



# Once Upon A [Stolen] Time

*Samreen Ahsan*

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2015...

All her life, Myra Farrow has been obsessed with medieval castles—and the kings and princes who once inhabited them. Now, wealthy videogame designer Steve Bernard wants her to model for a princess character in his new game. Myra can't resist his offer, especially when she learns that Steve plans to film inside the mysterious Hue Castle—a cursed, barren, colorless place forbidden to visitors for centuries. But unknown to Myra, her soul is bound to Hue Castle by blood and sorcery. When she enters its doors, she awakens dark powers that will reach through time—stealing her past, torturing her present, and rewriting her future.

1415...

Edward Hue, the last of the Hue royal bloodline, has never stood in the sunshine or held a living flower. Cursed from birth to live in darkness and bring death to all he touches, he is at the mercy of his cruel, tyrannical father, who will not rest until he shatters Edward's soul and makes his son into a diabolical copy of himself. Edward's one hope is the mysterious woman who haunts his dreams—who will either break his curse and bring him out of the darkness, or destroy him utterly.

For Myra and Edward, past and future collide in a tale of love, obsession, betrayal, and the hope for redemption.

## Once Upon A [Stolen] Time Details

Date : Published December 1st 2015

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Author : Samreen Ahsan

Format : Kindle Edition 258 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Romance, Science Fiction, Time Travel, Historical Romance, Historical, Historical Fiction

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# From Reader Review Once Upon A [Stolen] Time for online ebook

Eve Recinella (Between The Bookends) says

## ARC Provided By Author in Exchange for An Honest Review

Historical romances usually aren't my thing. I overdosed on those Zebra ones in my late teens and early 20's, and just never had the urge to go back to reading them. But when I was approached by the author of this book with an offer of a copy in exchange for a review, the blurb intrigued me enough to give it a go.

*"Once upon a time, in a distant land, there lived a beast that imprisoned his prey outside of time. He captured her, unraveled her, destroyed her and never let her go."*

For the most part I really enjoyed this one. It took me a bit to get into and I honestly wasn't sure I was going to continue it, but it soon hit its stride and I found myself sucked into the mystery.

It was not without its issues though. One being that the dialogue of the characters that takes place during the 1415 period sounded EXACTLY like the dialogue of the characters from 2015. At one point the hero Edwards says "What a dork" Now I am no historian, but I am going to go out on a limb here and guess that wasn't a common phrase in 1415. He also decides at one point to "go for a run" Again not sure going for a run was something men in the 1400's were doing.

There were also a couple issues with conversations that that made no sense. For example this conversation took place literally RIGHT after Julia told Myra to find out what hospital she was born in.. **"So Myra was born at West Hampstead Day Hospital then?" he asked. My father coughed this time. I didn't know why Steve was asking such silly questions. Even if he thought I was planning to marry him, still, why would someone need to know where I was born.**" Erhmmm...I believe we covered the "why" at the end of the previous chapter.

*"Time had split me into two. I didn't know which world I belonged to."*

There was also a SMALL issue with Steve. He was gay with a boyfriend (Tyler) of 7 years, then near the end of the book. Steve is suddenly, not so much gay...and where the hell did Tyler go??

We jump back and forth between 2015 and 1415. Sometimes this can be jarring to the overall story, but worked well in this instance. The book had a fairytale like feel to it. Reminded me a bit like Beauty and The Beast, but darker. This also ends on a cliffhanger, so be prepared for that.

SO, how to rate this one. It did have a few issues that took away from my enjoyment. That said, I was sucked in and found myself turning the pages to see where this was all going. I also enjoyed it enough that I will continue on to see how things with Myra and Edward workout. A generous 3 stars from your truly...

