



## The Scarecrow King

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## **The Scarecrow King** Jill Myles

Princess Rinda of Balinore knows of only one way to get her cold father's attention – to be an obnoxious, spoiled princess. When she finds out that the king plan to marrying her off to a far-flung nobleman, she puts on her best bratty show in front of the entire court. But Rinda's plan backfires, and she soon finds herself married to the most ineligible man ever. Her new husband is monastery raised, poor as dirt, and a traveling minstrel.

A very, very bad traveling minstrel.

But Alek isn't what he seems like on the surface, and neither is Rinda. She won't take this marriage lying down, and schemes to find herself a new husband – a king. But as she and Alek travel together, they learn that not only are appearances deceiving, but goals can change in the blink of an eye, and love can get in the way of the strongest plans...

The Scarecrow King is a romantic retelling of the King Thrushbeard fairy tale.

## **The Scarecrow King Details**

Date : Published September 22nd 2013 by Jill Myles

ISBN :

Author : Jill Myles

Format : Kindle Edition 212 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fairy Tales, Retellings, Young Adult, Romance, Magic

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## From Reader Review The Scarecrow King for online ebook

### Jamie says

I like to read book reviews before purchasing the books. Because of that, I'd like to address a few of the main complaints I read before reading the book, before I give you my overall opinion:

1. Previous reviewers complained that the "surprise twist" was super obvious. Duh. It's a retelling of a fairy tale that people are familiar with. **"Retelling" is literally in the title people!** Complaining about not being surprised is like being upset reading a retelling of Sleeping Beauty and being upset that it was obvious that she was going to prick her finger, or that it was just *soooo obvious* that slipper would fit Cinderella.
2. Next, people complained she fell in love too fast, or the timeline didn't make sense because it went by so fast. Let me say this again- **this is a FAIRY TALE**. It took Cinderella approximately a nano-second to fall in love with Prince Charming, it comes with the genre. Plus, when I was 16 I'm pretty sure I thought I was in love with my high school boyfriend after a week as well (*spoiler alert - I wasn't*), so it's not even that unrealistic outside of the fairy tale realm.
3. I also read complaints about the mood-swings of the protagonist, and complaints that she was self-absorbed. Keep in mind she's 16. If my 16-year-old self was drug on an adventure like this one I probably would have complained the entire time - it's what teenagers do after all! Personally, I didn't think it distracted too much from the story... And I am usually easily annoyed with stupid self-centered characters. Maybe I just tolerate them better in a fairy tale setting, who knows!

Now onto my opinion: This book was adequate for what it was - a retelling of a fairy tale. It was a quick read (a few hours), and I overall enjoyed it. I wasn't particularly impressed by anything, and I wouldn't pay for than \$5 for this book, but it's worth the read for \$4 if you like fairy tale stories, and are expecting that when you read it. I wasn't a huge fan of the end portion of the book, but it wasn't awful or anything. I wouldn't go out of my way to recommend this to a friend, but if they saw it and asked me about it I'd say "Eh, go ahead and read it."

Side note, I'm not sure why we needed to be told of three separate occasions why Rinda never learned to braid her hair. I got it the first time, thank you.

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### Most?fy? says

Likes:

- Storyline
- Atmosphere (loved the mixture of fantasy, fairytale, romance and travel genres)

Dislikes

- Title (which gave too much away)

- Cover (utterly irrelevant)

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## **Kagama-the Literaturevixen says**

Princess Marinda of Balinore is used to being ignored by her father the king who prefers her blonde and more magically talented sister Imogen. Rinda's birthright magic is that she can add luck to inanimate objects by smearing some of her blood on them.

But neither Rinda nor the rest of Balinore considers it something to be proud of. Not when it is such an insignificant magic compared to her sister who can call forth water from the ground with her Birthright.

One day their father declares that it's time that they both found husbands. Imogen is happy but Rinda is furious knowing it's just a way to remove her from the castle and her father's presence.

Rinda comes up with a plan. She will scare away the prospective suitors by insulting them so badly that they won't want to marry such a rude princess even if she is a connection to the throne of Balinore.

When the day of the ball arrives she sets her plan into motion and the suitors soon give up their courtship but things go wrong when the entourage of the King of Lioncourt arrives and Rinda noticing how unshaven and dirty from the road they are calls out..

