

A Curse So Dark and Lonely**Brigid Kemmerer****Reviewed by: Niharika Sharma, 17****Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity****www.bethestaryouare.org**

Harper is a 18 year-old girl living with cerebral palsy in Washington D.C. as part of a family who is struggling to make ends meet. One night, when she tries to defend a stranger getting kidnapped, Harper gets magically transported to the kingdom of Emberfall to be offered as a potential love interest for Prince Rhen, Emberfall's heir. She learns that the kingdom has been placed under a curse by an enchantress that forces the prince to constantly relive his eighteenth year until someone falls in love with him. The catch is that if Prince Rhen doesn't find someone to love him in the next few months, he will permanently turn into a beast and destroy his kingdom. In this modern retelling of *Beauty and the Beast*, Harper must decide whether to save Emberfall from its impending doom or return to her family before it is too late.

I was glad to find that this novel wasn't a typical love story where the main character easily falls in love with the prince. Instead, the book didn't focus solely on romance, and Harper's relationship with Rhen slowly developed over time as they built up a sense of trust and understanding with each other. I loved all the characters in this book, especially Harper. She is a strong protagonist who can take care of herself, tries to help others in any way possible, and doesn't let her disability hold her back. I also thought that the author's writing style was entertaining, since I never felt bored while reading this book.

My main issue with the novel was that it could have been more creative in its structure to make the story more unique than the typical *Beauty and the Beast* retelling. I wanted to learn more about the enchantress who cast the curse, but her character wasn't as well-developed as all the others. Additionally, Harper and Rhen's romance wasn't very compelling for a story in which they were meant to fall in love in order to break a curse. Still, this book was fun to read and its characters always kept me wanting to read more. I would recommend *A Curse So Dark and Lonely* for people who are 14 or older and are interested in fantasy or romance novels. I'd suggest getting this book from a library since it is good for a one-time read, but it is not necessarily something I would read multiple times.

Recommended Books:**A Court of Thorns and Roses, Sarah J. Maas****Serpent and Dove, Shelby Mahurin****The Cruel Prince, Holly Black**