



Of Cinder and Madness

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The stories about her have been greatly exaggerated. Yes, she is beautiful, with wavy blond hair and big, blue eyes and flawless skin, but her charming façade is a lie, a mask, a deceit.

Yes, yes, I'm sure you think me merely jealous. I'm not. I'm the victim, and I can prove it.

You see, Eleonore deserves to be locked away. My, she even deserves to be killed!

This gripping retelling of a much-loved fairy tale will make you question all you think you know about the girl who steals away to a ball and leaves behind a slipper.

Of Cinder and Madness Details

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From Reader Review Of Cinder and Madness for online ebook

rina dunn says

Boring Af! I just didn't get this book at all! It was confusing AF all the leaping around with different times and expecting you to understand what was going on. I won't carry on with this series.

Dianna says

I am on the fence about this story. It was disorienting to read from the two timelines. I kept expecting to learn the horrible thing that had been done to deserve a 16 year old being locked away in a tower, and kept from associating with any other people. The stepmother seems horrified at the birds that are accumulated by her stepdaughter, but avoided discussing them with her husband or the stepdaughter, feeling like avoiding the situation would somehow help.

She dislikes the magic she sees her wield, but has no issue seeking magical solutions from faeries and witches to ease her mind. Is there no one in this society who can help with mental illness, or power crazed beings? The girl is grieving her father, never fully dealt with the death of her mother, and is cast out for being different.

I really wanted to like the stepmother, but I found myself bored by her tale. I wanted to know more about our snow white representative, and see how dark she could become. I suppose I found the story lacking. It feels like so much more could have happened. I barely got to know the characters. The step daughters barely made an appearance, and the step mother didn't seem to make an effort to be around her step daughter, giving up too quickly.

I was glad for the happy ending, but found myself wondering whether the dark trees are linked, or both sealed.

Will being locked away for eternity in a happy memory be the best solution for the mad young woman?

Topsues says

I have to give this book 4 stars because, you can't get away from the brilliant creative mind of Nicole Zoltack or the way she can recreate emotions into real feelings within you. My own memories sort of kicked against this twisted tale of Cinderella, so even though I thought it was a great imaginative piece of work, I kept thinking this is going to happen next, and it did, but not in the way I expected. This tale is very close to the original and it's characters are mostly the same but with different personalities. It was easy to imagine the settings of the tale as you have the original ones in your mind. I have to recommend that this is definitely worth a read as it's such an original twist on such a unforgettable fairy tale. I would say it's a challenge for your mind to try and adapt to, that on its own is worth it.

Melissa says

Nicole Zoltack's *Of Cinder and Madness* is a re-telling of "Cinderella" from the point-of-view of the stepmother, Angelique. In this version, Cinderella aka "Elle" or "Eleanore" may not be the sweetheated

maid that features in most re-tellings of this story.

I really liked how Zoltack played with the Grimm version of "Cinderella" ("Aschenputtel"), keeping the elements of a tree planted at her mother's grave and the birds that like to peck out eyes. This is definitely a darker "Cinderella" re-telling, but not as dark as I was expecting. And someone's grief and guilt turning into dark powers is an interesting concept.

I do, however, wish more time was spent on the magic of Eleanore's tree. I also thought that the initial cutting off of Angelique's internal thoughts at the beginning of the book would prove later that Angelique was an unreliable narrator, but that did not seem to be the case.

I would recommend this to any readers who love fairy tale re-tellings with a slightly darker edge to them.

Wren says

A Strange, Wonderful Fairytale Retelling

I won this book in a giveaway. This is an unsolicited review.

I started this book, and almost didn't continue, as I don't usually enjoy fantasy from the 1500's. I'm so glad I continued. This short story is a retelling of Cinderella, but I believe the reader should throw that idea out of their minds. It truly is the story of a mother's unconditional love, mental illness, and fantasy.