"King of Lioncourt...more like King of Scarecrows!" I laughed and laughed and laughed at the ridiculousness of it.

Her father is furious by her behavior and declares that he will marry her to the first man who enters the castle. Rinda not taking his threat very seriously learns how wrong she is when she finds herself married off to a poor wandering minstrel named Aleksandr.

This does not suit her at all!

Her new husband brings her from the castle and tells her that according to the customs of his country he will give her a symbolic gift a flower for the 30 days. If after those days she still refuses to accept it then they will be divorced.

This suits Rinda very well as she figures if she can just find her way to the kingdom of Lioncourt she can convince the king to marry her. Then she will have the life she deserves at last.

Luckily Alek is from Lioncourt so she can just as well accompany him. It's not like she will accept his stupid flower.

This is a retelling of the King Thrushbeard fairytale so if you know that story it will be very obvious who Alek really is.

But the author fleshes out the story and strays from the original tale in that instead of Alek being mean to her and stashing her away in a shack to humble her- they go adventuring together instead.

Along the way Rinda learns some valuable lessons and grows as a person and finds her happy ending.

As for the romance...well from what I can judge compared to the authors other books this is pretty chaste. Sure there is kissing but the more intimate scenes are not described in great detail.

I found Alek a guy who could be firm with Rinda but who didnt push her around (even when she deserved it) He does call her out on some of her prissy princess ways but over all he was a great guy. (even if he wasnt a great minstrel lol)

Some people mention in their reviews that Rinda falls in love with Alek a little bit too fast.

While part of me can agree another part of me thinks that no they had been in each others company for some time and had to save each other from some dangerous situations. How could they not fall in love after all that.

We accept it in the fairytales when the basis on the couples relationship is being kissed by a stranger while you are uncocscious.

If there is one thing... I wish Rinda had a confrontation with her father towards the end. But he just seems to disappear from the story.

This is a wonderful retelling of one of the more obscure fairytales out there that has a flawed but most of the time likable heroine,a sweet brave hero and enough humor,drama and romance to satisfy anyone who wants to disappear to faraway kingdoms for a spell.

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### **Set says**

I remember fuming when I read King Thrushbeard as a little girl and hated the way that he castigated his princess.

Now when I read it, my emotions are more like this...

I really liked the retelling of this story with the magical spin to it and I liked the author's writing style. I love fairy tales!!! And this fairy tale retelling is filled with so much adventure and a new kind of magic that I would have never imagined. I wish that Jill Myles would do a Snow White retelling.

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### **Minni Mouse says**

3.5 stars because I loved this book! It was surprisingly sweet and darling, delightfully entertaining, and laugh out loud funny. A retelling of the King Thrushbeard fairy tale, our main character is a spoiled-rotten, lil' punk of a brat princess...which by itself was new for me. Her ridiculous barbs and tantrums were *funny*.

“For the love of all that is good, he's wearing more feathers in his one cap than I have in my entire wardrobe. Tell us, sir -did you attack a stray peacock on your way to the ball tonight?”

“That is enough, Rinda!” My father's voice was furious. “How dare you humiliate your family before the court?”

But I was just getting started.

“I refuse to marry an old man who resembles a dried up carrot,” I said in my loudest voice.

“Your highness,” the earl began again, shocked. He looked at my father in a mixture of confusion and humiliation and jammed the cap back on his head, smoothing his hand down the hideous orange jerkin.

“Oh, like that's much better,” I said. “Now you truly look like a carrot.” The feathers really did jut from his head like a crown of leafy greens. “Perhaps if you wore a sack over your head instead of that cap—”

What a refreshingly light and sweet story that I highly recommend!

## THE GOOD

1) Princess Rinda was so freaking funny. Literally had me bursting into laughter out loud. Homegirl had absolutely no filter on her, which I adored, and she was spoiled useless from anything remotely practical.

“Too hairy,” I told the next one, giving him a disdainful look. “I shouldn't have to brush my husband like a messy rug.”

The crowd tittered, half-horrified, half-amused. They parted to let me through, eager for any sort of gossip or entertainment to divert them. Like crows near for a carcass, they hovered over my shoulder, waiting for me to point out the next unfortunate suitor.

“Too poor,” I told the next one, and stroked my lovely belt of jet beads. “I'm not about to marry a pig farmer.”

