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Swan Lake (Timeless Fairy Tales Book 7)



Synopsis

Will she choose to save her country or free herself? Cursed to be a swan by day, Odette spends her nights leading a band of smugglers and delivering illegal goods. Though she longs for her spell to be broken, she is stuck flattering the evil sorcerer who cursed her. When the kind and witty Prince Alexsei tracks Odette and her crew to their camp, Odette fears he is yet another complication she must manage. Instead, Alexsei slowly endears himself to her and searches for a way to break her curse—but with every visit he risks alerting the sorcerer to his presence. When the sorcerer launches an attack against the royal family, Odette is pulled between her love for Alexsei and the severe consequences that pitting herself against the sorcerer will bring. Can she fight at Alexsei's side—and survive? *SWAN LAKE* is retelling of the ballet, and is the seventh book of the *TIMELESS FAIRY TALES* series. The books in this series take place in the same world and can be read all together, or as individual, stand-alone books. If you enjoy compelling characters, sweet romance, and magical jokes, download a sample or buy it today!

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Customer Reviews

I agree with the 3 star review that mentions that the book was rushed and not a lot of time was spent on the characters. Just looking at the number of chapters in the book, it seems like this novel was very short, and it read that way too. I don't know if Shea also wrote it quickly and wanted to get it out, but I think some slower scenes that developed the major characters could have improved the experience a lot. Odette and Alexsei's relationship does come out of nowhere, and even now I wonder why he bothered going up to Swan Lake in the first place. I would have liked to see more of Odette with the female characters, like Nadia or Odile or Benno (especially Benno). And Yakov and Rothbart each could have been more developed: they're both flat characters that rely on stereotypes, and Rothbart's motivations at the end lack a real impact because you never get to know him. Also, why did the swans pick up smuggling in the first place? Regardless, the book is a fun read, and I do recommend it. It's a little more isolated than some of the other novels seem to be, but it still works. I will say that if Shea eventually plans to go somewhere with the overarching plot, I think it would be a good time to start strengthening the ties between the characters (beyond Angelique constantly popping up. Where are all the other mages in the world, exactly?) You hear about the summit, which is an idea she presents in the freebies on her website, but I do think that the plot needs to start moving towards the big end battle. But you should read this book, I swear. It's good. Odette is a mix of some of the other heroines but still has her own strong presence.

Swan Lake has always been one of my favorite fairy tales, but sadly there's so little retellings of it that I actually like. Thankfully, this is one of them. As always, I loved the characters that K.M. Shea brought to life in her novels and how they can think for themselves and do things that actually make SENSE. Odette isn't the simpering swan maiden who lives in fear of the sorcerer Rothbart, nor does she fall into insta-love with Alexsei, which was something I really appreciated. She's the Swan Queen, which isn't just a name in this case. It means something, because she ACTS like the leader and she's fierce, loyal, and completely badass, especially when something threatens her "flock". She's also kinda hardheaded and stubborn, which is why her interactions with Alexsei are funny and sweet. Oh Alexsei! I'm not someone who talks a lot about the male protagonist, so I'll just say that I definitely shipped him and Odette hard throughout the book. Like all of the other male heroes from Shea's books, he's a perfect fit for Odette and I'm not saying anything more because you should read the book and find out for yourself. Besides that, there's also a really interesting take on

Rothbart and Odile here and the parts they play in the novel. One of the parts that I've always hated in the original story is how the prince who claims to love Odette NEVER REALIZES that the girl he's dancing with at the ball IS NOT ACTUALLY ODETTE but ODILE for the ENTIRE night. I mean, seriously? But Shea not only provides a good explanation for this, she also turned it into one of the funniest parts of the book (for me at least) and made me love Alexsei more (not saying anything else about that, though). Odile's actually a total sweetheart, which was definitely a major change from the original tale. And Rothbart: I have no idea how to feel about him at all. Of course, you'll hate him within the first 5 seconds you meet him, but there's a surprise at the end that not only makes you question your initial feelings, but also wonder about the hint of a bigger villain in this whole mess. Something I definitely wanted more was more mentions of other characters from the previous novels. This book is set further from the worlds of the other Timeless Fairy Tales books and also over a longer time span (4 years!) so it's therefore not as involved (except for an interesting tie-in with the Arcainian princes from the Wild Swans and of course, Angelique!). But there's still some tantalizing glimpses into the lives of the other characters, like mentions of Stil, and Elle, not to mention the Summit for all the continent's leaders and the upcoming wedding for Dylan and Callan. There's even a minor link to the Snow Queen, and all of this would be fine and all but I WANT MORE!! Okay, enough ranting about that. Back to the time span thing I mentioned before: for taking over 4 YEARS to realize, the issue takes a surprisingly short time to get fixed. I feel like some parts of it were a little rushed, especially compared to the Snow Queen story (then again, that took two books so there's that). But aside from the timing, that's basically it. This was a beautiful story, not because of romance or anything, but because of everything else that was also there: friendship, sacrifice, action, magic, and of course, how it ties into the overarching plot of the whole series. While not my favorite of the whole series, I still really liked this addition to the series and I definitely recommend reading it

While I did enjoy this book, it fell short of my expectations and it wasn't quite as fun to read as my favorite in this series, The Little Selkie. The plot is very fast paced and dominated by action scenes with very little substantial 'sitting around talking' going on. Sometimes that's not necessarily a bad thing but in this case I think those types of scenes would have benefited the romance between Alexsei and Odette. In the end, the relationship felt rushed. I also wish there had been more of the secondary characters. Yakov was featured a little more prominently but I found it hard to really understand his character beyond what he was presented as: a flirt. And yet by the end he seemed entirely different...? Benno was interesting but she had very little scene time, or so it

seemed. Rothbart. Oh where to begin... (SPOILERS AHEAD) Rothbart was presented as the quintessential villain but by the end he was shown to be doing everything for his daughter who, throughout the entire book, he had ridiculed and belittled. Okay. I get that. Actually, scratch that, I don't? While a few details and hints were dropped throughout the book that might have alluded to this, the big battle at the end just makes this seem super strange. And to be honest, I kind of wish he'd just been bad. When the bad guy turns out to be a good guy it's not always the most appealing thing, especially after you see so little of him and therefore don't have enough time to get invested in him as a character. In short, he came across as a one dimensional villain and the way his part in the story ended just didn't match up with the way he was written up to that point. This is the first time I've given this author a three star review. I still love this series and I will probably re-read this book eventually but it just doesn't stand out to me like some of the other books do.

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