



Slipper

Hester Velmans

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Her life is the inspiration for the world's most famous story.

Lucinda, a penniless English orphan, is abused and exploited as a cinder-sweep by her aristocratic relatives. On receiving her sole inheritance—a pair of glass-beaded slippers—she runs away to France in pursuit of an officer on whom she has a big crush. She joins the baggage train of Louis XIV's army, survives a terrible massacre, and eventually finds her way to Paris. There she befriends the man who will some day write the world's most famous fairy tale, Charles Perrault, and tells him her life story.

There is more: a witch hunt, the sorry truth about daydreams, and some truly astonishing revelations, such as the historical facts behind the story of the Emperor's new clothes, and a perfectly reasonable explanation for the compulsion some young women have to kiss frogs.

This is not the fairy tale you remember.

Slipper Details

Date : Published April 17th 2018 by Van Horton books

ISBN :

Author : Hester Velmans

Format : Kindle Edition 371 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Retellings, Fiction, Adult

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From Reader Review Slipper for online ebook

Amy Leigh says

What if Charles Perrault's story of Cinderella was based on a real story of a real girl he just happens to meet? That is the tale this book tells. It's definitely an adult book with rape, witch hunts, and abuse. It's written very realistically. There is still so much whimsical charm and it includes other fairy tales like mother goose, the frog prince, the emperors new clothes, and of course Cinderella.

The emotional involvement with the characters was there for me and even though Lucinda can be childish, she experiences things in life that make her grow and become an adult. Do you remember the movie Ever After? I kept thinking of that movie as I read this book only change the rating to mature. I highly recommend to adults who live fairy tale retellings and historical fiction.

Thank you to NetGalley and the publisher for giving me a copy of this book for a fair and honest review.

Nancy says

Lucinda's mother is thrown out by her wealthy family because she is pregnant and they believe she is not married. Lucinda is brought home to live and when she grows up is treated as the lowest class of a maid by her sister after her grandmother dies. Lucinda travels and goes from what could be happiness to disaster. Many painful times in her life but her life is a series of Fairy Tales including her inheritance of a pair of glass slippers. You can see where this is going. An interesting read. Her life gives the author Charles Perrault the inspiration for his famous stories.

Kai says

I received this book through Netgalley. I voluntarily offer my honest opinion of this book. I am a big fan of the original Cinderella story and enjoy retellings of the story. However I struggled with this story and found that certain parts felt like they dragged on a bit in parts. Lucinda suffered a lot more than the original story, which she begins as an orphan and then the unwanted bastard of her mother's family. Her only friends are Bessie Goose who delivered her and the other servants. She survives being raped by her uncle, becoming a mistress and war. Even though Lucinda had a tough life I found I started to dislike Lucinda as she got older. It was a good story but I really struggled to complete it and do not think I will read it again or recommend the story. xx

Ginger Pollard says

Wow! What a fantastic book! I wanted to read it in one sitting! I almost did. This is an exquisite twist on the classic Cinderella. It's amazing and unputdownable! The things our heroine is subjected to in this book is unbelievable. I thought it was awesome and I highly recommend it.

I received a copy of this book from Netgalley. Thank you, Netgalley!

All opinions are my own.

Hester says

Forgive me for shamelessly posting a review of my own book, but it's just too tempting! In a nutshell: I wrote the kind of book I wanted to read. The kind of book I want to read has a sweeping plot, bumbling but engaging characters, a historical background, interesting facts or observations, and a feminist slant anchoring it firmly in the 21st century. It may not be everyone's cup of tea, but I hope that there will be at least one or two readers who can relate!