“I am a baron, your highness,” the man said, his dark blonde hair revealed as he broke into a sweeping bow, trying to save face.

“Not with those clothes, you're not,” I replied, my voice droll. He glanced up and I saw his mouth thin with dislike. Good. I turned away from him as if he were beneath my notice.

“Too ugly,” I flat out told the next. “Too short,” were the next two. I made sure to point out each humiliated man so the rapt audience would know just who I was humiliating. “Too freckled. Too pale. And you. Goodness, no, not you. You hold your wine goblet like a woman. And you? Are you even old enough to be here? You're scarce more than a stripling.”

- 2) And by contrast, Aleksandr was the kindest and most joyful character ever -- a perfect foil to Rinda. His cheerful demeanor and glowing smile radiated positivity.
- 3) Slow-burn romance...kind of. What was deliciously slow was the character and relational buildup between Alek and Rinda as Rinda slowly appreciates his selflessness and she in turn becomes less selfish. Her attraction and love for him was a bit abrupt...but whadya gonna do -- this is a middle age YA book and we got things to do.

### **THE BAD**

- 1) Alek, bro, I know you're a blushing virgin and all but did you have to blush and flush and redden every other page? Keep it on your pants, boy. Damn.
- 2) After the first third of the book the giggles died down and the story got marginally less enjoyable.
- 3) Spiders. Enough said.
- 4) The book took itself too seriously and dragged out the reveal of Aleksandr way too long from Rinda's point of view. Rinda can't possibly be that dense, and I as the reader didn't like being stuck in her dense narrative with her.

### **THE VERDICT**

This was such a cute, entertaining read! If you're in the room for a giggle, a light-hearted fantasy with slow-burn romance and arranged marriages, and a fairly quick and easy read, this is the a book for you. I almost guarantee you'll find yourself grinning at this adorable story.

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### **Angie says**

After continuously reading Fantasy Romance, I now switched to a fairytale retelling.

This is about the spoiled princess of Balinore, Rinda. Her birthright magic is granting luck on inanimate objects. Not a magic worthy of a royalty - thus her father, the King, despises her.

Rinda is a spoiled brat. It's been a while since a heroine irritated me like this. I know she's demeaned by her own father, always the unwanted daughter. But she's so selfish, bratty and rude. I really hate her.

I almost dnf this book. The only saving grace on this book is Alek, he's so pleasant to read. I really like him.♥

I already know what the twist will be, so no surprise when the great reveal happened. There's a lot of one dimensional characters in here.

The latter part is a bit fun and what saved the rating of this book for me. It was an ok read.

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### **Story\_girl says**

What a sweet and cute fairytale retelling and Alek is such a sweetheart. Would love to re-read this story sometime!

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### **Johanna says**

Sometimes you just need some trashy, angsty romance with a guaranteed happy ending. Yesterday was such a moment for me. Luckily I still have my kindle-unlimited which is invaluable in such cases. An extensive search later, I found my book.

#### **Spoilers for the original fairytale ... and in consequence the retelling I guess**

The Scarecrow King is a fairy-tale retelling of King Thrushbeard. I'm German and of a generation that inhaled the fairytales by the brothers Grimm with the mother milk. This one is a highly highly highly problematic one (which is likely the reason it isn't as famous). The plot is as follows. A horribly selfish and spoiled princess is supposed to get married, but she insults every single candidate horribly, including a young king who has a rather ridiculous hairstyle and facial hair (hence the title King Thrushbeard). Her father gets fed up with her and swears to marry her off to the first man to come to the castle. This just happens to be a dirty and highly untalented minstrel. The princess gets married of and kicked out of the castle. Her new husband is poor and forces her to leave everything she has left behind. He puts her through a lot and she has to learn to deal with an impoverished life. In the end it's revealed her husband was the king she had snubbed all along and they lived happily ever after. Yeah, she doesn't get angry at him, she doesn't leave him, she doesn't even challenge him. She is just so happy to be married to this guy who abused and manipulated her in the worst kind. Grimm's fairytales are rarely great in terms of feminism but this one is particularly bad. Anyway, I was curious how a retelling of this would work and foresaw a lot of angst and pain. And that's actually what I got. While the princess still isn't the nicest or most discerning character, her motivations are far more understandable and she isn't just passive like in the original. The king isn't nearly as manipulative and cruel as in the original either. While his actions are still highly questionable, his motives at least were kind. And I got my angsty fight in the end after everything comes out.

