forgettable.

I am little bit disappointed that I had such a negative experience with this book, but it wasn't as interesting as the synopsis painted it to be and probably would be suited to a younger audience than myself, more Middle School than YA.

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### **Lena (The Printed Girl) says**

This book was such a surprise! I expected this book to be just like 90% of all other YA novels that came out this year but it was absolutely not!

I have to admit that it took me a couple of pages to get adjusted to the writing style. In the beginning it looked really bad. It seemed like Karina was just too stupid to ever have a decent conversation with. But after a while I started to appreciate the humour.

In the beginning it was like reading a book narrated by a funnier version of the hulk. 14 year old Karina was just soooo sassy and blunt and she definitely did get 100% on her social skills test. But it worked, it really worked! But after a while that just stopped. It stopped being funny, and got way more serious without changing the way Karina formulated her thoughts.

This is definitely not your average YA adventure story, so be prepared (or in any case, more prepared than I was!) But I feel like it could have gone a little bit further with the parody style. Sometimes I was wondering if the writer meant it to be funny or not. It left me a bit confused at the least.

At times it got way to complicated. Because it's a sort of parody, I think it was supposed to be that way. Everyone was constantly switching sides, and you never were sure of who you could trust.

I'm also disappointed that we didn't learn more about this other dimension and the magic and technology. When questions are asked about how certain things work, the only answer that is given is that they don't know it themselves or have no time to answer it. That is such a shame, because it would have been really interesting to read a bit more about that. It could have made the book a bit more interesting.

### **Lucretia says**

I'm a shoe type of girl. Always looking for that next fabulous pair. Who would have thought so much could happen from simply buying a stunning new pair of shoes? When Karina buys a pair of silver shoes at a garage sale, for a bargain mind you, she can tell they are special, but has no idea they will be a catalyst to something fantastical.

The story moved quickly and had fun elements that were nods to some of my most beloved, classic children's adventures. I think those alone will make this something that both adults, YA readers, and even children will enjoy. The amount of twists and turns, and side changes, made this a real fun story.

I found Karina to be absolutely darling, a bit awkward, but that just added to her charm. She was a perfect heroine to navigate an adventure where you always have to question things, people, and motives. I loved not knowing who was good, bad, or fell into a gray area and adored so many of the secondary characters- especially the witch.

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### **Paula says**

What a fun teen fantasy book. Loved the story. I would give 5 stars but for the many grammatical/spelling errors! Especially the word "below" was constantly written as "bellow" lol!

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### **Vanessa Fry says**

I received this book as a free arc in exchange for an honest review.

While this book had an interesting enough plot, most of it felt like a creative writing prompt gone wrong. The book starts with our main character Karina. While out and about, Karina finds a pair of silver shoes at a yard sale. She finds herself inexplicably drawn to these shoes and purchases them, but will not wear them. After a disaster at a school dance, Karina realizes that these shoes could be dangerous and possibly magical. One thing leads to another and she ends up in another dimension (Whyland) helping two princesses defeat an evil witch.

I'm a big fan of the fantasy genre (especially YA Fantasy), but not enough attention was put into the characters and the setting. Not much about Whyland was explained or thought through enough for my taste. For example, some people had magic and some did not, and sometimes magic was a good thing and sometimes it was looked down upon. Also, none of the characters went through any sort of inner journey or really learned anything about themselves along the way, which is definitely something that I'm looking for in a YA read. In addition, none of the character's motives were clear. When Karina is whisked away into Whyland, it is under the pretense that she is helping to stop an evil witch. Basically the kingdom is under attack and there's a witch who may or may not be dead, a rebellion, and the king's forces and the reader and Karina are just supposed to take for granted that we might be on the correct side. Finally, the ending felt

rushed and it seemed like the climax of the book was actually the ending to the book.

This book was definitely different than any other YA Fantasy that I have read to date, and I think that the idea behind it was definitely interesting. With a bit more polishing, I think this could actually be a good book, and if this author writes anymore books, I will likely check them out.

