



The Everlasting Rose

Dhonielle Clayton

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In this sequel to the instant *New York Times* bestseller, Camille, her sister Edel, and her guard and new love Remy must race against time to find Princess Charlotte. Sophia's Imperial forces will stop at nothing to keep the rebels from returning Charlotte to the castle and her rightful place as queen. With the help of an underground resistance movement called The Iron Ladies-a society that rejects beauty treatments entirely-and the backing of alternative newspaper The Spider's Web, Camille uses her powers, her connections and her cunning to outwit her greatest nemesis, Sophia, and restore peace to Orleans.

The Everlasting Rose Details

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Author : Dhonielle Clayton

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From Reader Review The Everlasting Rose for online ebook

Stacia | stacialovestoread says

thank you so much to Netgalley & to Freeform publishing for granting me this eARC in exchange for an honest review

Whoa.

Honestly that's all I can say.

Dhonielle has followed up (and maybe even surpassed) her previous work, The Belles, with book 2. Camillia is fully rounded character and her growth from the first book shows. No longer is she the delicate flower, hoping to be the favorite of the royal house; she is strong, determined, and in love.

Our story opens with Camillia and Co. as fugitives on the run from the law. Soon enough, our party dwindles and gains and dwindles again.

Everything has been leading up the final battle between Camillia and Sophia. Charlotte is awake and mending, and Camillia has made new allies in the form of the Iron Ladies...they're pretty mysterious but they're helpful when necessary.

Overall, this was an amazing read. I am so thankful that my wish was granted by the publisher for me to read this book ahead of its release in March. I will definitely be purchasing a finished copy when they're out!

Stacy Fetters says

"You and your sisters spent your entire existence altering appearances, shifting reality, catering to the most shallow whims. The birth of this world came out of a rotten, poisonous seed- and now, the framework is laced with it. Everyone spends all their time trying to look like something else. The masses will believe what is presented to them, as long as it's compelling and beautiful. Thanks to you, they no longer have any idea what's real- what's true."

I'm not even sure how this is possible but this was so much better than The Belles. I love The Belles and was excited to get my hands on this one. I've lost sleep, ignored people, and hid in quiet places to escape into the world of Orléans.

This was non-stop action from start to finish. I felt as if I couldn't keep up. But this was amazing and I need more. The twist and turns were shocking. They messed with your mind and it was hard to keep calm.

My fingers are crossed that she makes a companion novel that has the history of the Iron Ladies. We need more answers!!

Angry Girls fight back and my heart is proud!

Rae says

The Everlasting Rose by Dhonielle Clayton picks up where The Belles left off. With Camille, her sister Edel, and her guard Rémy on the run, they're on a mission to find Princess Charlotte and put a halt to Sophia's reign of terror.

Similar to how I felt about The Belles, The Everlasting Rose was okay, but it didn't blow me away. I did find it more engaging than the first book in the series--there was more action and more excitement--which was nice. It was well-written, but I never felt sucked into the events. I read the book but never felt committed to the characters.

I still maintain that the story concept is an interesting one. While I didn't always love the execution, I can fully appreciate the story idea. I liked the addition of the Spiders and Iron Ladies in The Everlasting Rose. It was a nice contrast to the world's constant desire for beauty. I liked the Iron Ladies' message and their goals for the world, though I would have liked to know more about them. Are they good? Are they bad? I would have liked to understand the group's motives better--it seemed like there was a lot left unsaid.

The ending was a whirlwind. So much happened! So much could have gone wrong! I think the ending adequately brought the book to a full closure though, which was appreciated.

I was hoping for more character depth and development in The Everlasting Rose, but most of the characters still felt shallow and flat. Sophia continued to be my favorite character. She was bad and twisted, which made her interesting.

While I can't say I give The Everlasting Rose rave reviews, if you've already read The Belles and liked it well enough, you'll find The Everlasting Rose equally enjoyable.