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## **Dianne says**

Have you ever been spellbound by the thought of magical castles, being royalty or of being part of a time long ago? Ever think you were born in the wrong time? Myra is obsessed with anything medieval, ask her about a castle, a king and she can talk for hours, but the one antiquated idea she cannot abide by is having her parents choose her husband. No one's saying Steve isn't attractive, or wealthy or intelligent, but he is not Myra's type, nor is she his, now, how to let their parents down easily...

Meanwhile, there IS something that Steve could use Myra for, as a video game creator, he sees her as the perfect model for his next big game and it involves a legendary castle, thought haunted and cursed, Hue Castle, where nothing and no one survives. How could they know Myra had a tie to the castle or that she would awaken the dark magic within?

Six hundred years earlier the last of the Hue bloodline lives a wretched life as his brutal father tries to steal all humanity and compassion from his son with one deadly order. As Edward feels his soul being torn from him for his heinous act, he is haunted by a beautiful young woman he fears will be his destroyer, little did he know that woman exists six hundred years in the future. Is she his salvation or his final ticket to Hell?

**Once Upon a [Stolen] Time** by Samreen Ahsan, is a fairytale come to life, as two souls, centuries apart find each other, but still lack their own place in time. Unsure of the other's intent, but for answers and intrigued by what they see and feel, fate most assuredly is playing a part in their meeting. Is this a dream come true or a nightmare getting worse?

Samreen Ahsan brings fantasy to life, as one contemporary young woman builds a close relationship with a man in her own time, while being drawn to a tormented man from the past. Ms. Ahsan details the castle, its cure and the glimpses of the past in rich detail, from the actions of her characters to the dismal scenes that surround them. The suffering is palpable and dark, almost other worldly, while her portrayal of contemporary times is more cut and dry, with some major secrets and more reliance on her characters to color the spaces. They do so marvelously, but it is the past that shines through, the magic of a castle and of a time far removed. Her style is magical in itself as she sets the past and present onto a direct collision course.

I received an ARC edition from Samreen Ahsan in exchange for my honest review.

Series: Stolen Series - Book 1

Publication Date: December 1, 2015

Publisher: Samreen Ahsan

Genre: Fantasy

My Rating 4.5 Stars

Print Length: 221 pages

Available from: Amazon

For Reviews & More: <http://tometender.blogspot.com>

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## **Snow says**

**I'll be as quick as possible in reviewing this...**

*a fairytale like*

**beautifully written...but a tad bit too long and a bit confusing in intertwining the past/present action and eventually, in resolving the matter leaving us still questioning...  
the characters are likable but I still found myself missing smth...smth more palpable...**

**\*\*\*COPY generously provided by the author in exchange for an honest REVIEW\*\*\***

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## **\*kawehi.reviews says**

? I received an ARC via the author in exchange for an honest review. Thank you!! ?

**3.5 stars!!**

After I read the synopsis, several keywords jumped out at me: "castles, royal, princes, obsession, dark powers, and love".

I've always loved sort of medieval stories and even ones that mixed with the present and this one did it with a very interesting twist.

There are elements of thrill, intrigue, romance, and mystery with a sprinkle of danger that I feel any adventurous reader will grasp onto and enjoy the ride.

I really implore those who love felt out of place and looking for an out of the box read and romance to dive into and escape into this. It makes you feel as if there is a place for everyone while exploring the darkside and romantic side of fairytales while adding a tinge of danger.

Not a bad read!

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## **Aira Cabrera says**

3.5 stars!

ARC received in exchange for an honest review.

Myra is fascinated with all things medieval. Castles, princes, and kings are what she loves to talk about the most. She's a good daughter, but she just can't do what her parents want her to, which is to get married. They set her up with Steve. Steve is a fun and nice guy, but Myra just isn't his type and vice versa.

Myra and Steve become friends instead, and when Steve asks Myla to help him out with his new video game, she says yes. What happens next changes Myla's life.

I really enjoyed the mystery of hue castle. It made me as curious as Myla was. The romance aspect of this story was enjoyable as well. It was sad how Myla and Edward were in different times, but reading about them still made me so giddy!