Holly Morse says

With her new novel, *Slipper*, Hester Velmans has given us a highly entertaining romp with lessons. Part historical fiction and part fairy tale romance, it follows the life of a love child, an orphaned 17th century aristocratic beauty, whose innocence gets her into trouble and—as she grows—whose talents rescue her. Inspired by Charles Perrault, a name we should know but universally do not, an actual “functionary in the glittering court of Louise the Fourteenth,” Perrault penned some of our oldest cautionary tales: *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Puss in Boots*, among others. Velmans puts his literary style and story content through both kaleidoscopic and meat grinder changes. *Slipper*’s heroine, Lucinda’s, downfall and ascent trace a shaky path through witch trials, incest, scandal, war, and intrigue. With these, Velmans mixes for us an intoxicating brew of re-imagined fairy tales. We follow Lucinda, borne along by her notion of true love as it submits to the constant revisions of realism. Fantastic but not fantastical, Velmans’ endlessly diverting tale has ogres, rogues, imps, fairy princesses and princes aplenty but in human form. In the rare (best) cases, they also have human hearts. A delightful novel, *Slipper* delivers grown-up fun in wonderfully rendered scenes that engross, horrify and satisfy the child-enthralled-by-their-bedtime-tale in each of us.

Tocotin says

I was seduced by the cover! No, I don’t have a foot fetish or anything, but... I just loved the cover. I do buy a lot of books based on my liking of the cover. I should rethink it, because sometimes I buy something I would never even want to read, if it had an ugly or plain cover. And sadly, this book was a bit of a disappointment.

There were pieces I liked, for example, the descriptions of the life of the camp followers, and some of the characters were lovely (Bessie, her love interest), but the story was moving at a very uneven pace – stretching one moment unbearably long, hurrying up the next, and the twists were predictable or clumsily handled. Did Lucinda really have to nag his lover so? Why did she so absolutely need him to tell the shameful story he was (supposedly) scarred by, and wanted to avoid? Yeah... Lucinda was sometimes too stupid to live.

The dialogue was truly bad in places. (“Ah!” she commented. !!!!!) I did like the whimsical, omnipotent narration more than I thought.

Nico Plasterini says

Slipper is an impressive tour de force: in imagining the backstory of Charles Perrault's muse for Cinderella, Velmans weaves history and modern social commentary into a compelling tale about the motivation for the classic fairy tale. The muse Lucinda, unjustly forced to be a cindersweep, must undergo a transformation of modern proportion, rejecting the violence and fantasy of 17th century patriarchy, to get to the ball and beyond towards self-actualization. A remarkable book: it is both moving and important. Highly recommended.

Meg - A Bookish Affair says

"Slipper" is a fairy tale retelling of the story of Cinderella. In this book, we have Lucinda, a beautiful but unfortunate girl, born to a young woman who was pregnant out of wedlock and tragically passes after she has Lucinda. This book explores just what would have happened if a real woman told author Charles Perrault of her plight and gave him the inspiration for one of our timeless fairy tales.

I love, love, love fairy tale retellings. They are so much fun and while this one was fun, be warned, it also has some pretty adult topics not for the faint of heart. I loved seeing how the author chose to explain some of the details of the fairy tale: the fairy godmother, the slippers, the prince, etc. It is clear that a lot of thought went into how Perrault could have taken some of the less glamorous parts of Lucinda's story and turned them into something truly fantastic.

As with Cinderella, I found myself pulling for Lucinda throughout the book and hoping that her life would finally change for the better after she seemingly goes from tragedy to tragedy. I loved Lucinda and I loved "Mother Goose."

This was a good book! It will appeal to those that like their historical fiction with a touch of the unexpected and magical.

JKS Communications says

Hester Velmans has come up with a delightful, creative twist on historical fiction with "Slipper" in this feminist reimagining of Cinderella.

Amy Bruno says

LOVED this retelling! Full review to come.

ABCme says

Thank you Netgalley and Van Horton Books for the ARC

This is a very special novel. It kept me engaged and guessing what was real and what was not all the way until the end, including the author's notes. I enjoyed the adult historical fiction and smiled like a little girl reading a fairytale.

