

Poisoned

By Author, Jennifer Donnelly

Reviewed by: Harini, 14

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Poisoned, the second installment in Donnelly's darker fairytale spin-off collection is a version of the original Snow White. This story is about a teenage princess named Sophie who everyone believes to be too “soft” and “kind” to take up the brutal position of queen. Her stepmother, the Queen sends her huntsman to obtain her heart like the fairytale, but here, the huntsman succeeds. Sophie is left alone and about to die when seven dwarfs find her and build her a heart made of clockwork. From the seven kindly dwarf’s house she realizes that the Queen may not be the reason for the removal of her heart. She sets off on a dangerous quest to the castle of Fear himself to get her heart back. Along the way, she realizes what it truly means to be a queen and that kindness is more deadly than fear ever could be.

As an avid reader of any fairytale and a huge Disney fan, this book gave me the sense of completion and fulfilled all of my “what ifs” and “if only's” that I had growing up. Taking a break from the kid-friendly world of princesses and instead jumping into another universe full of death, destruction, and unfiltered reality. More themes that are relevant in this book are female empowerment, being brave, strong and confident. Poisoned shows girls they don’t have to be heartless and cold to be a good leader. It shows people that kindness DOES matter and one small kind deed could change someone’s life.

Poisoned is very graphic. There are many scenes where there is blood, gore, pain and war. I would not advise anyone under the age of 12, or anyone who is squeamish about blood or sensitive to gore to read this novel. This is a YA (young adult) novel, and not meant for kids. I would say that the recommended grade would be seventh grade or more.

Recommended Titles:

Stepsister by Jennifer Donnelly

Deep Blue by Jennifer Donnelly

Poor Unfortunate Soul: A Tale of the Sea Witch by Serena Valentino

Beauty and the Beast: Lost in a Book by Jennifer Donnelly

Before the Beginning by Anna Morgan