This book does end in a cliffhanger, so be prepared.

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**- ?? DANY ??- (danyreads) says**

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READ THIS REVIEW ON MY BLOG!!!

<https://bit.ly/2GWIN9t>

**ARC provided from the author in exchange for an honest review (thank you Samreen Ahsan!)**

i'm so confused in a really good way?? it might be the weirdest thing to say, but the characters in this book got SO INTERESTING literally 2 pages away from the epilogue. a brand new layer of dimension was introduced to them so suddenly and in such an absurd yet efficient way and they legitimately fleshed themselves out SO FAST in front of my eyes a literal minute before the book ended. I'm still a little bamboozled to be honest with you guys.

I'm not gonna lie, this book in general is very weird. the plot itself is rather on the odd side of things because it never really moves forward from what we know from the get-go. the narration of the story is divided between two characters who live six hundred years apart from each other, and their storylines never really entirely line up. the character development and romance are both mostly superficial, or, safe to say, there really isn't any at all in the first place. but.... it all strangely works?? I want to say that the beautiful and colorful (ha) world building completely saved this book, but that isn't totally the case. it all strangely harmonizes and falls into place when it really, really shouldn't. the pieces shouldn't fit together, but they do, and we are left with a very strange but unique puzzle.

the writing is mostly okay, Samreen did a great job, but I want to talk about anachronisms. one of our main characters, Edward, lives in 1415 (which is, you know, very far away). it means that, back then, the language was different, expressions were different, science was different, etc. I don't want to get too much into it, but basically I mean that there's no way for Edward to know that people start remembering dreams at age 7, knowing that oneirology originated in the 19th century, or for him to use technical terms like 'monochrome', which appeared roughly mid 17th century. anachronism isn't a huge deal (there's definitely MUCH bigger and badder instances of anachronism in history, cough cough MR LEONARDO DA VINCI) but as a history buff it's still something that stuck out like a sore thumb to me in this book.

this is..... not a terrible book. I was definitely not expecting to like it that much, if at all, but I'm okay with

having read it. I'm not mad about it. historical romances aren't really my thing so I was pleasantly surprised by this, and the world building completely shines through. after that sudden character development reveal in the last few pages of the book, I'm excited about the potential of this series. thanks again to Samreen Ahsan for providing a free copy!!

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## **Maureen says**

I have been loving fairytales ever since I was a little girl. I grew up believing in prince Charming and hoping one day the prince would come to me. Now I've grown up, and now I know life is no fairytale.. But still.. I love fairytales. So when Samreen Ahsan emailed me a little while ago, with the question if I wanted to read her new novel called 'Once Upon a (Stolen) Time' I just couldn't say no. I've read the previous two books written by Samreen, so I know for a fact she can write a great book.

After reading a view pages of 'Once Upon a (Stolen) Time' I honestly didn't really know what I thought about this book. It felt a little like I was missing something. I just didn't get the main character Myra. Her parents seemed to force her into marrying someone she didn't love, and Myra just didn't really say anything. I felt disappointed in the story and really didn't think this book was anything like a fairytale. But I kept reading.. And soon I began to feel the magic of this story about Myra and Edward.

Myra is a young woman living in the modern time, Edward is living in a time almost 600 years ago. Somehow Myra and Edward have always been dreaming about each other. Myra has always felt like modern man weren't for her, she dreamed of kings and castles.. Edward dreamed about a beautiful woman who could save him from the curse his family is living with for many years. When Myra visits the Hue castle, she sees and feels things, no one else does. And when Myra looks inside a mirror she can see a man living in the castle many years ago.

After getting through those first view pages where I felt like I was missing something and didn't really like this book.. I soon began to feel intrigued with the book and its characters. Soon I just couldn't stop reading anymore and I really needed to learn more about Myra and Edward. The magic of 'Once Upon a (Stolen) Time' really is the way you can just feel the romance and passion between Myra and Edward, without it really happening. This book really is just the beginning of the story of Myra and Edward, and although we don't get much of a real romantic scene.. I was definitely feeling those fairytale vibes.

