

Title: *Poisoned*
Author: Jennifer Donnelly
Genre: Fantasy

Reviewer Name and Grade: Allie H., 7th Grade

Date Reviewed: July 25, 2021

Jennifer Donnelly's novel Poisoned is a reimagined version of the fairytale Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. In this story, a princess named Sophie has always been told that she was too softhearted, too weak, to ever rule. And Sophie believed it. But one day, she was in the Darkwood with the queen's huntsman, and he pulled out a knife and took Sophie's heart. Fortunately, seven strangers found her and helped her survive, by giving her a mechanical heart. These strangers loosely resemble the seven dwarves, but are named Joosts, Jeremias, Julius, Schatzi, Josef, Jakob, and Johann. They do dig for gold and gems in mines, but each has a special talent. Unlike in the fairytale, Sophie's stepmother does not ask a mirror, *who's the fairest of them all?* Instead, she asks, *Who will bring about my fall?* When she thinks that it is Sophie, she tries to find her and kill her. She doesn't simply use a poisoned apple. Instead, she has additional gifts that have sinister purposes. One includes laces for a bodice that look like silk, but turn into venomous snakes. Another is a comb that turns into a scorpion and attempts to sting Sophie. She manages to escape these situations with the help of the strangers and others. In addition to these dangers, Sophie has discovered that her new heart can only work for a little while, so she sets out to find her old heart in the castle of the evil King of the Crows, also known as Corvus. She wants to find a spell to put it back inside her before it is too late. While dealing with these problems, Sophie learns that her stepmother and everyone else who has doubted her is wrong. Being kind is not a weakness, but a strength. This Snow White may start out by waiting for her prince, but by the end, she is independent and strong on her own.

Did the plot keep you interested?

The plot is very exciting, and I couldn't put this book down.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

The pace of the book was perfect. It had plenty of action, but it did not move too fast.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

This is a good book for sixth or seventh graders.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend Poisoned for people who like adventure and fantasy books. If you like Harry Potter, Percy Jackson and the Olympians, or The Hunger Games, then you might like this book, too!

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

In this story, there are many similarities with the original fairytale, Snow White. However, this book is more modern and instead of a prince coming to the rescue, Sophie can be her own hero.

4 stars: I enjoyed this book, and found it worthwhile reading. I was not sure at first if I wanted to give this four or five stars; it was a really good book. Though I decided to reserve five stars for my absolute favorites, that does not mean that Poisoned is not an amazing novel. This story is a page-turner, I found it very hard to stop reading sometimes. Even though I have outgrown

traditional fairy tales, I was happy that this book differed, because there was a strong female character and an empowering message for girls my age.

Reviewer Name and Grade: Dhikshika C, 9th grade

Date Reviewed: July 30, 2021

Summary:

Sophie has always been told that she would make a horrible queen. That she was too emotional, too kind, too caring, to do what was needed. Her stepmother hosts a ball for Sophie, so she can secure a strong ruler for her realm. During most of the night, Sophie flirts with Haakon and dances with him; he later proposes to her. After the party, the stepmom goes back to her room. The King of Crows appears and feeds her lies and tells her that Sophie will bring her fall. He gives her a glass box and tells her to “Bring me her heart”. The stepmother ordered a huntsman to kill and take Sophia’s heart. Sophie and the huntsman ride out into the woods, where the huntsmen then proceeds to take her heart, he flees. The seven brothers, who are the seven dwarfs of the story, save Sophie. She may have had her heart stolen – literally – but that wasn’t enough to keep her down. Now she’s on a quest to get her heart back, and save her kingdom.

Main Character Descriptions:

Sophie: She's described as too kind, too foolish, and too weak in the beginning of the book. She was thought to be a terrible ruler for having such a selfless personality. Later into the story she has a huge character development. By the end, she is still kind but this time her kindness brings confidence, and strength. She becomes more queen-like and turns into a great ruler.

Will: He is a grumpy, irritated, and brooding archer. Will is later known to be really trustworthy and is physically very strong.

Arno: Is a thief. He steals money from the dead, at first glance he is known to be hard-headed and doesn’t show any weakness. But later on as you learn his reason for being a thief and stealing from the dead, you can see that he isn’t as rude and emotionless as he seems.

Adelaide: Is the stepmom, she truly evil, doesn't believe in love and kindness. All she wants is her kingdom and to be the only queen, she doesn’t want anyone to surpass her.

Did the plot keep you interested?

The plot of this book kept me very interested; It made me wonder what would happen next.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

I think the pace of this book was just right.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

Grades 7-12

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this to anyone that likes classic fairy tales.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

Even though it is a follow up for the book Stepsister, it can be read as a stand alone.

Rate this book:

5 stars: I'm really glad I read this book; it was awesome!

I loved her spin on Snow White. The characters were charmingly funny and sometimes devious,

the writing was exceptional, and the story incorporated the core of the fairytale while still making its own. Classic fairytales are often enjoyable, but it's always great delving into the darker roots from where they came from.