Thank you to NetGalley for providing the Kindle version of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Obsidian says

Honestly I am always worried when a debut author puts their second book out. I always worry that I am comparing it too much to the first. However, since the first book by Clayton was the first book in this series, I can't help but compare it. And I have to say that the second book didn't work for me at all. I was bored and just kept waiting for something (anything to happen). This book didn't expand the world the reader had found out about in book #1. There was barely any development to any characters. And then things just kind of end with a hint that there may be more to happen with these people in the future.

So in "The Everlasting Rose" the second book in the Belles series, we have Camille racing to stop the new evil Queen (Sophia). She and her sisters Edel and Amber managed to get away along with one of the guards, Remy. The group has plans to free the other Belles and rescue the true ruler of the throne Princess Charlotte.

I honestly am surprised that Camille seemed even more clueless in this one. I just felt sick and tired of her towards the end. The series should have shown a growth from book #1 to book #2 and we didn't get it at all. I can't even call Camille a Mary Sue since at least the Mary Sue personality is to be perfect and more beautiful than all other female characters for no good reason. Camille was just bland and there. We know she wants to

free her sisters and dethrone Sophia, At least there was no love triangle so we just have Camille obsessing over one person which felt like it came from nowhere.

The other characters barely have anything to do. Camille spends the most time with Remy and we have her thinking about him, wondering how it would be to kiss him, etc. Edel has more personality than Camille, though we barely have her interacting with Camille (which was weird) besides teaching her how to tap into her powers to change her outside looks and height. Edel doesn't trust Amber or anyone else and she acts like a jerk toward Remy. So Camille's personality was set to jerk, but at least she was lively. Amber was a total non-entity. And the Sophia we read about via the news sounded more scary than what we get in this book.

The writing was just okay though I found the flow terrible. There is no sense of magic to me like there was in book #1. I think that this book was too rushed. I would rather have waited another year for more world building and better plotting to be included in this one. It didn't help that each chapter was maybe 4 or 5 pages long. Considering this book was 342 pages (my hardcover) you would think that Clayton would have the main plot be about dethroning Sophia. Sadly we didn't get that until the very end.

The setting in this one just didn't work. If Clayton had stayed focused on the Belles maybe. But instead Clayton includes a resistance group known as "The Iron Ladies" who we just read/hear about for long portions of the book. And then Clayton tries to include a whole thing with the Belles being able to tap into their powers to change themselves and I never want to read about how cold a character is again. The book also started to feel repetitive after a while. Camille and friends run and hide, teacup dragons hide in her skirts, she fights with Edel and or Amber, feels angry, and feels jealous about Remy. Lather, rinse, repeat.

The ending was a bit of a letdown. I mean we get a Happily For Now ending which I honestly I was fine with because I really can't see this series continuing after this.

? **I am** **The** **Phoenix** **?? ? says**

"The journey home from Trianon feels *a thousand moments longer* than the first one"
errrr.... aehm... ??

I did not expect *that* much from this book, the second in a series that was already flawed from the beginning... but you know, I really enjoyed the first one and I was very curious to know how the story went on and (hopefully) ended. But this one, I mean... just no.

I am not giving one star because of how much I liked the first book and how hyped I was for this release (you may have noticed I ordered it barely a week after it came out). First of all, the story was much less interesting in the new environment; the first was packed with mysteries that made me flew through the pages, mysteries that should have been explained in a satisfying manner in this one but, spoiler alert, were not. The writing style was dry and pretentious from the beginning, but it became almost silly by the end (see above quote).

Aaand, last but not least, this book has some of the dumbest characters I have ever seen. There is especially a scene near the end of the book in which a person *whose name starts with A* decides to end his/her life in the stupidest way possible, literally nullifying every chance they had in they already stupid plan and literally no

one cares. Like for real. No one blinks an eye. I was like wtf just happened??? why??? why is no one doing anything???? ???

Anyway, I think i made it clear that I didn't like the book but hey, I still like the first one enough to give the author another chance in case she publishes something else. And maybe this book wasn't really that bad, it's just anger for some disappointed expectations building up for months, or second book syndrome, or whatever. meh. NEEXT ???