Samreen Ahsan really has a unique way of writing. Her stories just feel very pure and sweet. And although the ending was really frustrating... (Major cliffhanger alert!!) I can't wait to read the next book in this series. I almost feel like Myra, desperately thinking about Edward and wanting to be with him.. I can't stop thinking about this book. There is still a lot of mystery in this story and it can still go a lot of different ways. Yep.. although I had my troubles at first, I really really really love this book!!

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## **Lauren Stoolfire says**

**I received a free ecopy of this novel from the author in exchange for an honest review.**

Myra has always been obsessed by medieval castles and everything associated with them from royalty, chivalry, and courtly love. Her family has been trying to get her head out of the clouds and settle down with

a man - after all, she is 22 and isn't in school and doesn't have a job - but she isn't really interested in anyone except long dead medieval kings, princes, and knights. When they try to set her up with Steve, an eligible bachelor from one of London's most prominent families, she grudgingly agrees to meet him. Turns out neither are interested in each other like that - Steve's gay and has been with his partner, Tyler, for several years and is keeping it all secret from his family. However, Steve's done his homework on Myra and knows she likes all that medieval stuff and he has a very intriguing business proposal for her. He works designing video games and he wants her to act as the model for the main character in his upcoming fantasy/ adventure/ mystery game. She excitedly says yes when she learns that his team has gotten permission from the government to record at Hue Castle. Hue Castle is one of the only castles in England that she's never visited and that's because it's never been open to the public, and that the government has practically made it impossible to even get a look at the place for the last two hundred years. According to legend though, Hue Castle is a cursed, haunted, and colorless place.

*Once Upon A [Stolen] Time* by Samreen Ahsan is quite unique and I love the concept behind it. I particularly found myself intrigued by the medieval aspect. I found myself the most interested in the mystery/ curse surrounding Hue Castle and the Hue royal bloodline. Unfortunately, this is one of those novels where I enjoyed the concept more than the overall execution of the story. There are definitely a few issues with it. I confess that I had a difficult time connecting to any of the characters and everyone is a little too flat for my liking. When it comes to Edward, the Prince from 1415 who alternates POV chapters with Myra, and Steve, there were times when I thought I must have missed something very important about the two characters. The story also could be quite repetitive - many scenes could have been trimmed down to tighten up the prose and move the plot along.

Two issues in particular irked me the most: the language and the romance. In regards to the language, there is zero difference between reading the characters from 1415 to 2015. The language should have at least evolved a little bit over the course of 600 years, but no. If I'm not mistaken Edward actually says "what a dork" and that he's "going for a run" in his POV chapters - I didn't realize those phrases were commonly used by 15th century British royalty. Initially, I expected to be giving this novel three of five stars, but the romance angle made me knock it down to two. Steve appeared to do a heel face turn (unless I missed something) in his feelings for Myra. (view spoiler) And, then there's the ending which concludes with book one on quite a cliffhanger and (view spoiler). This novel's billed as "a romantic fantasy fairytale", but I wouldn't call it romantic at all especially after that.

Overall, *Once Upon A [Stolen] Time* by Samreen Ahsan has the potential to be an intriguing fairytale-esque novel that features POV chapters from characters in both 1415 and 2015. However, in the end, I much preferred the concept behind the story to the actual execution. While I liked the medieval elements and the creepy mystery surrounding the castle, I wasn't a fan of the cast of characters, the language, and the romance. Thanks again to the author for providing me with a free ecopy of this novel.

