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Hunted



Synopsis

Beauty knows the Beast's forest in her bones--and in her blood. Though Yeva grew up with the city's highest aristocrats, far from her father's old lodge, she knows that the forest holds secrets and that her father is the only hunter who's ever come close to discovering them. So when her father loses his fortune and moves Yeva and her sisters back to the outskirts of town, Yeva is secretly relieved. Out in the wilderness, there's no pressure to make idle chatter with vapid baronesses...or to submit to marrying a wealthy gentleman. But Yeva's father's misfortune may have cost him his mind, and when he goes missing in the woods, Yeva sets her sights on one prey: the creature he's been obsessively tracking just before his disappearance. Deaf to her sisters' protests, Yeva hunts this strange Beast back into his own territory--a cursed valley, a ruined castle, and a world of creatures that Yeva's only heard about in fairy tales. A world that can bring her ruin or salvation. Who will survive: the Beauty, or the Beast?

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Customer Reviews

"Fierce and luscious. Wander into these woods and vanish inside this splendid fairy tale."

--Stephanie Perkins, New York Times bestselling author of *Anna and the French Kiss*

"A rich, Russian-influenced retelling of 'Beauty and the Beast';

Building upon a familiar tale, Spooner creates a detailed world populated by complex characters...

reminiscent of Robin McKinley's and Patricia McKillip's novels, concerned with the

power of stories." -- Kirkus, starred review

“Spooner creates a detailed world populated by complex characters

| An elegant, classic, and vivid fairy tale. (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))

“Unlike the cardboard heroes of fairytales, Yeva is a very human girl who must discover the meaning of the deep yearning that has always been within her. The author’s depictions will keep the reader spellbound. (Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA) (starred review))

“A haunting and romantic exploration of love and what sacrifices come with freedom. (Marie Lu, author of the Legend and The Young Elites trilogies)

“Haunting and graceful, with an edge that draws blood when you least expect it, *Hunted* is a masterpiece. Spooner deftly weaves together fairytale with fantasy, bringing to life an immersive, unforgettable world, a heart-wrenching romance, and a badass heroine. (Amie Kaufman, New York Times bestselling author of *Illuminae* and *The Starbound Trilogy*)

“Elements of Russian folklore thread through this revision of *Beauty and the Beast*, and the smooth storytelling effectively creates atmosphere and mood as well as relaying the tale. Much time is spent on details they all work to create a richly immersive and creatively fresh world for a familiar story. (Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books)

Beauty knows the Beast’s forest in her bones and in her blood. She knows that the forest holds secrets and that her father is the only hunter who’s ever come close to discovering them. But Yeva’s grown up far from her father’s old lodge, raised to be part of the city’s highest caste of aristocrats. Still, she’s never forgotten the feel of a bow in her hands, and she’s spent a lifetime longing for the freedom of the hunt. So when her father loses his fortune and moves Yeva and her sisters back to the outskirts of town, Yeva is secretly relieved. Out in the wilderness, there’s no pressure to make idle chatter with vapid baronesses . . . or to submit to marrying a wealthy gentleman. But Yeva’s father’s misfortune may have cost him his mind, and when he goes missing in the woods, Yeva sets her sights on one prey: the creature he’s been obsessively tracking just before his disappearance. Deaf to her sisters’ protests, Yeva hunts this strange Beast back into his own territory—a cursed valley, a ruined castle, and a world of creatures that Yeva’s heard about only in fairy tales. A world that can bring her ruin or salvation. Who will survive: the Beauty, or the Beast?

Ever since I read Robin McKinley’s *Beauty*, I’ve had a special place in my heart for *Beauty & the*

Beast retellings. It's crashingly disappointing when the retelling does nothing but rehash old themes, and does nothing to uncover untapped nuances from the story. I wasn't disappointed with *Hunted*. It's a fitting successor for *Beauty*. Yeva is her father's youngest daughter-- a daughter he taught his own love of the woods and hunting before becoming a rich merchant. When the inevitable misfortune hits his business, he moves them back to the small hunting cabin in the woods where Yeva first fell in love with the forest. Only he becomes distant, obsessed, and then disappears. It's up to Yeva to find him, but she finds an abandoned castle and a beast instead. *Beauty*, Yeva, in this retelling, is as much a Hunter as the Beast. And that's the twist that I loved so much in this telling, as well as the more nuanced emotional connections to her older sisters. Yeva is first taken because she can hunt-- and the emotional journey from captive to someone who would consider the Beast as more than just a tormentor stays true to Yeva's love of the hunt. She attempts to kill the Beast, and their back and forth in harming/not harming each other really spins this tale a interesting, dark way. Yeva has lots and lots of agency in this, not much is done TO her, and that I appreciated as well. And then there are *leshys* and *rusalkas* and other Slavic myths bound up in this, so that was cool. A dark, and more active-*Beauty* retelling, completely worth your while.