Danielle (Life of a Literary Nerd) says

“Beauty is blood and bone and sovereignty: a perfect smile is its greatest weapon.”

I'm so pleasantly by this book and I actually really enjoyed it. I loved the world of the Belles and the luxe history and descriptive writing, but I had problems with some of the characters and plot points. But **Everlasting Rose** surpassed my expectations and gave me everything I wanted for the story in this world. Set immediately after the events of *The Belles*, Camille is looking for her sisters and a way to stop Princess Sophia from taking over the Orleane society. Plenty of action and politics make this an engaging and rich story I couldn't put down.

Things I Liked

The **worldbuilding** was one of my favorite things from book 1 and I feel like I got an even better grasp on it in book 2! I feel like I got a bigger insight into Belle history and their powers, like what *arcana* is. The setting is this seamless blend of 18th century France with this futuristic tech, and it just works. I also continue to love anything and everything related to gods and mythology.

I really grew to love Camille in *Everlasting Rose*. She is passionate, ambitious, headstrong, and determined. She doesn't always make the smartest choice, but she's never careless or reckless and I respect the hell out of her.

I always here for a good revolution storyline, so I loved meeting the **Iron Ladies** who lead the rebellion against the Belle/beautification culture. It was nice seeing a different perspective and group that doesn't define their power in beauty.

Belle lore is so dark and fucked up. It such a contrast to the facade and practice of the Belle. It the pinnacle of not all that glitters is gold .The Belles are seen only as property not people. How they're treated and used is truly horrifying and how Belles are created is something I never expected. And there were so many leeches - just nasty.

Things I Didn't Like

I had a problem with **clunky transitions** throughout the story. I felt like as soon as we got to an intense action scene the chapter would end, and the next began with an easy resolutions past the problem. It cut a lot of the action in the story and make the reading a little choppy.

Sophia still crazy loon, but she wasn't as big a presence so she didn't bother me as much. But as the 'villain' of the story, she was a little underwhelming.

Everlasting Rose is a mostly satisfying conclusion to what *The Belles* started. This series takes a deep look at the dark side of beauty and challenges the influence and expectations society ascribes to our appearance. The writing and the world are so luxe, the characters are compelling, and the food sounds delicious. This was a book I just couldn't put down.

I received a copy of the book from in exchange for an honest review.

Cesar says

2 stars.

Me too, Zen. Me too.

The Everlasting Rose is what I would call rushed product. This being the final(?) book in the series, I had expected more from it. By that, I mean we get a satisfying conclusion and the plot and characters would be more fleshed out. But what I got was a rushed book that should've been a bit longer.

Yes, I know, this coming from a person who sometimes says that a book is unnecessarily long and could be shortened. Now here I am saying a book should have been longer.

The Everlasting Rose picks up after Camellia, Edel, Remy, and Amber escaped from Sophia's wrath and they are in hiding. They plan to overthrow Sophia from the throne by revealing that Charlotte, Sophia's sister, is alive. But they need help and a mysterious group known as the Iron Ladies could help.

When I first saw the page count for *The Everlasting Rose*, I couldn't help but be concerned. Usually, when a book in a series is significantly shorter than the others, they're sometimes underwhelming. *The Everlasting Rose* is a rushed work that had a plot that was all over the place and bland characters. I did not enjoy my time reading it.

The plot is not coherent in the long run. Camellia's main objective is to dethrone Sophia. Sounds simple enough. Though that doesn't go into fruition until the 50 pages of the book. The remaining pages are nothing but Camellia and Co. running from safe house to safe house, planning, going to another safe house, more planning, and so on. Really, this book felt incomplete and rushed.

I would not have minded if there were an extra 40 pages to expand on decent pacing and more development of the characters. But all we got was a rushed ending. A while ago Tomi Adeyemi tweeted that she did not think the next book in her *Legacy of Orisha* series was complete and wanted her readers to get the best experience and decided to push back the release date. After reading *The Everlasting Rose*, I think that's what should've been done. Because this was a rushed book that isn't complete.