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**Diana~ (Kiss Me Books) says**

**Thank you to Samreen Ahsan for providing me with this ARC in exchange for an honest review.**

Samreen Ahsan's *Once Upon A [Stolen] Time* was my first introduction to the author and I can say I am absolutely intrigued by her. When I first started reading, I was captured by the setting and time-traveling



aspect. I had hoped for a kick ass heroine, a dark and tragic hero, and an amazing love story. What I got was a little bit different but I still enjoyed it nonetheless.

Myra was a heroine I had a hard time connecting to. It felt like I was inside a sixteen-year old's teenage brain who constantly had her head in the clouds. She's very into princes, princesses, castles... you get the drift. Basically, she's enamored with fairy tales and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. I just didn't connect with her. Edward on the other hand... I was curious about. The premise of the hero living in an entirely different time period from the heroine was quite interesting and I wanted to know how the two could possibly end up together, especially when separated by time itself. I loved reading in Edward's point of view and I felt for this complex and tragic character.

***"Once upon a time, in a distant land, there lived a beast that imprisoned his prey outside of time. He captured her, unraveled her, destroyed her and never let her go."***

Like many others before me, I struggled with starting this book and had a hard time getting into it. But once the ball started rolling, so to speak, I became a lot more interested and invested in the mystery as well as Myra and Edward's romance. It felt real and I was moved by Edward especially in his affection for Myra.

***"There were only two people in this time. Just me and him, as the world spun into a timeless abyss."***

In the end, Samreen Ahsan's unique writing and sweet romance between Edward and Myra had me looking forward to the next book. It almost had a Beauty and the Beast feel to it, one of my favorite Disney movies and stories. While the book does end in a cliffhanger and we have no idea when Samreen will write the next one, this was still a very enjoyable read and I highly recommend it for the tortured hero and his romance with our contemporary heroine.

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## **Elfina Renee says**

I think all of us have either read or seen the cutesy Disney classic Beauty and the Beast and have hummed the musical theme song. I know I sure did. Not even through the first chapter of Samreen Ahsan Once Upon a Stolen Time, I was playing it in the background and knew I was reading a five star hit.

This first read brilliant author had me entranced with her edgy tone of voice, suspenseful plot...trust me there wasn't any dufus Gaston's running a muck.....no. You had curses, hexes, murders, tortures and a ever growing plot thickening. This was a highly refreshing change of read from my normal hunts. I'm more than eager to continue its lineup!

I'm very thankful and privileged the author contacted me. Within the first chapter I was inspired to not only deliver a five star rating because of her extraordinary talents but do something I'd never done before with my collage.....create a collage with gif animation. In the past the two for me were always separate unless it was just adding text...but I digress.

I loved the regalness of the two timelines....one being of medieval and the other a more modern day contemporary. Both past and present meeting to bring the future....Ahhhh what a climactic ending. Already I'm hungering for the second one in the series.

P.S. This problem of me not being able to post a product review is still on going. Here is the error message that pops up when I attempted to post review for Once Upon A [Stolen] Time by Samreen Ahsan. From Amazon (Sorry, you do not yet meet the minimum eligibility requirements to write a review on Amazon. For more information, please reference our Community Guidelines.)

P.S.S. This was my email and phone call to Amazon addressing this very issue. I'm a good customer of Amazon with valid credit card on file, since when have I not met minimal requirement guidelines? The authors and publishers on all my social media platforms GoodReads, Facebook, Twitter, Gab and Minds are aware of my inability to post with Amazon. I hope we are able to remedy this problem right away, thank you in advance for your prompt attention.

This author is amazing and deserves my support! Suggestions anyone in the reading community.....I welcome your advice!

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### **Scott Bury says**

The old adage, “Be careful what you wish for, because it might come true” is the starting point for this story. Myra Farrow is a romantic young woman from London, UK, who is obsessed with stories about medieval knights and princes. She wants to be part of history, and wishes she were a real medieval princess. Frustrated with the impossibility of that, she reads medieval English history, literature and poetry, even making it the subject of her university degree.