This was a lovely retelling of *Beauty and the Beast*. The setting seems to be somewhere in Russia. Yeva is the youngest of three sisters of a man who is now a merchant but who was once a famous hunter. When he loses his fortune in a risky venture, they go back to his long-abandoned hunting cabin deep in the forest. He resumes hunting but is losing his mind because he feels he is being watched. When Yeva, called *Beauty* inside her family, goes out to look for him she finds herself captured by a Beast who has the need of a hunter. During her imprisonment she shares stories so that she can hear the sound of a human voice and has Beast as her mainly unseen audience. Her stories recall his human side which had been getting lost in the Beast. I loved the language in this story. I loved that *Beauty* was always someone looking for something else -- that she never felt comfortable in any situation because she was always looking to the horizon for more. Beast was the same way which led to him being cursed by the elusive firebird. I loved the interludes when the Beast is the narrator. It is easy to see the conflict in his dual nature. Even if you know the story, this version is well worth reading for the twists and turns Ms. Spooner adds, the wonderful, descriptive language and the nuanced characters. I highly recommend it to all lovers of fairy tales.

4.5 perfectly shimmering stars !!!! I have been SO disappointed by the YA fantasy titles I've read lately, reading "*Hunted*" took me by surprise, and then totally wowed me. Sure, there are plenty of 4

and 5-star reviews for this novel, but a lot of horrendous books get showered in gushing praise. Especially YA fantasy titles. I was actually inspired to pick up this book after reading a scathing 1-star review. A review that absolutely shredded the plot of this book as well as the characters. I expected "Hunted" to be a trainwreck, a Beauty and the Beast retelling stuffed with tropes and plot holes and lackluster prose, but I was so curious about the Slavic/Russian folklore in this story that I couldn't help myself. The scathing one-star review had mentioned Slavic/Russian folklore played a role in the plot, and that was when I decided I had to read "Hunted." And thank my fairy tale stars I did! Because this book is WONDERFUL. The very best way to spend a cold, gray afternoon at home. Sometimes the universe is kind. The beginning was the hardest part for me, because the novel is set in medieval Russia, and there were a number of anachronisms that grated against my little history-loving brain. At first, I made note of them (as I always do when I read, especially if I think I might be reading a trainwreck). But the setting of the story soon switches, as Beauty journeys from her town to the enchanted/cursed land where the Beast lives, and the issues I had in the beginning all vanished. The plot of this book honors the original Beauty and the Beast fairy tale in so many brilliant ways, both in structure and character, and by weaving in the Slavic/Russian folklore, author Meagan Spooner added some truly delightful and inspiring depth to this classic story. The prose of "Hunted" is well above average. The sentences flow, and some of the descriptive passages are quite lovely. The characters are beautifully drawn. Beast is a point of view character as well as Beauty, and I really loved his chapters. The relationship between Beauty and her two sisters made me tear up, especially toward the end of the book. There is a wonderful canine named Doe-Eyes and a reinvented Gaston character named Solmir. The magic of this story world was subtle, unique, and added so well to the dialogue and plot. The novel had a quiet, relentless drive that built toward the last fifty pages, and it was this final section of the book that made me really sit back and say, WOW. Wow. Fricking awesome. "Hunted" is a rare YA fantasy that features a lot of emotional depth in the characters, whether they are main characters or secondary. This is a novel in which actions have consequences, psychologically as well as physically, a story in which bodies are not machines full of limitless power, but fragile objects that often struggle and suffer. My highest praise for "Hunted" is this: the novel has a depth of understanding about human nature, storytelling, and the power of reshaping stories, that made my brain explode with pleasure as I witnessed Beauty undergo the final part of her hero's journey. The finale of this book is wise and rich and perfect. If you are a reader who loves fairy tale retellings, interesting magical worlds, or stories that weave folklore into their plots, I would recommend you add "Hunted" to your reading list.

This book was really good. I enjoyed it from beginning to end. If you are looking for a wonderful story to read on vacation, sitting in your yard, on the train...I say check it out. What I enjoyed most were obviously the characters, but it was the constant stream of visual images that played like a movie the whole time I was reading.

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