Dhonielle could've expanded more on the Belles, how Sophia managed to create more Belles, explore their powers, but it's all just speculation. We are told but now shown.

Camellia is still a static character, never changing or even having the least bit of development. Her goals were put first but not her. Yes, she does show compassion to her sisters but that's all we get from her. Nothing about her is extraordinary other than being a Belle. If she wasn't a Belle, she could easily be forgettable.

Speaking of forgettable, there are the Iron Ladies and they are by far a poor excuse of a rebellion. I wouldn't even call them a rebellion to begin with. They're a group that claims they are better and are so good at their jobs. In reality, they didn't do anything other than be intimidating and show up at the last second. Camellia did their job for them and they just took the glory. Pathetic. Easily forgettable.

There is a romance between Camellia and Remy and it too was rushed. I know I keep saying the word rushed a lot but that's the only way I could even describe everything that happened. The romance between Camellia and Remy came out of nowhere. In the previous book, they had a somewhat rocky relationship where Camellia didn't like him at first but grew to like him but not in a romantic way. Here, she just likes him all of a sudden and there is no build up to their relationship.

Then we have Sophia, A.K.A., every other cartoonish Disney villain out there. That is not an exaggeration. Given that this is a world that is entirely focused on beauty, Sophia's new laws are cruel, but she is a boring villain. She's just a bad girl who did bad things and wants to do bad things but we aren't given any reason why she's like that other than she's bad. She's bad just for the reason of being bad. It's like she woke up one day and decided to be evil.

Seeing how the story ended, I am not sure if Dhonielle will continue this series with another character. The way it ended left enough room for the world to be explored from a different POV. If only this wasn't rushed, I might've enjoyed it more.

Everlasting Rose? More like Withered Rose.

Verdict

The Everlasting Rose is nothing but a rushed product that fails to deliver any promises of a satisfying conclusion. It wasn't a terrible book, just rushed. Really disappointed.

Thanks for reading my review!

-Cesar

Adah Udechukwu says

The Everlasting Rose was not as an awesome Book 1. The 4 stars i gave The Everlasting Rose is in honour of Book 1. Book 2 isn't really worth it.

Vanessa W. says

The Belles - ★★★★★

The Everlasting Rose - ★★★

Ehhhhh... I'm a little disappointed. No one is as sad as I am. I mean, I was dealing with multiple health issues while trying to finish this, so I don't know if that impacted my overall enjoyment.

Also, I feel like this felt much like a second book in a trilogy, not the conclusion to a duology??? There better be a third book forthcoming called *The Iron Ladies*, Miss. Dhonielle.

World-building: 3 stars // I didn't feel like we got more development of Orleans. We did get somewhat more backstory and a surprise or two, like *The Iron Ladies*, but I didn't feel it expounded much more. I would be down for a prequel about *The Iron Ladies* or even a spin-off book because the book ended with me having more questions than I got answers. I will add points for rare teacup dragons.

Writing: 4 stars // Dhonielle Clayton's writing is just the best. I could not have finished this book without the beautiful and unique writing. It's absolutely mesmerizing. I actually liked the writing more so than in *The Belles* because the purple prose isn't as intense.

Characters: 2.5 stars // We are only ever in Camille's head. Nearly 50% of her stream of conscious is focus on being on the run and worrying about her sisters. But she didn't have any inner-turmoils or demons herself. She didn't really grapple with any big life choices or question her own morals. She always did the right thing. It was too easy too root for her. Not to mention, I thought there would be more development or surprises in relation to her mother. The mystery surrounding her mom was so built up in Book 1. In fact, a lot of the mystery of Orleans is built up in Book 1 only for the suspense to be lacking in *The Everlasting Rose*. Which brings me to my next point...