The story is well written, if not for a few timeline hiccups. The world building is lovely. I truly saw the land of Fantasia. The characters were engrossing. I especially enjoyed the independence, and strength of the main character.

This book was completely original. I kept thinking about it when I wasn't reading it. That, to me, is the mark of a fantastic read.

Donna says

I love fairy tale remakes and this doesn't disappoint. I loved how the story is told from the stepmother's point of view. Eleanor is using some dark powers but I am not sure that she wants to be evil. I loved Angelique's solution to the problem. This was definitely worth the read and I am looking forward to more by this author.

Laura Hernandez (TheVoluptuousBkDiva/YABkDivas) says

I can find no words to use that will express just how much I loved this book. The prose was beautiful, captivating, and simply just enthralling. I cannot wait to delve further into this series as book one has left me hauntingly captivated.

Camillea says

A short story retelling of the classic fairytale, Cinderella. It is very, very different from the usual retellings

we find. I wasn't prepared for the sudden twist at all. Of Cinder and Madness is told from the perspective of the stepmother with alternating timelines which was enjoyable. However, I found the telling to be too fast paced and not as detailed for me to properly enjoy the book. I had neither pity nor understanding for Eleonore. The ending was too messy and too rushed, in my opinion. But if you're looking for a quick and creative read, then try this book.

Jamie (The Kansan Reader) says

I normally tend to stay away from Cinderella retellings. I'm not a big Cinderella fan. Most the time I am reading a retelling because it is part of a series. That is what I had to do with this one. I did not expect to get a Cinderella retelling through the stepmother's eyes.

The story goes back and forth between past and present. The stepmother tells of the time before she married Jacques leading up to the present and the present of being a widow and having to learn to deal with her new stepdaughter. She tells of her encounters of Eleonore (Cinderella).

If you like a darker fairy tale this is for you. Eleonore has a power and she uses it for harm instead of good. There is a HEA for everyone but it is not the same one we grew up knowing.

I loved seeing from the stepmother's eyes. The guilt she felt for not treating Eleonore the same and the fear she had once her power started to grow. I loved it all.

Best part about this retelling is that even though Eleonore lost a slipper the prince didn't go around to ever home and use the slipper to find a girl he danced with.

On to the next retelling which I think is one of my favorites, Sleeping Beauty.

Heather Hayden says

Rounding up to four stars from 3.5.

The narrative took some getting used to, as the chapters switch between timelines. Once I figured out the flow of it, I had no trouble (they are marked with dates, but I have trouble remembering those.) However, the chapter always starts as though you know where you are in the timeline, so I had a few "uh?" moments.

The story itself is enjoyable, if rather dark. It's told from the stepmother's perspective and shows a very twisted version of Cinderella. (Don't get hung up on the blurb, by the way; although the blurb states that Eleanore deserves to die, the stepmother is actually trying to save her.)

Because you know from the start that Eleanore is dangerous, there isn't a suspense watching more of her darkness become unveiled as the two stories unfold, but there is the always underlying question of whether the stepmother will succeed in saving her or whether Eleanore will continue slipping even further into the darkness.

I was rooting for the stepmother the entire way. Yes, she makes mistakes, but she's human, and she's doing

her best to love and care for all three of her daughters.

The story was shorter than I expected, but I liked the resolution. I'll add the warning that 10% of the ebook is devoted to an excerpt from the next book, which disappointed me as I don't like thinking I have another 6-8% to go only to find the story suddenly ending.

I'd recommend this book to readers who love darker fairy tales.

Angel Leya says

Yes, Angelique is Ella's (Eleonore's) stepmother, but she's not the bad guy. She just wanted to help the dark, troubled girl whose beauty was as captivating as her pain. But it's not that simple of a tale. And trust me, everything you know about it is wrong.

I tend to love fairy tale retellings, so I was excited to snap this one up.