Her parents have indulged her to the point of visiting every old castle and manor in the UK, except for one that's abandoned and closed: the totally fictitious Hue Castle.

Myra's parents, who run a successful business in London, are concerned that their daughter lives more in the past than the here-and-now, so they arrange a marriage for her to Steve Bernard, scion of one of the UK's wealthiest and most powerful families.

But Steve isn't just the inheritor of wealth. He's actually a successful video game entrepreneur, and while he isn't interest in Myra romantically, he does want her to be a model for shooting scenes for his new medieval-themed video game. And as coincidence will have it, Steve has chosen the abandoned, yet lifeless Hue Castle for his setting.

Hue Castle has all the necessary elements for a very spooky setting, like prison towers, dungeons and instruments of torture. But the most dangerous thing is a shrouded mirror. When Myra looks into it, she sees scenes from six hundred years ago, the vicious cruelty that brought down a curse so extreme that nothing grows at Hue Castle — no plants, not even rats live there.

As Myra returns to look into the mirror, she's increasingly drawn into the lives of those dead for six centuries, and gradually, she begins to hear them and finally contacts Edward, the crown prince of England in 1415. Myra wonders whether she can even enter that time, and if she does, whether she would be able to return.

## **Characters**

Ahsan's strength is creating believable, familiar characters, and Myra is another example. She's a romantic, obsessed with her fantasies of kings and princes and knights, but she is far from one-sided. She dreams about being rescued by a handsome knight, but she's not weak. She's a complex, modern woman who likes her cell phones and clothes, and her freedom and independence.

Steve is a complex man, too, who undergoes a transformation through the book and comes to love Myra for who she is. This sets up a love triangle and another level of conflict in Myra, who is already trying to choose between the past and the present.

Perhaps the most complex, appealing character is the tortured Edward Hue, the prince and son of the cruel (fictitious) King Stefan. You really feel for this character, and I was surprised by how fully Ahsan has realized this character.

## **Drawbacks**

The only thing I didn't like about this story was the framing device, the overly complex way she has set up the story, with Myra being set up by her parents with Steven, who is not interested in her at first. I understand why Ahsan chose the billionaire genius guy and the smart, regular girl structure for her previous two-volume Prayer series (*A Silent Prayer* and *A Prayer Heeded*). She was showing what a love story like *50 Shades* could be if handled by a writer with skill and talent. But there is no need for that here. Neither is there a need for the marriage to be arranged. Steve could have just hired Myra to be his model, and gradually fallen in love with her. It would have made the story simpler and allowed the author to get to the action quicker.

But that's a minor point. This is a mesmerizing story that keeps you swiping your e-reader to get to the next page. It's well worth a read.

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## Christine says

< a href="https://tinesreviews.wordpress.com&qu... My review is also posted on my blog.  
(Source: This was given to me by the author. This will not affect my reviews.)

*“- It’s impossible you will not love Once Upon A[stolen]Time”*

Since the beginning of the story, Ms. Samreen Ahsan never failed to amaze me to this story. I’ve never read this kind of story. A love story which sets in different time and only a mirror can able to see each other.

Myra Farrow is in the year 2015. She loves castles and palaces. All of her cousins are getting married or engaged. And her family set up an arranged marriage to Steve Bernard. Steve Bernard is working at gaming industry and he’s a gay. Myra and Steve made a deal to make a new game and they will film it to Hue Castle.

Edward Hue is in the year 1415. He is the son of King Stefan and will become a future king. He doesn’t like the way his father treat his people.

*” I knew it was a silly desire, because we were cruelly separated by time. I came to the conclusion that time was my biggest enemy. ”*

This is not the typical story that we read. Edward and Myra’s love story hurts me because Edward longed for her since he can see her in his dreams and Myra was engaged to the Guy he doesn’t love. But it’s a great story because of the twist. And one thing I can’t erase on my mind was Steve Bernard. He’s still a mystery to me.