Plot: 2 stars // The plot was kind of lack-luster. The first 3/4 is focused on escaping *The Belles* + Camille trying find Charlotte, evade capture, and stop Sophie's coronation. The last 1/4 was so rushed. We get all this build up and then the big stand off is followed by a fade-to-black moment instead of Camille ever truly facing the biggest antagonist of the entire series. (view spoiler)

Overall Enjoyment: 3 stars // Unfortunately, I just wasn't blown away by this one. My overall rating is purely based on my enjoyment. You can tell the author put all her effort into writing this. It's not sloppy or low quality by any means. I had high expectations and wanted more suspense and character/plot development.

Final Thoughts:

I thought Sophie would answer for the horrible things that happened in *The Belles*. That's why I tolerated the torture/bulling in the first book. Instead, (view spoiler) I also didn't feel like the author took enough risks with this one. Everything major happens in a few chapters and it gets wrapped up. I feel like Clayton is the sort of author to leave us with something shocking or unsettling that makes us want more. The possibilities in a world like Orleans are *endless*, so it's a shame the author went a safe route in how she concludes the story.

That being said, I will always be a fan of Clayton's work and I will undoubtedly pick up the next book she writes without a question (especially if it's Book 3 in *The Belles* series *wink*).

Update: February 2, 2019

I received an ARC from Netgalley for consideration for a review.

I am at the 50% mark. My first impressions:

- It's very consistent with the last book.
- The writing is still beautiful, but the purple prose has lightened so I've flown through the first half of the story in about a couple days.
- My current issue is that there's not enough conflict and every mission the characters carry out they succeed at. There's not enough urgency and the suspense I felt in the first book seems lost in the sequel.
- Oh, and I didn't like the way a character dies. It didn't add to the plot and I didn't feel any emotional impact.
- I plan to finish this really, really, really soon. I'm optimistic.

WE HAVE A TITLE AND RELEASE DATE!

Source.

Tanya Tate says

I GOT THIS ARC THANKS TO NETGALLEY!!
YES YES YES!!

Frank says

Am I the only one who kind of hates that cover? This series deserves better than these covers

laurel [suspected bibliophile] says

Camille has escaped from evil Sophia's clutches, but the princess has captured her Belle sisters and is building a prison that will house a monstrous creche of slave Belles to cater to the demands for more beauty.

I think this is one of those, *it's not you, it's me* books.

I enjoyed the first one, with the decadence overlaid and supported by an unseen/purposefully ignored slave system of magic users and was really anticipating where this book would go. How would the system be dismantled? Where did the Belles come from? What else would be revealed.

I wasn't underwhelmed or overwhelmed by this sequel, I was just...whelmed.

It was enjoyable and had a good ending, but I found myself skimming through it to get to the end, swishing

my eyes over the macarons and teacup *everything* (view spoiler) to get to the meat and potatoes—more revelations of the "secondary" Belles, more screen time, more explanation of what it meant to be Gris, more action, more explanation of Sophie and her rapid transition to authoritarian power, (view spoiler)

But I felt like most of this book was Camille, Edel, Remy and Amber somehow managing to escape detection from the most incompetent city guard on the planet while flitting from innhouse to innhouse wearing flimsy masks, with the last 20% crammed into the final showdown.

I think that a lot of readers will enjoy this final (?) installment in the Belles duology (?), but it didn't capture my attention as much as I would have liked.

I received this ARC from NetGalley for an honest review.

Tucker (TuckerTheReader) says

****3.5 Stars****

Edit: You guys!! megs_bookrack and I are starting a petition to have Dhonielle Clayton to write a third book. Petition:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MnNp...#>

I had a while to think about this. I mulled it over in my head and I'm feeling rather conflicted. On its own, The Everlasting Rose was a great book but as a sequel **and** a finale, I must say I am a bit disappointed.

Maybe it was my fault though. One of my bad habits with finales is that I get so excited to see what the ending is that I don't slow down and enjoy the actual story. Whoops! ?

The characters and plot was just as exciting as book one. I hope we get to see more in this world soon!

