



Never After

Rebecca Lickiss

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A prince in search of a bride, a lady in search of adventure, and a wizard in search of a job each follow a folktale to a remote castle buried in thorns and briars and find what they seek in this delightful non-Grimm fairy tale from the author of "Eccentric Circles." (July)

Never After Details

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Author : Rebecca Lickiss

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From Reader Review Never After for online ebook

Shay says

I appreciate the author's attempt at finding a new story in the constantly retold fairytales genre, however this book lacked the charming or endearing sidekicks or great main character that make us love them. Some characters were so close to normal humans, that you couldn't ever decide if they were good or evil. A small amount of that is charming and thought-provoking, but for me it was so over the top that I couldn't find a character I liked enough to root for, or read for. I kept putting this book down and not coming back to it, which is a huge statement for me.

Gypsy Madden says

Prince Althelstan's father has commanded that he only marry a princess. However, princesses are in short supply, so Althelstan quests far and wide and finds a legend that proves to be true of a sleeping castle. But instead of the curse centering on a princess, this one centers on three sleeping princesses. There is however a beautiful maid, lavishly dressed who could only be a princess in the next room and Althelstan is smitten. But to waken the sleeping castle, he needs a princess. So he recruits his cousin Lady Vevila who is bored with palace life and wants adventure. Three wizards decide to tag along. Once they get to the castle though, they are met by a witch, claiming to be the prince's fairy godmother and also claiming that she put the entire castle to sleep to keep her precious prince safe from the outside world. She insists that only a true princess can wake her precious prince, so Vevila must pass a test, as well as any further women who pass through the front door of the castle. Vevila finds herself imprisoned in the highest turret commanded to spin an entire room full of straw into gold.

Most of the fairy tale retellings I have run across lately have been embellished upon so much the original tale is almost unrecognizable, usually making for imaginative new tales with a hint of the old tale underneath. This one, however, you can point to sections and tell exactly which tale is being drawn from which makes it feel less than original and more of a retreaded combination the Rumpelstiltskin tale, the Princess and the Pea, Cinderella, The Frog Prince, and Sleeping Beauty, with the characters being exactly like the originals. Where this tale did excel in was trying to show just how old-fashioned a lot of the concepts in these tales are. Like the purity of the sleeping royalty, the convolutedness of the princess tests, the unfair double-standard of princes vs princesses, that not everything is romantic and beautiful in reality (like the falling apart castle, and everyone drooling after a hundred years of sleep, and the poor gate guard who had been coated in bird droppings), and the enchanting of animals in Cinderella (loved Tom, their driver!). It did annoy me that there wasn't more of an insistence of putting some princes through tests after all of the putting the ladies through princess tests. It also annoyed me how accepting Jaquenetta was with just meeting Althelstan. Vevila and Rumpelstiltskin did keep the story fresh, especially with how modern Vevila was. And I loved Berengaria's attempting her princess test. The weaker points were Althelstan who was very one note through the entire story, and didn't grow at all as a character. The Cinderella characters also felt obvious and cliched. Though Rueberry was a fun character, Mazigian really needed work. From the blurb on the back of this book, I expected him to be best friends with Althelstan, and practically co-starring in this book, but yet it was like he barely knew him and he was basically just a third in the wizard party without really doing anything to make himself stand out. And then once the curse hit, I gave up on understanding him. Seriously, whenever he spoke, I just skipped to the next paragraph down. The book in total was a fun diversion, that definitely hit the spot for traditional fairytales with a twist, but in the long run forgettable and cliched.

Uriah says

I have to preface this review by saying that I am a friend and neighbor of the author and I own a proof of the book. If that turns you off, so be it.

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Never After is a great hodge podge of fairy tales with believable characters. Often in fairy tales the characters are so sublimely good or inherently evil that you don't get a good picture of who they are and what their motivations could be. Rebecca does a good job of filling in pieces of the characters while at the same time understanding how ridiculous many of the situations in the tales can be. I have re-read the book several times and enjoy it each time.