*” I experienced his present in the past but in my present, which was tied in our unknown future together. ”*

I recommended this to everyone who loves fantasy, romance. You guys should try this, I promise. You will not regret reading this.

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## • Lindsey Dahling • says

This book was so frustrating! It has such a creative concept (two storylines, a cursed prince, a present day girl who could break it, an evil king, etc.), but it took *so long* to get to the action. It’s literally not until you’re halfway through the book that the plot finally moves forward. LITERALLY HALFWAY.

The first half of the book simply focuses on the main girl character, Myra, going on a tour of a castle with her friends she met less than 24 hours ago. Myra is in her early 20s, has a degree, lives with her parents, has no job, no friends, and is obsessed with castles. Her mother really wants Myra to meet someone so Myra can give her grandchildren, so her mom brings Myra to a party at the wealthiest family in town’s estate in order to meet said wealthy AF family’s son, Steve.

This is how the 1 hour meet-cute unfolds:

Myra meets Steve.

They walk around the mansion and grounds for about an hour.

Steve says he’s gay and his mom doesn’t know.

Myra says that's fine, nbd.

Steve asks Myra if she wants to help him create a video game centered around castles.

Myra says yes.

Myra and Steve's moms overhear Myra saying yes and assume that Steve proposed marriage (after knowing Myra for 1 hour) and then proceed to turn the entire party into an engagement celebration.

This all happened in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 introduces us to Edward, the cursed prince living in 1415, who is a bit more interesting. He has a troubled past and an even more troubled present. His dad is sadistic, his twin sister is depressed, and they all live in literal darkness (thanks to the curse). I actually really enjoyed reading his POV. I found myself growing annoyed when it switched back to Myra. She, Steve, Tyler, her parents, and the tour guide lady all seemed so flat. It became difficult to tell who was speaking in the dialogue because everyone sounded the exact same. Edward had a lot of issues and conflict, some of which seemed completely unnecessary and may have been added for shock value, but at least there was never a dull moment with him.

Also, this is just a personal issue, but the use of exclamation points outside of dialogue is off-putting and I don't know why. It makes the story seem much younger than it actually is (if that makes any sense).

To summarize—cool, creative concept; lacks depth.

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**Tina ↗ the girl who lives in Fandoms (Book.Enchantress) says**

**"ARC Provided By Author in Exchange for An Honest Review"**

4 Silver Stars  
with Golden sparks

tbh I didn't think I like it this much, because it was categorized as romance & I'm not a romance reader. but I read synopsis & see the story contained time travel & after I started reading that & reached the main part story actually began, I was like: "wow! this is actually so awesome, mysterious & magical!" & I very liked it & glad that I read this.

the main character wasn't very annoying. (but sometimes she was annoying & very overthinking) & I was shouting at her: "you wanted it all the time, dammit, JUST DO IT!"

it was like a book lover want to go into his/her favourite fictional worlds but it actually real (just a matter of time) I would go there if I had that chance, without hesitation.

In general, all the characters were likable (except the king) & realistic. I liked Edward & Steve.

But at the end I was startled many times by these kind of questions: "What the...?! Why did you do that?" also it has 'beauty & the beast' vibes at some points.

at some parts story was just dragged out, I was waiting for things to happen in the whole story & it happened at the end. (not like cliffhanger but kind of like cliffhanger.)

I think it was my first medieval story I ever read. it was good, I could feel the darkness in 1415. (sometimes

too much darkness)

also an easy read, but I would rather to see Edward's story-telling was more old English style. (tho I guess king's speech was old English)

I recommend this if you like any of these: Medieval time, romance, dark power, mysteries lie down in the castle & these sort of stuff.

World building: ★★★★★/5

Characters: ★★★★★/5

Written style: ★★★★★/5

plot: ★★★★★/5

Idea: ★★★★★/5

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## **Emilia Grant says**

Once Upon A [Stolen] Time by Samreen Ahsan is the tale of a girl trying to discover who she really is, and of a man succumbing to the darkness surrounding him. Their paths clash together in what can only be described as magic - a mirror being the lone portal that binds the two of them together and allows them to communicate with one another.