While it wasn't amazing or brilliant (there were some plot, world building and pacing issues) it gave me what I wanted at the time. Romance, angst and a happy ending.

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### **✗Tabby✗ says**

#### **THE REVIEW**

##### **Why this book?**

It seemed like a book for me

##### **What I thought**

This was a wonderful fairytale retelling. Since I never read the tale King Thrushbeard, I didn't know what to expect. So I gotta say I was surprised by the big reveal. This book was charming and put a smile on my face. Rinda grew through the book, by the end she is no longer the spoiled princess we have to endure in the beginning. Oh and Alek what's not to love? He's the kind of guy every girl dreams about. I also loved that there was no insta love! The romance was slow building and I enjoyed every minute of watching them fall in love. One more thing, I hated her father with a passion. Overall a enjoyable read.

Aleksandr!

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## **Raven\_Blake (dreamy addictions) says**

Same Review Also Posted In My Blog: Dreamy Addictions

Oh boy, this book was a charming fun romantic tale that I quite enjoyed reading. The Scarecrow King is actually a retelling of King Thusbeard's fairytale that I've never read before, in fact I never heard of it but I really really loved this book! It's really a nice retelling and now I'm pretty curious to read the original tale. This was actually my second read from Jill Myles and the first one is the queen of blood that I really loved and when I found this book, I knew I'm really going to like this book. Princess Rinda and Alek are definitely fun characters that I quite adored.

Everyone in the kingdom of Balinore has a birthright magic and princess Rinda of Balinore is born with a magic that can bring luck to inanimate objects which is considered to be an insignificant magic in her kingdom. Except for her beautiful blonde sister, she's ignored by everyone including her father. But everyone adores her sister, princess Imogen who is born with a strong magic, she can call water just by thinking about it. To get her father's attention, Princess Rinda acts like a spoiled brat and spends his money tremendously without any care. When the king decides to marry off both the princess's, Rinda gets pretty mad about it and decides to spoil his plans by bringing forth her bratty self at the entire court and insulting her suitors. But her plan backfires on her and instead of marrying a nobleman, she's married to a travelling minstrel who is also dirt poor. But Alek isn't what he seems and neither is Rinda. She won't take this marriage lying down so she comes up with a scheme to find a husband who is a king. But as she and Alek travel together, they learn that not only are appearances deceiving, but goals can change in the blink of an eye, and love can get in the way of the strongest plans.

I loved Rinda! Although she acted like a spoiled brat and seemed very rude, I really liked her because I can pretty much understand why she has to be like that. Honestly, I felt a bit sympathetic towards her situation. I also loved the character development of her. The story tells us how she grows from a spoiled brat into a strong respectable woman. Alek is definitely a charming character who is quite patient with Rinda's mean personality. I enjoyed the relationship between Rinda and Alek. I was literally swooning, every time Alek does some small little things to win Rinda's heart. I'm a fan of slow burn romances and I absolutely loved how their slow growing relationship develops into love. I wish there was more romance in it cause I didn't get enough of it. As for the supporting characters, I pretty much hated Rinda's father and as for Imogen, she was okay but nothing interesting.

The plot was wonderful! Though the main twist is easily predictable, it was a well executed plot that kept me engaged through out. Since, I haven't heard of this tale before, it's kinda refreshing to read this book. The story moved in a fast pace with no boring moments in between. I loved the writing style and I also enjoyed reading the story from Rinda's perspective. The world building is good but it could've been great if there was a bit more world in it. Nonetheless, I liked every thing in it.

Overall, it was a charming and wonderful tale that made me smile! It is one of those tales that you want to re-read it again maybe sometime in the future. It's a great retelling with right amount of adventure, magic and clean romance.

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## Colleen says

### 4 Stars

The Scarecrow King is a “romantic retelling of the King Thrushbeard fairy tale.” They probably had to put that on the cover because not many people are familiar with the tale. Although I often dislike rewrites, I am still a sucker for retellings of any the Brothers Grimm tales. So of course I had to read *The Scarecrow King*.