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## Lia says

The book starts off with Karina buying silver shoes in a yard sale (how did those shoes get there???). The shoes seem to possess some kind of power and **she ends up going with two sisters that show up in her house at night, who told her they needed the shoes to save their kingdom in an alternative universe. If that doesn't sound crazy to you, this is only the start. I didn't understand Karina's motivations for anything, really, she's a follower and does pretty much whatever people tell her to.** She believes everyone she meets without much doubt (especially in the beginning). I don't know, I just didn't get it.

"And you believe everything you hear?

Karina scratched her head. "I really have to stop that, like when two girls came to my room and told me I needed to help them save the world and defeat an evil witch. Believing what people tell me, what nonsense."

**The "main" side-character Cayla is very annoying and should just keep her mouth shut.** I really didn't like Cayla for a few reasons. First, she acts like every question Karina asks, is utter nonsense and that Karina should know better. Karina *just* came from an entirely different world, so cut her some slack. Second, there is this love-interest and Cayla is into him but she really acts stupid about it. Sometimes she says he's like a brother to her and other times she's obsessively jealous of some other girl he works with. It does not make sense.

Beside this one side-character, **I could not understand the family dynamics in this story.** This might just be because I haven't been paying enough attention to it, but I just couldn't make out who was who. Who the parents of the sisters (Cayla and whatever the other girl was called) were, I still have no clue. Also, **I feel like everyone was constantly switching sides between good and evil and, honestly, after finishing the book I still don't know who the antagonist really was.**

"There are many things anyone could do. Each person is faced with infinite possibilities. It doesn't matter why you choose one or the other, or why life draws you one way or another. What matters is not why, or what exactly, but your choices along the way. Perhaps any girl could have done it. But not all of them would have done it."

To be completely honest, I have not read this entire book. I have skimmed a couple of chapters at about 2/3 of the book. **I didn't feel like it was worth my time and the storyline was just not interesting enough for me to continue reading everything.** If I could summarize the storyline very shortly it would be something like this: girl goes to foreign land, travels from one castle to an evil witches' castle, and back, and then back again, and then back again to save the land!

**I am giving this book 2 stars (perhaps 2.5), simply because after a few days, the only things I really remember from reading this book are how annoying I thought Cayla was, how confusing everything**



**was and how uninteresting the story-line was.** I also had hoped to see a bit more about Brazilian culture, since the author is part Brazilian, but there was nothing about it in the book. I don't know whether I would really recommend this book, it wasn't really bad, it might just have been not to my taste.

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### **Lisette says**

From the moment, Karina lay eyes on a pair of silver shoes, she knew she had to have them. The shoes' unnatural pull has made her covet them in a way that often puts herself and those around her in unexpected circumstances. Her life is soon turned upside down when she is catapulted into the chaotic realm of Whyland. It is there that she soon becomes privy to a plan several of its residents have concocted in order to restore balance to the realm itself. Despite her misgivings, she dives head-first into what has been asked of her, never once thinking about the consequences of her actions.

A wonderfully put-together tale, Karina's Silver Shoes throws the reader smack-dab in the middle of Karina's tumultuous life. This is a girl whose attention has been piqued by a pair of silver shoes. A girl who knows nothing about the parallel dimension that exists alongside her world. She's innocent and quite naive, though she's headstrong and decisive when she needs to be. She often finds herself in situations that test her mettle, those of which also make her question what she must do in order to survive.

The author has created such a complex world. One that mimics the real world, to some extent. She vividly paints the environments the characters find themselves in, allowing the reader to further imagine everything they see, touch, and feel along the way. Though the quest the characters embark on is full of so much adversity, the characters are willing to see things through to the very end. Their desire to set all wrongs to right drives them to do what they think is best for themselves and those they love. A truly immersive read, this is a book that stays on your mind long after you've read it.

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### **Romee Darling says**

I received a free arc in exchange of an honest review.

Unfortunately, this one didn't work for me. At all.

The premise was quite lovely and in the beginning, I found it to be quite enchanting. Unfortunately, the development was very disappointing indeed.