If you are looking for a spoof of fairy tales with a similar feel to Terry Prachitt, this could be a great book for you. Originally this was planned to be the first in a series and I hope we will get to see the other books eventually.

J. Else says

"Not just another frog-meets-girl story."

This book is a hodgepodge (and by hodgepodge, I mean a freaking "mess") of different fairy tales all twisted into one. There is really no magic to this book even though three of the characters are wizards. The names are unusual yet do not fit into the magical world unless its one written by a 5-year-old child. The characters are all one-dimensional and cliché. Most all of the characters are mentally challenged as well. In the end, everyone gets married to someone, but why? Just because they happen to be in the right place at the right time I guess. Maybe this is supposed to be a play on how actual fairy tales have that love-at-first-sight-so-lets-get-married couples, but I just felt as if the author had given up and wanted to end things quickly. Everything in the plot is building around a castle where the inhabitants are all fast asleep and three princes are the ones that need to be kissed to awaken them. They are put to sleep by their "fairy godmother" who never truly explains why she wants to keep them sleeping besides saying she's "keeping them from the evil in the world." ****SPOILER**** Then she just runs away when they are finally awakened. Then the book just drags on until everyone gets married and goes their separate ways. There is a kingdom in turmoil where a prince was turned into a frog so he cannot ascend to the throne, but I guess who cares when he is finally transformed? There is a shortage of princesses in the kingdoms, and though one of the characters hints that he might know why this might be, the author certainly never tells you. There is absolutely NO POINT to this book. It builds into nothing. One of the characters has a spell cast upon them where they speak in verse, and it really gets annoying. They also repeat the curse so many times you want to rip the pages out! I'm sure this was supposed to be funny, but it made no sense to what was going on. Basically, this author decides to mess with a bunch of fairy tales that have been modernized so many times that her version is really a little pop in the grand scheme of things. Very disappointed with this book.

Jackie says

Easy read. A new take on various fairytales strung together into one story. Light and humorous. Doesn't take itself too seriously.

Elevetha says

Fairytales incorporated: Sleeping Beauty, Rumpelstiltskin, Cinderella, The Princess and the Pea, The Frog Prince.

It had a cute idea for a story and cute aspects such as Berengaria, acting as the Princess in "The Princess and the Pea", not feeling the pea but rather falling off the bed many times during the night.

The characters had potential but mostly fell short of any and all expectations. Some of them were a bit annoying and the majority were boring.

The book itself was not terribly engaging.

Favorite character: Rumpelstiltskin. Just quirky and likable.

Urticea had an almost "Madame Mim" quality; always angry and jumping around. I liked her.

Berengaria was a sweet dear. I wanted more of her.

Mazigian is a wizard cursed to only speak Shakespeare. He was decent.

The Frog. What to say? He's barely in the book and seems rather dense but he had more potential than the rest of the characters.

Princess Vevila was okay but a bit of a feminist. She had a few good scenes. Her and Rumpel were kinda cute.

Rueberry, the fat wizard that only thinks of eating. Annoying.

Prince Althelstan annoyed me as well, though I'm not as sure why. Maybe because all he did was run around drooling over Berengaria.

Zenpfennig, the old wizard, was also slightly aggravating, what little he was in the book. He really didn't do much.

One of the main problems was that the characters that I liked were barely in the book. Another was that things were very rarely, (who am I kidding?) NEVER, explained and that aroused my ire. If you're going to hint at a ton of stuff that must be super important...then explain because we don't know what's going on!!

Overall, some cute aspects and very few and far between good characters, that don't get much page time or development.

Nothing in here was enough to entice me to a re-read in the future. I wouldn't recommend it as there are far better "Not just another frog-meets-girl story" books out there. FAR better.

