



Wickedly Charming

Kristine Grayson , Kristine Kathryn Rusch

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Cinderella's Prince Charming is divorced and at a dead-end. The new owner of a bookstore, Charming has given up on women, royalty, and anything that smacks of a future. That is, until he meets up with Mellie...

Mellie is sick and tired of stepmothers being misunderstood. Vampires have redeemed their reputations, why shouldn't stepmothers do the same? Then she runs into the handsomest, most charming man she's ever met and discovers she's going about her mission all wrong...

It's only natural that sparks fly and magic ensues when these two fairy tale refugees put their heads - and vulnerable hearts - together...

Wickedly Charming Details

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From Reader Review Wickedly Charming for online ebook

Jdtolbert2003yahoo.com says

The story is about Prince Charming (His actual name) though in the real world he goes by Dave. Dave thinks himself a middle-aged overweight balding single dad that no one could possibly call charming. He has given up on love. The sweet Cinderella is depicted as an self-absorbed woman who never mentally left her teens. When he meets Mellie (Snow White's step mother).

Mellie has an image problem that she just can't get past. She loves children and was meant to be a mother. Her own children (before Snow) have grown up and become productive member of the Kingdom. But the nasty brothers Grimm painted her the evil step-mother when in fact it was Snow who was a runaway and married a necrophiliac. Mellie used all of her own magic just to keep Snow alive. Determined to change her image and at the suggestion of Prince Charming Mellie writes a book.

The story follows the book tour and Prince Charming and Mellie's romance to the end. It was totally different and cute.

Drucilla says

I've said it before and I'll say it again: The world the author has created in this series is really neat. I love when fairytale conventions are turned on their ear, but the execution leaves a lot to be desired. The romance between Charming and Mellie is hardly there. In fact, Charming seems to hardly spend anytime with Mellie as the novel progresses. The set up with Ella at the end of the novel is great but just peters out and doesn't payoff. Also, while I like the idea of Mellie's book and it *does* fit in well with Mellie's cause, her group "PETA" (People for the Ethical Treatment of Archetypes) is just stupid.

Side note: I hate it when covers don't reflect the inside of the book. Charming is described as a balding, middle-aged, guy with a paunch. What part of that is reflected in the cover!?!?!?!

Amy Jacobs says

I am a huge fan of fairy tale remakes and was excited to jump into the story of Prince Charming and The Evil Stepmother. Who would think that Cinderella would get rid of that handsome Prince and that The Evil Stepmother actually had a decent bone in her old body?

If you are looking for some sexy and steamy scenes, then look elsewhere. There isn't much in the steamy department. While I enjoyed the attempt of creating a new fairy tale long after the original ended, I wasn't a huge fan of the book. It had such promise and could have been so much more, but in my opinion this book was just okay. It was an easy read with not much to absorb and the Prince was not what I was expecting as a Prince. The pace was slow in many parts of the book, making this a much longer read that it should have been. I actually struggled to finish this one where as it should have taken me no time at all.

If you are looking for a different HEA for your favorite fairy tales, then give this book a chance. It could have been that it wasn't my cup of tea since I am a huge Cinderella and Snow White fan.

Blodeuedd Finland says

My thoughts:

I found this book charming and sweet. It was fun to read, and I liked her takes on fairytales and what isn't always told in them.

It takes place in our world, but what we do not know is that there are more magical kingdoms in another dimension of some sort. Prince Charming left his kingdom, because what else was there to do than to wait for his dad to die. These "fairy-tale" characters also live for a long time. He went through a painful divorce with his Ella, it was not a match made in heaven. Poor Charming is sure charming but he is also a nerd that loves books (oh he won my heart at once there!), his hair is not as thick as it used to be, and as Ella pointed out his weight is no longer perfect. So he is a normal man, just still very charming, and I liked him. Then we have the wicked stepmother, yes Snow White's stepmum, though she is not as evil as those wicked Grim brothers made her out to be. There is another story there, and I did feel sorry for her and the bad rep she got. Sure she was a bit pushy at first, but she calmed down and I liked her. They were just two people with painful pasts and they wanted more to life.

After having finished this book I did hope that Grayson will go back to this world and write about more characters. What I definitely liked was when they talked about the Snow White story, because it sure is icky that the prince wanted a dead woman, what did he actually want to do to her? Oh the story will tell you, the real story. Amusing and disturbing. A great spin to stories we all know.