I kind of expected this story to be a bit dark (I mean, just look at the title). But as I wound my way through the story, I was somewhat perplexed at the complete rewrite of the original story, having little in common besides the roles of the characters (barons, prince, step children, etc.) and the settings in which they participated. Honestly, I kept reading it wondering if the stepmother was the one who was afflicted by madness, and the Cinderella story I've come to love would be restored.

I found the pacing a bit difficult as well. The story starts not in the middle of action, but somewhere floating before the action. the opening statements make Angelique seem bitter, almost vengeful, but we find out through the story this is not the case (over and over again). Between the current story chapters are flashback chapters, detailing how they got to this place. The flashbacks skip around, and it ended up being a bit confusing at times, trying to decipher where I was in the story. Besides that, the constant back and forth, even when the current story finally got interesting, interrupted the flow.

Finally, though I wanted to like the characters, Eleonore was less than sympathetic, and Angelique's constant struggle felt overdone, and she wallowed in self pity more than I could truly enjoy. The prince was perplexing as well (was he disturbed, too?).

The story is imaginative, and it totally turns the original on its head. It was obviously not the right fit for me, but I think others who like dark and twisted fantasies/fairy tales with a more casual pace and somewhat experimental format would enjoy this book.

Ashley Poteet says

I really loved this wicked dark telling of cinderella!

Elenore is quite strange and evil. Angelic is amazing for still wanting to help her after everything Elenore has done. She cares so much for her stepdaughter, though she is all the girl has left. Her mother died a tragic death when she was small. Then years later, after Angelic married Elenore's dad, he passed away in a hunting accident leaving Angelic with his daughter. She sees the girl is beside herself with grief and is not herself. That may be the case, but still needs to be locked away! If only for the safety of everyone!

One night Angelic decides its time for her two daughters to live a little, she decides to take them to a royal ball, in hopes her daughters will find nice men to marry. She leaves Elenore at home, under a potion induced sleep, or so she thought. When angelic spots Elenore looking like a princess dancing with the prince she is shocked and frightened for everyone's wellbeing. Things go badly when Elenore sees the Prince dancing with her sister and unleashes birds that do her bidding, scaring everyone and forcing angelic to spill her secrets to the open and handsome ear of the king.

Angelic realizes something must be done when the prince disappears to hunt for his love Elenore.

??Trea says

I really didn't care for this story at all! I found it very boring, hated the flip flopping around on the timeline and didn't care for the dark twist that the story took. It wasn't a memorable story, and I won't be continuing with the series.

Eating Between says

I love the idea of Cinderella actually being the villain in this story! I found the premise and idea of this book to be so creative and actually quite brilliant it makes the reader think What if all those princesses weren't the heroes of the stories but actually the villains?

The author creates a deliciously wicked world were Danielle (Cinderella) has dark powers and isn't as sweet as we all grew up thinking but quite mad and devious. The events portrayed in the book match up with the fairytale, She is looked away in an attic but out of fear. There is a ball that she crashes but there is no fairy god mother the magic is all Danielle and it's not sparkles and happy thoughts it's dark and mad. The prince falls for her and she disappears but there is no glass slipper left behind.

You can read the rest of my detailed review here-
<https://eatingbetweenthelinesinc.wordpress.com/2017/01/13/review-cinderella-dark-princess-by-angie-angel/>

Celli Hem says

Honestly, this felt more like a short story than a novel. It took me less than an hour to read and overall, it was not a terrible story at all.

It's Cinderella, sort of, but told from the point of view of the stepmother, who this time, is not a villain, but rather a terrified woman at her wits end. The Cinderella character is still a beautiful girl but she's...twisted. Her grief somehow made her able to use some kind of magic and the birds she sings to do whatever she wants and she's used them several times to harm people, including one of her stepsisters.

Told in two timelines, it's a well-written short story, but it's not a novel, despite being marketed as one. It's

too short and too many things are underdeveloped to fit the concept of a novel. I think the author would've benefited from putting this story in with others to create an anthology of tales rather than just these little bites of stories.