Rinda is a princess. She is wealthy and pampered. But her father blames her for her mother’s death and is cold and abusive towards her. Rinda’s life has a lack of love in it. She rebels by acting like a spoiled brat. When her father decides the only thing to do is marry her off to anyone who will take her, she tries to scare them all off by acting as horrible as possible which sets off a chain of events that will change her life forever. If you are familiar with the fairytale, then you will know one of the twists. Although it probably would not be hard to figure out even if you never read the original story. It is a fairly straightforward story, but I definitely enjoyed it.

*The Scarecrow King* is a much lighter and more romantic take than the darker Brother’s Grimm version. I grew up on Grimm stories, so I definitely do not shy away from dark or scary or stories that are more about the lesson than happily ever after. But I was glad that this version was less *The Taming of the Shrew* / subdue the emotional female vibe and more about empowerment and self-discovery. That was one good change compared to the original story. The other good addition was explaining why Rinda acted the way she did. Rather than just being a spoiled princess who needed to be taught a lesson, she had more depth. And while she was annoying at times, I still understood why she acted the way she did.

The story was sanitized but sweet. I liked the banter between Rinda and Alek. I loved when he taught her to fight. The story was endearing and easy to read. The action parts could have been built up more to increase the stakes though. Keeping things on the very tame side of PG13 unfortunately made things seem less dangerous. It would have been wonderful if the author had maintained at least some of the ominousness tone of the original writers. You know, just enough to send some shivers down my spine a time or two. Instead, the bad guys weren’t ruthless enough which also meant they weren’t scary. Which in turn made the threat seem less menacing.

I wish *The Scarecrow King* had been longer and fleshed out with more risk and atmosphere. But I still greatly enjoyed it. I would definitely recommend it for anyone who likes their fairytale with a little adventure but not too much gloom.

#### RATING FACTORS:

**Ease of Reading: 5 Stars**

**Writing Style: 4 Stars**

**Characters and Character Development: 5 Stars**

**Plot Structure and Development: 4 Stars**

**Level of Captivation: 4 Stars**

**Originality: 3 Stars**

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### **Alissa says**

Fairytales :) I like them, particularly those belonging to the modern trend of “adult” fairytales. This one does not, as it can be surmised from the book's description, and it suited me just fine: I wanted a simple, quick, fluffy and sweet story for the evening and this looked like a perfect pick.

Mostly it was, this book is peaceful and appropriate for all ages but the story is predictable down to the last detail (I mean, fairytales should be predictable, but within limits); the protagonist is your typical feisty princess; there is not much going on; the novel would benefit from tighter editing and I'm positive it exceeds the recommended monthly levels of teenage dopamine.

I liked it anyway, narrative and writing style are ok and I finished it in the allotted evening. 2.5 stars.

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### **Ewa says**

I know the fairy tale about Thrushbeard King, mainly from the film, so I don't know how very much the author changed the original.

Generally I liked it, although I have reservations about a heroine. In the first scenes even I sympathized with her, but before the ball and later appeared to me as the moody brat which isn't taking nothing and nobody into account.

I think that she isn't deserving Aleksander, but he has a good effect on her, so there is a good chance that she will grow into respectful woman and queen.

The book runs quite fast, the whole lasted about a month. At some point one scene reminds me of Lord of the Rings ;-P

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### **Susana says**

3.5 stars

Now this was a fast paced and addictive retelling of King Thrushbeard's tale... of which I was only vaguely familiar.

With a little time available in your hands, I bet you'll be hard pressed to finish reading this asap (if retellings are your cup of tea...)

As one can read in the author credits, Jill Myles wanted to tell this story in the true fairy tale "(ish)" manner.

As such this doesn't have convoluted plots. The characters are what you see. No big secrets are lurking around waiting to be unveiled: You pretty much know what is going to happen.

It felt as if I was reading a more traditional kind of fairy tale... but without all the gore that normally abounds in those.

The characters are interesting, although a little one dimensional.

The plot ends up being interesting because of the bickering between the two main characters.

In the end if this had been more developed \_ especially the last bit \_ this would definitely get a higher rating.

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### **Regina says**

Lovely fairytale retelling of a lesser known fairytale. It was a clean romance and had likeable characters. the princess was a brat even though i felt sorry for her at first. Rinda says mean things but she really does have a heart of gold when she realizes she doesn't need to keep pushing everyone away. Her father was a horrible dad. Alek was so incredibly sweet that he's too good to be true but hey its a fairy tale. He puts up with a lot of the things coming out of Rinda's mouth. I want to read more retellings by Jill Myles now.

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