Michelle says

I'm not sure why this book has so many negative reviews. It's meant to be light fun, and that's what it is. It doesn't take itself too seriously, has a cute romance, and has good characters. The only actual flaw that I noticed would be that everything isn't explained and developed as fully as it could be. Now, onto my review: What happens when you combine a stubborn princess, greedy wizards, cursed princes, and a hag? A lot of fun!!! Never After is a thoroughly entertaining take on several fairy tales. This new look at The Princess and the Pea, Rumpelstiltskin, The Frog Prince, Sleeping Beauty, and Cinderella will have you laughing in your seat. It all starts when Princess Vevila decides she's had enough of the princess thing. She's ready for adventure, and not in the mood to marry her doltish cousin Prince Althelstan. She 'escapes' her castle and ends up setting off a train of events that leads to her imprisonment in a different palace with different doltish princes. The difference is this castle has been cursed by a witch, or blessed by a Fairy Godmother depending on how you look at it. One thing is for certain, no one is going to let Vevila leave until she does a few ridiculously impossible tasks, or dies trying. Luckily our heroine finds a hero, his royal shortness Rumpelstiltskin, who, for what he lacks in height he makes up in sanity in a world of crazy people. This is light and fun reading. It's a very clever book filled with likable characters. I'm surprised that it has had very little publicity, but I'm excited that a sequel has just come out and if it's anything like this one it's going to be marvelous.

Joy says

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Mike (the Paladin) says

Fun and funny. Enjoyed this book. It slowed down a couple of times (some of the wizard humor was a bit strained) but on the whole enjoyable. Fun without "making fun" of fairy tales.

Recommended.

Cindy says

Prince Althelstan wants to get married, but his parents, mostly because they're trying to keep him from marrying his cousin Vevilia (as if she would have him!) tell him that he can only marry a princess. The only available princess he can find is still a toddler, and so he sets out on a quest. He manages to find an enchanted castle, buried by weeds and herbage. He is not surprised to find the inhabitants asleep. He kisses every woman in the place, to no avail. Even when he kisses the beautiful young woman who he thinks must be a princess he has no luck. Upstairs he finds a trio of sleeping princes, but he has no intention of kissing

them. So he thinks back to his dear old cousin, and decides to ask for help.

His dear old cousin has run away from home. She doesn't want to marry some boring sop and spend her life producing babies and embroideries. She wants adventure. When her cousin catches up to her, he convinces her to go to the castle and kiss the princes for him, because he has become quite smitten with the young woman he couldn't wake up. He has also convinced a trio of wizards to come along and help him, but their motivations, at least the leader of the three, are more inclined toward all that gold laying around than the suffering of the sleepers. The only thing that stands in their way is the princes' fairy godmother, Urticacea. She insists that Vevilia must take a princess test to prove that she's worthy to kiss the princes. Turning straw into gold... how easy.

The true charm of *Never After* is the sense of humor with which Rebecca Lickiss infuses the story. She adds bits and pieces from other fairy tales. In one scene, Rumplestiltskin benefits greatly from Vevilia's advice. She sarcastically asks him if he's going to want her firstborn child, and when he complains about how awful a burden a baby is, she suggests he just take the baby back to its parents. Another example is the discovery of the real reason why the Princess got bruised when sleeping on top of twenty mattresses and one pea. I found this quite funny, in a sort of, "Yeah, of course!" way. The remarks, the way the author uses the stereotypical aspects of fairy tales blend well together, making a humorous story that reads lightly and quickly. If one of my friends was depressed, and they liked fairy tales, this is the book I'd hand them. It's that pleasing and pleasant a read.

Part of this is characterization. For ages we've (as a collective down through the years) have written stories with the prince being mighty and strong, and the princess being a swoony wimp. Then, more recently, we've turned that on its head, and made the princes weak and the princesses warriors, and thus this is becoming a bit of a stereotype in itself. Lickiss manages to walk the line, by creating characters that have both strengths and weaknesses. Althelstan is the strong, typical old time Prince who, while not exactly quick on the uptake, is very dedicated. His devotion to the unknown princess is very sweet. He's a good prince, and an enjoyable character. Vevilia is strong, filled with a combination of bad luck, determination and the need for adventure that brings her vividly to life. Even old, set characters such as Rumplestiltskin are given new life and purpose. It's wonderful to see old characters in a new light, and to see the conventions used with a deft twist instead of abandoned.

