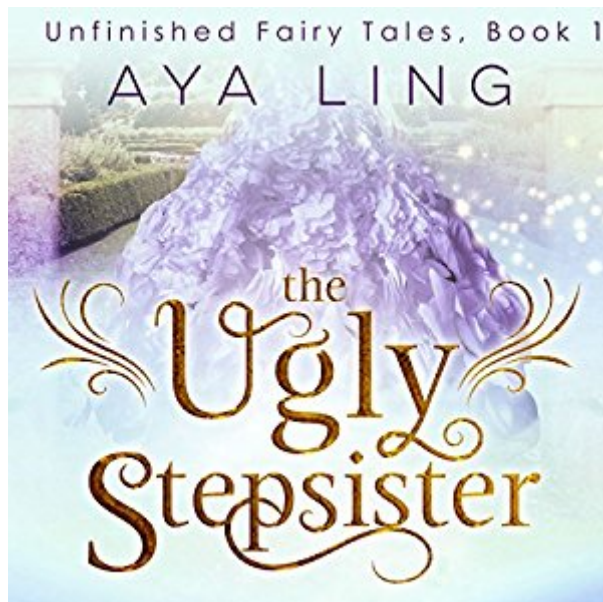


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The Ugly Stepsister



Synopsis

What if you are trapped in a fairy tale book? When Kat accidentally rips apart an old childhood picturebook, she's magically transported into the world of Cinderella - as Katriona, one of the ugly stepsisters! To get back, she'll have to complete the story, right to the end of happily ever after. But the odds are huge: The other stepsister is movie-star gorgeous, the fairy godmother is nowhere to be found, and the prince isn't interested in balls at all. Can she ever return to the real world? Cover Design by Clarissa at Yocla Designs

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I absolutely loved *The Ugly Stepsister*, by Aya Ling. Kat is a female protagonist that takes hold of the story and pushes it along through the power of her will. She's not a damsel in distress. She doesn't allow the story to happen to her, but shapes the story as she marches towards the end, forgetting stereotypes and what a "proper" lady should do. And she's flawed. She makes mistakes. She falls on her bum. She asks for help when the odds are insurmountable. Another awesome aspect of this light romance is that Kat isn't supposed to be gorgeous. It's easy to write a love story when pretty people think they might want to hook up with other pretty people. Perceived beauty has been a demarcation of a person's status for as long as people cared to gossip about such things. Kat catches the eye of the prince with sheer will and personality. Sex is not even a theme in this story. In a world of little girls dressing up to emulate the latest titillation, there has been a trend to over-sexualize childhood ideas and fairy tales

are no different. The Ugly Stepsister adheres to a propriety that's been out of favor in recent years, and it's refreshing to not have to wade through sexy-this or sexy-that. The story, while a retelling of Cinderella, has its own voice and its own uniqueness. The author uses what we know and expect of Cinderella, and molds our expectations to trick us into complacency, only to twist the tale a little bit more. As a unique story, the only other book I can even think to compare it to would be *Household Gods*, by Judith Tarr. I read half the book in one sitting, and gave serious thought to just finishing it and calling in sick. I ended up stopping, dragging myself through the workday knowing that the reward of finishing this delightful tale awaited me. I highly recommend this book for anyone who wants a light fairy tale with romance with threads of girl power. I received a free copy on NetGalley

I loved this book. The concept was unique and I loved the twist on the original Cinderella story. I bought the book with curiosity and I found that I couldn't put down the book. I ended up finishing the book the next day. I have read hundreds of books and this one intrigued me to no end. The book is just like the brief summary says. It is a story where a seventeen year old girl named Kathrine, nicknamed Kat, is transported into the Fairy Tale book Cinderella. In order to escape the book, however, she must finish the story to the "They lived happily-ever-after." She isn't Cinderella but Katriona Bradshaw, one of her stepsisters. The problem is that all the information is messed up. Cinderella is a servant but lives separately with her mom and two younger brothers. The fairy godmother is nowhere to be found and the Prince is falling for her instead of Cinderella. If her situation wasn't hard enough, Kat finds herself being sucked into the story, fighting against child labor and falling madly in love with the Prince. I would like to say that I wasn't excited about the ending of the book. It upset me that she didn't remember her whole adventure except the familiarly of the story. Why couldn't she get the guy and her family. I know I'm being very traditional in the happily ever after stories but I felt very disappointed that after developing so many characters in the story and relationships between them and Kat to have them all forgotten by her. I'm looking forward to Aya Ling's sequel book "Ever After" but I wish there was an alternate ending where Kat gets everything.

Over the years many books have passed through my repertoire of stories and after a while the idea of fairytale retelling became a trend. However, the more of these I read the more I came to realise they started to parrot each other. So when I did discover this one I was suspicious of it following the same route. Once I started the first paragraph though I was pleasantly surprised and gradually was

drawn into a Victorian style world with the main character struggling to comprehend her new reality. The twist to this story is that Aya Ling portrays a realistic view of the world at the time the book is set. So in effect the fairytale is more alive in a sense and this is what I connected with. The main characters actions could really effect how the 'fairytale world' could be shaped. Entrenching the reader in suspense as you wonder what Kat (the main character) could do to improve this new world while still trying to finish the true story of Cinderella.

I have mixed feelings about this book. There were some things that I loved like the spunkiness of the main character and some of the twists and turns that came into play. I just didn't like the flow of the book. It was a little awkward at times and hard to get through. It just didn't draw me in like I wanted it to.

This book is a wonderful retelling of the Cinderella story. Kat, a modern day teenager, falls into the story of Cinderella and finds it is up to her to unite Cinderella with the prince if she ever wants to return to the twenty first century. But Kat is one of the ugly stepsisters! She also has very modern ideas on labor laws, healthcare reform and women's rights. Her story is not to be missed.

I thought that this was a very interesting take on the role of the "ugly stepsister." The main character is transported and trapped in a fairy tale, where her only means of escape is to help the plot go according to plan. Once this is accomplished, she can go home to the "modern world." Seems easy enough, but she sticks out like a sore thumb, attracting all the wrong attention, thus stealing the thunder from poor "Cinderella." Should she ignore her own feelings, suppress her growing love for the prince, to escape the book once and for all? Or should she throw out the script and follow her heart, even if she is not sure how long it can last? This is an original take on the "Cinderella" tale that reminds all readers that within every story are many other stories--other characters to understand, other futures to ponder, and other hearts to follow.

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