Conclusion:

It was an amusing story to read. Sure they were slow to fall in love, but who could blame them. But it was there from page 1 so I just had to wait for that HEA, a more realistic HEA than the fairy-tale ones they knew by heart. I would read more by this author. At the end I was charmed, wickedly charmed.

Rating:

Quick read

DeAnna Knippling says

This is NOT a book for people who want the fantasy rather than the reality. It just isn't. It's more of a stepfamily/survivor kind of book featuring people who are middle-aged and not necessarily perfect, physically, emotionally, etc. Also, I wouldn't read the book if you're not interested in the publishing world; there's a lot of detail on publishing in here, which I found enjoyable, but I like that kind of thing.

My only criticism is that after all the roundabout misunderstandings throughout the first 9/10ths of the book, the resolution was almost too easy.

Lisamariel says

Oh boy... The book is basically about two charming, smart, fun characters who just run around in their own mind circles figuring out if the other one is into them. It's disappointing because they've both lived for a couple of years, are mature and grown adults, why are you acting like teenagers? I want to see a story blossom, not let it be blocked by personal insecurities. Very unsatisfying.

Laura Summers says

Reviewed for www.bookchickcity.com (6 out of 10 on the blog)

This is an imaginative and fun take on a fairytale. Our two main characters are Charming, the Prince Charming of Cinderella fame. Who is now a beleaguered father of two, middle aged and bespectacled. Who has reinvented himself in the Greater World as a bookseller and renamed himself Dave. He is also the father of two girls who have been abandoned by their selfish mother and Charming's ex Ella. Our heroine is Mellie, Snow White's evil stepmother, who is on a campaign to clear her name and that of other evil stepmother, because it certainly wasn't her that fed Snow the poisoned apple!

The book starts off with Charming at a book fair, because he is a total book geek and runs his own book store (personally I don't see anything wrong with this!), where Mellie is campaigning against the misrepresentation of fairy tale characters in novels. Sparks fly as Charming is horrified at Mellie's wish to censor fiction. The pair are like chalk and cheese with Charming quietly bookish, although gifted of course with magical charm, and Mellie outspoken, yet insecure all at the same time. It's not long before Charming convinces Mellie there maybe a very different approach to improving the perception of wicked step mothers, after all look at vampires - everyone loves them now! Cue an unlikely partnership.

As a lover of happy endings and fairytales, I did have to get over the fact that Prince Charming and Cinderella are divorced, but not only that but Cinderella is the baddie. The horror! ;-)

This isn't a hot and sizzling romance, more like a warm and fuzzy one, or a hot chocolate with marshmallows floating on the top. But I wouldn't say there were lots of sizzle and sparks and the love story itself is a slow burner.

The pace of the book is also sedate. I liked the world creation of the Greater World (our human world) and the magical kingdoms where fairytale characters really exist in separate kingdoms. The story is however, slow moving at times. There are some really witty scenes, a fab coffee shop sequence springs to mind and there are some parts that unfortunately dragged. Which meant the overall flow of the book could have done with a bit more speed and a little less detail. For example, we meet some characters briefly, never to see them again.

This is the first book I have read by Grayson, but I've since discovered she has written a series of these fairy tale adaptations. While I enjoyed the story and its gentle chiding at fairytales, I probably wouldn't want to read lots of them. But perhaps that is more to do with my love of fairytales and happily ever after, than a criticism of the writing, because I did enjoy it never the less.

VERDICT:

A fun take on what happens after happily ever after with our favourite and not so favourite fairytale characters. A gentle love story that will probably appeal to people who like less spicy romances.

Jill Kemerer says

I really enjoyed this book! It's a sweet romance (no steamy scenes here!), but the attraction sizzles between these two! I loved the unique plot and the twists. The romance really sold it for me. I didn't want to put it down!

My only gripe (and I got over it quickly) was that in the opening chapters, the heroine (Mellie) and the hero (Charming) sounded the same even in their thoughts, but it improved as I kept reading. It's just the writer's style. Excellent book!

Diane ~Firefly~ says

I love the idea of this series, but the books never seem to quite live up to what I'm expecting.