You probably wouldn't want to start *Never After* before bed. While its sweetness would provide pretty dreams, its engaging aspects will keep you reading to see what happens next. It even ends like a proper fairy tale, promising the reader that they all live happily ever after... and really, what more can you ask?

Published at The SFSite: <https://www.sfsite.com/10b/na138.htm> in 2002.

Dale says

Wow! Was this book bad!

Never After is one of those humorous fantasy books, in which everything is sweetly parodied and lots of puns are thrown in, etc.

A Prince in search of a princess finds a castle in which all of the inhabitants are asleep due to the spell of a fairy godmother (as in Disney's *Sleeping Beauty*), including the girl of his dreams. However, he needs to

wake up 3 princes before he wakes up his love so he enlists the help of his tomboy cousin (a princess) and his boyhood friend, who happens to be a newly graduated wizard and they all go back to the castle for adventure, treasure and love. Along the way, Rumpelstiltskin (yes, that one) gets involved.

My review:

This book was so irritating that I got to page 85 and called it quits. The author seems to be more bent on being cute than she is on advancing the story (which had gone nearly nowhere in the last 25-30 pages I did read). I was afraid that if I read it any longer, I would somehow be sucked in and trapped like the people in the castle. Maybe that would have been fine - at least I'd be asleep and not reading the book!

<http://dwdsreviews.blogspot.com/>

Bree Turner says

interesting mix of numerous fairytales

Janice (Janicu) says

This was a comedic tale with references to several fairy tales - Rumpelstiltskin, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and others. The story centers around a castle overgrown by vines and everyone within it cursed by a magically induced sleep. Sounds familiar huh? Except when Prince Althestan comes to kiss a sleeping princess, he finds 3 princes there instead. Calling in his headstrong cousin Vevila and 3 wizard friends (rotund Rueberry - always eating, young Mazigian - not overtly cautious, and white haired Zenpfennig - pompous and gold-loving), for help, they all encounter Urticacea - a crazy witch who is adamant that she is keeping everyone asleep for their "own good" and to "protect" her princes from the evil of the world. Things just get crazier from there. The witch insists they throw Vevila into a cell to make her pass a princess test, Rumpelstiltskin appears, Vevila keeps trying to escape, other princesses start to appear, many screaming matches occur between all. While I thought the whole concept was very witty and original, this book wasn't my type of humor since all the characters felt like giant caricatures to me, so I give it 3 stars for being OK. I think that is just a matter of taste in humor though.

Kaion says

A bit of a mess really... Fairy tales have no shortage of spoofs, but I'm always game for a new imaginative one. Unfortunately, Lickless hasn't really gotten a good handle on tone, which is really necessary to ground a plot with this much ... well, let's call it "farce" if we're feeling generous, and "noise" if we're not. There are some amusing ideas, but there doesn't seem to be an idea or specific point to all this criticism. The end result is a wildly inconsistent product in which none of the characters or storylines is sympathetic enough for me to make the effort to try and figure it out.

I mean, it kills time and there are funny moments, but I won't even remember reading it soon enough.
Rating: 2 stars

Jacob Proffitt says

With only two likeable characters, one of whom is only barely not an utter prat, this book was almost painfully devoid of charm or wit. While the central villain was a complete waste of time as a serious character (cliché is only the beginning of the authors problems there), the three meddling wizards were, by parts, self-involved, boorish, greedy, and, at a push, outright evil as they not only consent in the imprisonment of the only really likeable character but become enforcers of same in order to procure the gold she is supposedly spinning from straw.

While I did make it past the halfway mark, I completely lost interest once a domineering queen showed up and derailed everybody into some stupid party. Suspension of disbelief can only weather so many setbacks.