There's not much of a plot to this story. I think the story could have been developed so much more, shaped into something really amazing. Unfortunately, it didn't happen. There's no actual world building. The characters are just thrown in an alternate world, where the main goal is to get to a witch and destroy the shoes. We get little to no information to the world's rules and specifics. We're just there. There's a bit of magic too, but only the witch uses it, because she's well... Evil?

I found all the twists very predictable. Nothing extraordinary in the least. This story was meant to be about friendship, but coming from a girl who wanted to push her best friend down for a pair of shoes, oh well. I don't know what I've expected. The friendship is there, but I don't see it as being strong or empowering. There's just a lot of doubting and luck.

I don't think the book was necessarily bad, but it was under developed. I was really drawn to the description, and I'm sorry. It just didn't do anything for me.

While this is recommended for upper middle grade, I'd rather say it's meant only for middle graders. It's very

simple and debates no mature topics. Although I can't see myself liking this book in my younger years - some might.

It's a short read. The writing style was good enough, but once again, nothing extraordinary.

I still fail to understand why this is considered to be a parody. The world building and the characters weren't parodic, they were just way too simple. For me a parody means humour, and I couldn't find any.

I'm sorry. But it totally didn't work for me.

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## **Erin Bomboy says**

Karina's Silver Shoes is a fun, easy-to-read YA fantasy. Karina — a little snarky, a little naive — purchases a pair of silver shoes on a whim. Their presence kicks off an adventure where Karina enters another world called Whyland. There's a bad witch who might be good, a good advisor who might be bad, and assorted princesses. The adventure is easy enough to follow, and I enjoyed the commentary on wishes — don't wish for world peace although, in a way, that's what happens.

A few spelling errors did pull me out of the reading experience. I will say I really like the cover. It captures the fantastical element without being overly literal or cheesy.

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## **Michelle says**

(originally posted on The Writing Hufflepuff)

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

As I started to format this review I realised this is a YA book. I thought it was middle grade? Not when I requested it, but I had forgotten about that. It read like a middle grade book to be honest.

As the title of this post already suggests: I'M VERY CONFUSED ABOUT THIS BOOK.

Barely anything was explained, and if they did explain things, I was still left confused. I don't get what the point of the silver shoes was, because apparently what we're first told about the shoes wasn't true? But now I don't know what the shoes do? And what the point of them was?

Also there was some kind of revolution/coup sub plot going on, which kind of came out of nowhere and didn't feel built up at all to me. We're told that the king is apparently a tyrant, but we're only briefly told this and never really shown. It was barely even touched upon. That's another big problem of this book: lot's of telling instead of showing.

But let's get back to the fact that this book is incredibly confusing. The entire book felt incredibly rushed to me, so that didn't help me understand what was going on either. I also didn't understand who was on which side. The fact that they all seemed to constantly switch sides and pretend to be on one side but actually be on the other didn't help. Especially one character constantly switched: first they're good, then they're evil, then good again, then evil, then good – AND THEY NEVER EXPLAIN THINGS.

Towards the end of the book we find out the king has locked someone up for years, but either I missed it

because I was so bored or it was never explained why? I did consider that maybe the king was afraid that this person was going to try and overthrow him, as he fears his daughters would in the present, but if I was supposed to make that out myself... Then that's really bad writing. In this case we should've been told, not very very subtly shown.

All the characters were really flat. They could've easily been replaced by each other. Karina could've been an interesting, complex character, as she wants to wish for world peace and is upset at the idea that people wouldn't know that she was responsible for it:

because she would like to have statues made for her and win prizes.

This would've made a more unique, interesting kind of hero, since a lot of the time in YA and middle grade we see heroes who are heroes because they want to do the right thing. Unfortunately this is never really touched upon. Karina was too two-dimensional to even stand out.

Apart from the characters, I also didn't have a clue about the world this was set in. It's set in an alternative fantasy world, but I don't know anything about it, nor really what it looks like.

Basically this book kind of read like a first draft. There's too much missing, there are plot holes and it was incredibly confusing. I really wanted to like this one, but alas.

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