Many thanks to Disney Hyperion for sending me a copy in exchange for an honest review

| Goodreads | Blog | Twitch | Pinterest |

megs_bookrack says

****3.5 stars rounded up****

We can't expect one person -- or even two -- to take the entire burden of resisting on their shoulders. We all have to stand up and say no.

Attention: If you have not read *The Belles* this review may provide little tid-bits that could possibly spoil you for some of the events in that book. Proceed with caution.

The evil Princess Sophia is set to rise to the throne. She claims her sister, Charlotte, is dead. She has sinister plans in mind for all the Belles and the future of beauty work throughout Orleans.

Camellia, the once favorite, is on the run. Forced to flee the kingdom, she now finds herself on the outside looking in. Pairing up with some old favorites from Book 1, including handsome savior, Remy, Camellia begins to set her sights on taking Sophia down. The task is made more difficult however since Sophia wants her found, making her the 'most wanted' person in all the land.

Discovering an underground movement of rebels also planning to revolutionize the kingdom, Camellia finds a place where she feels she can be of good use. But can she trust them?

This book picks up directly where Book 1 leaves off. There is a lot more action in the plot as the world has previously been built for you, we spend less time on those details. However, although there is more action, I still felt the pacing was a bit off for me.

There were times when I was really enjoying it, speeding along, and other times where I had to force myself to pick it up. This being said, Clayton's writing feels lovely to me. Each word she chooses seems to add beauty to the text but at the same time, things can become very one dimensional.

I liked the scifi bits that were sprinkled through here. The way the Belles are 'grown' and Sophia's plans for them seemed something more out of a dystopian novel than a fantasy. I did enjoy those elements and personally, I wish there had been a bit more of them.

That may seem odd but I couldn't help but wish those ideas would have been expanded upon more. The origin of the Belles. We heard the mythological tale of where they came from but how much of that was true?

I did also enjoy the commentary about standing up to old-fashioned systems that need to be changed. Systems that take advantage of, literally USE, some individuals for the sheer pleasure of the better off within the society. This was an interesting examination of the concept of beauty, as well, and the negative effects of a strong societal emphasis on beauty.

The Everlasting Rose leaves off in a very interesting place. Is there going to be another book? I would definitely be interested in continuing on in this world. The events that take place at the end of this leaves a lot to be explored. I am crossing my fingers for a Book 3!!!

Thank you so much to the publisher, Disney Book Group, for providing me with a copy to read and review. As always, I appreciate the opportunity and look forward to hearing other reader's thoughts on this one!

Nenia ? Queen of Literary Trash, Protector of Out-of-Print Gems, Khaleesi of Bodice Rippers, Mother of Smut, the Unrepentant, Breaker of Convention ? Campbell says

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On the surface, *The Belles* series really doesn't seem like it should work. The concept of a dystopian society overturned by a teenage revolutionary has been done to death thanks in part to the wildly successful *Hunger Games* and *Divergent* series. *The Belles*, in particular, is highly reminiscent of the shallow and superficial Capitol elite in THE HUNGER GAMES, with over-the-top costumes, high premiums on beauty and luxury, and a *laissez-faire* attitude towards their poor and suffering populace reminiscent of the nobles in pre-Revolutionary France.

Part of what saved THE BELLES for me was how dark it was willing to be to drive home the point that beauty isn't everything. Camellia, the heroine, starts out very sheltered and naive, a pawn in her society's quest to become beautiful and adored. By the end of the book, she isn't just questing her own powers and where they came from, but also where her society's ideals fit in within larger concepts of morality and justice, and whether the ruler overseeing Orleans is really capable of fair and just rule (spoiler: nope).

Of course, this being a dystopian novel, she finds that out the hard way, through blood and tears.

I was excited when I found out that I was approved for an advanced copy of the sequel, THE EVERLASTING ROSE. **WARNING:** There will be spoilers for THE BELLES in this review, and a few mild spoilers for THE EVERLASTING ROSE, so if you're one of those people who want to go into a book totally blind, I suggest you X out of this tab and pretend you never saw me. I *did* mostly enjoy THE EVERLASTING ROSE, but not as much as the prequel; it had some glaring problems.