A communication that more often than not is cut short by Myra's fiancé.

Myra isn't your average 22-year-old. She does not suffer from the snowflake syndrome. In fact, despite her slight obsession with everything medieval, princess and castles, she seems to be one of the most grounded and relatable characters from the book. According to her family, who is used to mixing with other circles, Myra tying the knot is long overdue, so they arrange for her to get married to Steven, a wealthy bachelor with connections. He in turn unveils himself as a homosexual during their very first meeting and confesses his plans of using her as his main character in his video game to be based on Hue Castle. Little does Myra at this point know, that Steven isn't being completely honest with her or of the journey that she is about to embark on.

Hue Castle holds many secrets. The mysterious lives and the disappearance of its last inhabitants being only few of them. The land is barren, no light can enter, no life is anywhere to be found within its walls. Cameras are unable to capture anything within the castle's boundaries, and then, there is the mysterious mirror in the castle's chapel, preserved from the fire that took down everything else, and yet presenting an image that does not align with reality.

It is that distorted image that starts Myra's search for the truth of what happened to the last inhabitants of this castle. Why is everything within the castle's borders dead? Who is the man she sees in the mirror? Why can she feel him? Why is she the only one who sees him? Why does he seem to know her? Why do they share the same eyes? Why can she not forget him? A man, who should have succumbed to death 600 years ago.

It is those questions and the connection she feels to the man in the mirror that are the driving force behind her quest to figure out why Edward, the last heir of the Hue royal bloodline, disappeared on his 28th birthday never to be heard of again.

Despite Myra's attraction to the man in the mirror playing a large part in her motivation towards finding out

the truth, I did not perceive the first instalment of the Stolen series to be a romance novel. It had more elements of a good mystery book to me, one that I actually enjoyed reading.

At first I was taken aback by the fact that Myra's parents seemed to consider her a spinster for not being anywhere near a steady relationship by the age of 22 and went as far as to arrange a marriage for her at this day and age. Being her age myself I find that notion completely ludicrous. However, I accepted that fact as a necessary evil for the plot to move forward.

In fact, the beginning of the book fell victim to quite a few tropes, which is the reason why I had to remove a few points from my initial rating. However, 50 pages in and I remember actively thinking that my perception had changed.

Ms Ahsan crafted a beautiful story - one that I could not put down once I really started reading. I got pulled into her world building, into the plot, into the characters and their world. I needed to know all and everything there was to know about the circumstances of Myra's and Edward's existence and why they were able to communicate with each other at certain times. In fact, I am skipping class right now, typing this up. This is how enthralled I am by the story.

It had been quite some time since I last read a story this beautifully written. I quite enjoyed the prose and the vocabulary used. I could picture myself right there with them, experiencing every excruciatingly mysterious moment right along with the characters. I could feel their anguish. I was amazed by their depth. They felt real to me. And they did so, not because they told me they were, but because I could read that from their actions. I could see nuances in them, read into their behaviour, make up my own mind about them. That I appreciated more than anything. That I believe to be indication of a good author that knows their craft.

Edward especially I found to be an incredibly complex character. I was turning page after page trying to understand him, trying to see where he was going, how he was reacting, uncovering all the facets there were to his character.

Steven didn't disappoint either. Especially as the story progressed. Whilst I found him slightly dull at the beginning, towards the end of the first novel his actions grew more and more complex, showing us other sides of him, not as monochrome and one sided as he might have appeared at the beginning.

What both infuriates and thrills me is the fact that the book ended with a cliffhanger. I cannot wait for Once Upon A [Fallen] Time to become available. I would kill to know what is going to happen next. And I rarely get this riled up over second instalments. If you haven't read this book yet, you're missing out.

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