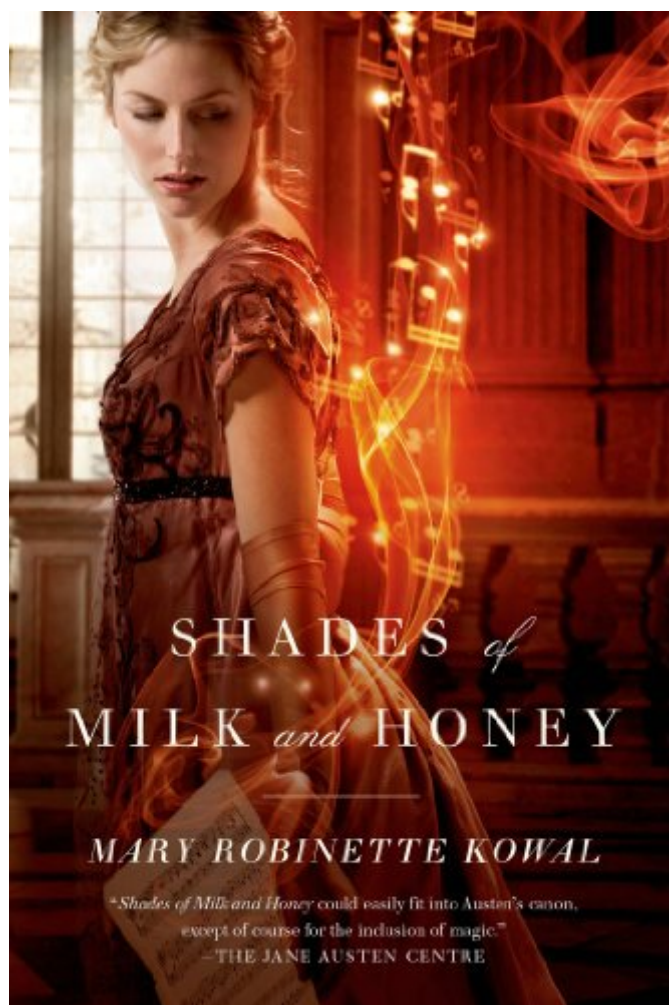


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Shades Of Milk And Honey (Glamourist Histories Book 1)



Synopsis

The fantasy novel you've always wished Jane Austen had written *Shades of Milk and Honey* is exactly what we could expect from Jane Austen if she had been a fantasy writer: *Pride and Prejudice* meets *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell*. It is an intimate portrait of a woman, Jane, and her quest for love in a world where the manipulation of glamour is considered an essential skill for a lady of quality. Jane and her sister Melody vie for the attentions of eligible men, and while Jane's skill with glamour is remarkable, it is her sister who is fair of face. When Jane realizes that one of Melody's suitors is set on taking advantage of her sister for the sake of her dowry, she pushes her skills to the limit of what her body can withstand in order to set things right-and, in the process, accidentally wanders into a love story of her own. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When I first read *Shades of Milk and Honey*, I found it underwhelming. However, since the magic premise was interesting, I decided to continue with the series in the hope that it would improve.

Thankfully, that gamble paid off, because each successive book is leaps and bounds better than the last. However, the stronger books make this one seem even weaker by comparison.[MILD SPOILER WARNING] To isolate my primary complaint with *Shades*, it would have to be the decoy love interest. It was obvious from the first few pages that this guy (he made so little impression that I can't even remember his name) was not the man for Jane, so it made the bulk of the novel incredibly tedious, as the reader has to sit through scene after scene of empty flirtation and angsty internal monologues to get to the horribly-clichéd conclusion. Worst of all, this obsession with a vapid man and the constant "woe is me, I'm so ugly" reflections made me really dislike Jane. Fortunately, *Glamour in Glass* is slightly better, *Without a Summer* is better still, and I just finished *Valour and Vanity*, which was AWESOME. Read this quick little novel for an introduction to the magic system, but keep your expectations low, for starters. The real fun comes in the sequels!

My Disclaimer: I was provided a free copy of this book by the author. I am providing an honest review in which all opinions are fully my own. I am not being compensated in any way. ~ Judi E. Easley for Blue Cat Review

My Review: Yes, yes, yes! You must read this book if you like Jane Austen style stories and magic. This was wonderful. The added touch of magic to the JA style was really marvelous. I really wanted to say magical, but well, it was! We meet Jane Ellsworth, who is plain with a large nose and mousy brown hair. That's her personal description of her appearance. Her sister, Melody, is gorgeous with lovely golden hair and is a happy flirt. Why would Melody be jealous of Jane? Melody took the same lessons with the same instructor when they were old enough to learn glamour. She simply doesn't have the same talent with it. And it seems to be making a difference. While Melody can swish in the draperies for the party, it's Jane who has to add all the details and perfect the elements that go into what there so that the draperies hang just so and the tasseled tie backs are all tied at the same length. She makes the fruit arrangement in the epergne for the table setting as well since she can perfect the blush on a peach until it looks as if you should be able to bite it and the juice would run down your chin. You see, women are supposed to use their glamour for household things to enrich the home. While for men, glamour is an art. That's where we meet Mr. Vincent. The very mysterious Mr. Vincent. Who is he really? What makes him so rude to Jane? She was admiring his glamour and trying to see how he created it. She tried to do something similar and added a little something to it. She felt she could learn so much from an artist as great as he. The book was paced

much like a tea party. Everyone arrived and was admired for this or that. Soon, they are all settled into their places and exchange a bit of gossip. Then for the big moment, the tea and goodies are served. A cup is tipped over and tea is spilled. Someone chokes on crumbs from a tea cake. A lace hankie has been misplaced. Please, pass the glamour and gossip. Then everyone is set straight and all lost items returned to their rightful owners and people are on their way. But did they all go home with the ones they came with? Yes, you really do need to read this book!

After a clunky first chapter, this book rapidly becomes fun, fast paced and enjoyable. It's plenty good enough for suspension of disbelief. However, I'd have liked to see all the characters developed a bit better. The sibling rivalry between Jane and her sister Melody seemed convincing enough, but very one sided-- Jane was clearly the 'good' one, and Melody was the 'bad' one. It seemed like things should be more balanced, with each of them having their own flaws, but also things in common. As it was, Jane didn't need to learn anything or develop as a character (except in her artistry)-- she was perfect from the start. Jane's romantic interest in the hero also seemed to come out of nowhere-- they didn't interact much, and she spent most of the novel in love with another man. When the other man was disqualified by some actions that actually seemed pretty out-of-character, Jane immediately fell for the hero. Again, I enjoyed this story, and read it in almost one sitting. The magic system was interesting and unique. It just needed another 100 pages to flesh out the characters, give Jane some time to grow as a person, and make a more convincing romance.

Being a fan of both Jane Austen and historical fantasy, this book was a good fit for me. I sometimes want to take a break from epic story lines and read something on a smaller more personal scale. With "Shades of Milk and Honey" the author effectively captured the tone and and plot of a Jane Austen type novel, while introducing a unique spin on magic. My main complaints would be the lack of development in the Jane/Mr. Vincent relationship, and a hurried haphazard ending to an otherwise beautifully crafted story. These are the main elements keeping this charming tale from being a shining five star read. In all other ways it was very enjoyable and imaginative. I'm definitely going to try the next book in the series, as many reviewers claim it gets even better as it progresses.

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