This one has Mellie protesting fairy tale books as they are unfair to step-mothers and others. She runs into Price Charming (who is an avid reader) and they are attracted to each other but both unwilling to put themselves out. Charming feeling not charming and reeling from his divorce and trying to take care of his kids. Mellie too caught up in being a victim and not believing he could like her. This goes on for most the book (which takes place over many months) and it just gets old.

I would have rather had them get together sooner and maybe deal with some of the step-mother issues that would come up in the future.

What I find interesting is Mellie is protesting fairy tales unfair treatment of characters while this book make Cinderella, Snow White and the King out to be awful people.

Debbie says

I really liked the premise behind this book, with all the fairy tale characters having different relationships than we know after all this time. And the idea that shy, bookloving Prince Charming, aka Dave Encanto and formerly married to (Cinder)Ella, and Snow White's (not-evil) stepmother Mellie would work together to write a book to change people's perceptions about stepmothers (like *Wicked* did for the Wicked Witch of the West)--and fall in love--was a neat one. But this book got bogged down in so much insecure internal dialogue on the part of the main characters that it became annoying. Some, I could understand--they were characters centuries old, both wounded in past relationships. But over and over, in the same words, ignoring all contrary evidence, was too much, and then when they finally come to terms with their attraction and their feelings, it falls flat and seems rushed.

Elizabeth says

Derivative, but delightful. The book starts slow and I almost DNF'd it several times but plowed through this. I'd call this second generation fan fiction, in that it felt like fan fiction of fan fiction. The tail draws

inspiration from Wicked, and some of the more modern fairy-tales retold as well as from reality television and a few real life events.

The tale travels back and forth between the 21st century and whatever century it may be in the Kingdoms. Our heroine, Mellie, happens to be Snow White's step mother. She's often referred to as wicked or evil, but it's her life goal to change that misperception. Our hero is one of the "Charming" princes, this one Cinderella's now ex-husband. They've both found a portal that allows them to move between the Greater World and the Kingdoms.

Charming's been miserable since his marriage ended, though he's a devoted father. He's trying to make a go of it as a bookseller. Mellie has built a life helping the underdog and is now on a crusade to make the Greater World understand how the Grimm Brothers and others have wronged many like her with their wrongful mistakes. She approaches the goal in the wrong way, using tactics similar to those employed by PETA, and achieves little success.

Charming persuades her to use storytelling instead, ala the book Wicked, to get her message out. Alas, Mellie can't write well so she employs Charming as her ghost writer. Nothing can go wrong there, right? I'll leave the rest of that to the reader.

An easy and fun read that has left me wanting to pick up another in this series. 3.5/5 on romance scale.

Melindeeloo says

Many years after the happily ever afters in their stories, Snow White's 'wicked' step-mother, Mellie, is trying to change things for others who have received the same bad rep she's been saddled with and Prince Charming, now known as Dave Encanto, is struggling on after his divorced from Ella.

I really enjoyed this offbeat tale of two middlish aged faery tale characters who are living in our world. There are parts early in the story that are a bit bogged down by Mellie's angst and her anger, but both once things get rolling the story ends up being sweet and heart warming and Dave is truly nerdishly charming and so much better a hero than the young shallow besotted Prince of Cinderella fame. And I liked that the maligned step-mother is the one to come to the rescue when Charming is faced with a seemingly unsolvable parenting dilemma.

I was surprised to discover the mention for a sequel at the afterward materials in Wickedly Charming and even more surprised to find that the next book Utterly Charming is actually a story that I read several years ago and is part of a series that I really liked in which Grayson, revisits faery tale characters and gives them another chance at a happily ever after. I am glad that these light (and mild) contemporary fantasy romances are getting a second turn in the spotlight.

Claudine says

An interesting after story of a classic fairy tale, undecided if I truly like this version of events. The HEA of the classic tale is bursted, Cinderella divorcing Charming and he ending up with the wicked stepmom in

current times?

Sarai says

THOUGHTS/OPINION:

This is a fairytale retake on the traditional HEA. First off the wicked step-mother is ticked off that we here on Earth think that she is wicked. I mean after all we never got to hear her own story did we? And what about those Prince Charmings we heard all about growing up as a little girl haven't you ever wondered about their marriages? Did they really get a HEA? I know I was always curious as a child and would ask my mother the HEA questions with a follow up yes I understand they lived that way but how do you know they did?