The Belles series takes place in a magical/steampunk fantasy version of New Orleans called "Orleans." Society revolves entirely around beauty and luxury, and the tyrant ruler Sophia has gone literally mad with power, exerting magic and might over her subjects at will, as well as demanding constant assurance that she really is the fairest in the land. The previous book ended with Camellia being betrayed, losing favor with the queen, and being forced to go on the run, until she can lick her wounds and rally her strength to become the revolutionary figure that Orleans needs.

When I saw the cover for *THE EVERLASTING ROSE*, I could tell that this book was probably going to be a lot darker - and I do like the contrast of that, but I don't think that this cover is as pretty as the original. Her neck ruff is super weird - it reminds me of this line from *Black Adder*, in which he describes one of his Elizabethan colleagues as looking like "a bird who swallowed a plate." In a way, that's fitting for this book, because it manages to be both horrific and ungodly cheesy at times.

Since this book isn't out yet, I don't want to spoil too much. I will say that we do get the revolution we were promised from the first book, and it is handled pretty well. There's a bunch of creepy women called the Iron Ladies who *really* like spiders (I can't help but picture Diana Terranova). Camellia discovers that her and the other Belles's powers aren't actually limited to beauty and makeovers. Camellia gets angry, and stoops to cruel acts in the name of justice. She loses her shit. It's brilliant.

And yet, there were things in this book I didn't really enjoy. I didn't like that Ms. Clayton not only seems to be redeeming Auguste, despite his betrayal in the previous book, but also appears to be reintroducing him as a love interest. She chose Remy, dammit! I didn't like the animal death that happens in the last third of the book and, worse, is committed by the heroine herself. It felt totally pointless, like it was done for shock value and that's it. There are better ways to be edgy than to just go around killing innocent little animals, just my two cents. I also didn't like the bizarre *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* twist this book took towards the end. I'm not going to go into any further detail than that, because spoilers, but if you read this book, you'll know what I'm talking about. It was pretty flipping weird. At that point, it kind of felt like this book had jumped the shark.

Lastly, and I did touch on this briefly in the previous book, I don't really like that the villain is an out lesbian. Not that I don't like lesbians, but it's irritating that when you see LGBT folk represented in fiction, it's usually as 1) the bad guy, or 2) the sacrifice (i.e. bury your gays). The previous book had a character named Claudine, who was the queen's lover, and she was murdered. When I complained about the only gay character dying, people were quick to jump on that in my review, pointing out that Sophia was also gay. Yes - she's gay, and she's evil AF. Having a dead gay and a psychopathic narcissist gay as your two main examples of rep really isn't that great. I know a lot of my LGBT friends who read this book were really upset about that aspect of this book, and I can see why. Especially since this book works so hard to be inclusive with regard to rep of skin color, with several of the main characters described as being various shades of brown, and this being described as beautiful, even desirable (I loved that, by the way - one of the best moments in this book is when the heroine totally goes against shadism, saying that she loves her natural skin color, and that darker is beautiful). It just goes to show that even diverse books can be problematic in how they choose to represent diversity within the worlds that they create.

Overall, though, *THE EVERLASTING ROSE* wasn't a bad book. I know I always sound harsh when I review these things, but I do really make a point to be fair and discuss as many elements in the book (both positive and negative) as possible because I know some of the tropes and problematic elements I discuss in my reviews *do* bother people, even if they might not bother me, and I consider it my duty as a reviewer to try and present an accurate recap of my reading experience to help others decide whether or not they want to buy

the book. I did enjoy THE EVERLASTING ROSE, and its over-the-top cheesiness that reminded me in so many ways of a better-written version of Amy Ewing's THE JEWEL. I thought the writing was gorgeous, and loved seeing a black heroine getting to save the world for a change. I'm really looking forward to seeing what Dhonielle Clayton comes up with next.

Thanks to Netgalley/the publisher for the review copy!

3 to 3.5 stars
