

The Other Side of Perfect

By Mariko Turk

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Blurb:

Alina Keeler was destined to dance, but one terrifying fall shatters her leg - and her dreams of a ballet career along with it. After a summer spent healing (translation: eating vast amounts of Cool Ranch Doritos and bingeing ballet videos on YouTube), she must trade her preprofessional dance classes for normal high school, where she reluctantly joins the musical. Rehearsals are nothing compared to Alina's past life at the acclaimed Kira Dobrow Ballet School. But the stage does offer more than she expected - namely her castmate Jude. He's annoyingly attractive, ridiculously optimistic and, worst of all, Alina just might be falling for him. However, finding a new normal means making peace with her past and acknowledging the racism she faced. Deep down, Alina still yearns for the world of ballet she left behind. But what does it mean to love something beautiful, yet broken? And as broken as she feels, can she ever open her heart to someone else?

Lyrical, romantic and peppered with humour, this debut novel explores the tenuousness of perfectionism, the possibilities of change and the importance of raising your voice.



Lamont Review:

How to move on when your whole future and reason for living is shattered?

This is what Alina is faced with when she breaks her leg and her looming professional ballet career is gone.

Back in normal high school, she has joined the school musical and it is opening up new options and friendships. But this doesn't get close to replacing the sense of perfection that she felt when performing ballet at her peak.

Can meeting the gorgeous Jude, her dance partner in the musical, help?

The Other Side of Perfect is a journey through her healing process. Alina's relationships with her sisters, her new best friend, and her old ballet best friend are central to the story and helps Alina to realise that life is what you make it!

Overall, a terrific romantic novel with themes of personal development, racism, perfectionism, friendship, love, and self growth, and will most appeal to teenage girls aged 14+.

Reviewed by Rob