Needless to say she would tell me to go to sleep. Ms. Grayson however, has decided to answer the above questions in this cute little romantic story. Apparently not every fairy tale creature or story character does live HEA. In fact Prince Charming is divorced who would've thought? Not to mention that evil step mother is in fact not so evil. Did we ever wonder if maybe just maybe her ward/child was evil and drove her mad? So I have to say this book managed to hit all the right spots for me.

I loved learning about the fairytale creatures and their not so HEAs I loved learning how the world of Fairy differs from our world and I have to admit that this was a very cute sweet book.

Don't go into this book expecting much b/c come on people it's a fairy tale retake but do go into it expecting romance that is realistic, fairy tale characters, and the thought that fairytales don't always turn out the way we want.

One of my favorite parts is when Charming is explain to the Step mother Mellie that she has to revamp her image like vampires did you know the sparkling ones LOL I howled at that ;)

Amy Keeley says

(Please note: I've added a few thoughts to the end of this review.)

I really wanted to like this book. I've read this author's short stories (under the name Kristine Kathryn Rusch) and loved them. But the ending to this made me wonder if it was a longer story that had been trimmed. Overall, an okay read, but I've read much better from her.

Maybe it'll work for you better than it worked for me. Here are my more detailed thoughts.

The Good:

* In spite of the half-dressed guy on the cover, this is a sweet romance (i.e. no bed scenes and just a couple of kissing scenes). It was a refreshing find. I think she handled the emotional aspects of starting over, especially while attempting to base the relationship on friendship, really well.

* Charming. He's funny, shy, and a hero I can really fall in love with. There's only one scene where I lost

some sympathy for him, but it wasn't a fatal blow to his character.

* Mellie's background. She starts out as very unlikeable. About halfway through, I agreed with Charming: she's amazing. Her biggest weakness is her insecurity, but I like how that was handled.

* The fairy tale world of the Kingdoms is fairy-tale-ish in the same way Once Upon a Time is. Lots of Disney references and comments on how fairy tales and myths change over time. It works surprisingly well here.

* In-depth coverage of what it's like in the publishing industry. Fairs, drafts, screenplays, book tours, even the ego of some writers, all of it came to life in this book and I loved every minute of it.

The Not-so-Good:

* It's obviously part of a series, and yet there's nothing to indicate that on the cover or front pages. Only two things directly told me it was part of a series (one indirectly but I put that in the next point), both of which could be missed by the casual reader. 1) More than one guy receives an in-depth description, thus indicating that there's going to be multiple heroes since heroes are typically the only handsome ones described in a romance. 2) On the very last page, under the author bio (which not everyone reads) is the statement that the next book in the series, Utterly Charming, is coming in Oct 2011. Seriously? That's it?

* There's a major thread left untied at the end (which only makes sense in a series). I think a number of readers unaware of that might throw the book against the wall.

* This book falls into the same nonsense other romance novels that greatly annoy me fall into. Except this was the worst one yet. The nonsense, in general, is this:

Danger surrounds either the hero, the heroine, both, or someone they love. Lives are on the line. Everything is tense.

And in the middle of all this? They hump.

At best, this bit of nonsense makes me laugh. In this story, considering who was in danger and how all the fathers I've known would have reacted, I nearly stopped reading the book. I won't say any more than that, but I was NOT impressed.

* While the publishing aspect of the story remained strong, the fantasy aspect was very anticlimactic. In fact, it turned out to be so incidental to the story that this could have easily been a contemporary romance. None of the magic in this book mattered. None. The only thing that came close was the act that took the magic from Snow White's stepmother. But it really wasn't crucial to the plot itself. It was just an interesting bit of backstory.

I don't know. YMMV. Most of it is a fun ride, so if you love Once Upon a Time, you might like this.

Update: Silly me. I hadn't noticed this was the seventh book in the series. It reads like the first, which doesn't impress me. When I looked at the synopses for the others, I became even less enthused. Maybe she does something with that major, untied thread in the next book. It focuses on Bluebeard (mentioned in this book), so who knows? I'm going to try starting from the beginning (Utterly Charming) and see if that works better for me.