We are guided by Charles Perrault, founding father of the original tale, who's voice we hear through anecdotes and life lessons, explaining elements of the story to his audience. It felt nurturing, like being read to as a child. I liked discovering the origins of the Silver Spoon and a Broken Heart.

We're following the life of Lucinda, born a bastard child in England's 17th century. After the death of her mother she's left in the care of her non-committed family, destined for spinsterhood in a society full of pretty girls and nasty men.

Daydreaming of Prince Charming, mesmerized, on we go, to France and then the Low Countries. We end up in the French-Dutch offensive. Through this warzone Lucinda makes it to Amsterdam and then to Paris, making a name for herself painting portraits for the high and mighty. She becomes a member of a salon of strong, artistic women and eventually finds her place in life.

Slipper is a satisfying read, highly recommended.

Randee Green says

Thanks to NetGalley and Van Horton Books for the ARC.

SLIPPER by Hester Velman (published April 17, 2018 by Van Horton Books) is the retelling of Cinderella. And, trust me, it is nothing like the Disney version. This Cinderella suffers a lot more than a torn dress and dirty fingernails thanks to all of that cleaning she had to do. This Cinderella survives rape, a witch hunt, war, and massacres. Life teaches her some very hard lessons – yet it takes her a long time to learn anything from them. And, in the end, the glass slipper doesn't even fit!

Lucinda (AKA Cinderella) is a penniless orphan growing up in the mid to late-1600s. Because her aristocratic family believes her to be a bastard, Lucinda is not treated very well. At best, she is ignored by her family. At worst, she is forced to work as a servant in the family's sprawling countryside mansion. Lucinda's only friend is her godmother/family cook Bessie Goose (who, in this story, becomes the inspiration for Mother Goose), and the other household servants who spoil her.

I somewhat enjoyed SLIPPER in the beginning, but then, around halfway through, I decided that I didn't like the novel. By the end, I was on the fence about it. It is an interesting story, but, as Lucinda got older, I found that I couldn't stand her. Lucinda is a very imaginative child, and she has herself convinced that her daydreams will one day become reality. That her Prince Charming will one day come rescue her from her miserable life. I didn't think that Bessie Goose was the most likeable of characters either. Instead of giving Lucinda some lessons in life and common sense, she instead allows the girl to remain ignorant. After being raped by her uncle, Lucinda throws herself at a captain in the English army who is betrothed to her cousin, believing that this man is her knight in shining armor. Leaving her home in the English countryside, Lucinda follows the captain to France where he is a captain in the army. Lucinda and Bessie join the baggage train, and Lucinda becomes the captain's mistress. Lucinda begins to see the captain for what he really is, but she continues to cling to her dream that he's her Prince Charming. She also develops an unhealthy interest in the

whores who are also part of the baggage train. At this point, it's too late for Bessie to give the teenage Lucinda any life lessons because Lucinda isn't about to listen to anything that anyone has to say. When Lucinda finally realizes that the captain is never going to marry her, she turns to physician John Prynce. Upon learning that Prynce is responsible for both of her parents' deaths, she flees the baggage train and makes her way to Holland. After a brief marriage to a boorish painter, Lucinda moves to Paris where, as a female artist, she is treated as a novelty and flattered by men who wish to make her their mistress. She also meets Charles Perrault, the man who will take her life story and use it to create the Cinderella fairy tale. He also uses Bessie's stories (passed on to him through Lucinda since Bessie is now dead thanks to Lucinda's recklessness) and turns them into the Mother Goose tales. It's in Paris that Lucinda finally begins to open her eyes and realize that her daydreams are what got her into this mess. She then returns to England to see if she can work things out with Prynce.

While *SLIPPER* was an interesting and well plotted novel, it just wasn't for me. I just didn't like Lucinda at all. Most of the time I was irritated with her – as well as Bessie – for her naivety and recklessness. I spent the majority if the novel wanting to reach through the pages to smack Lucinda upside the head for her foolishness. Yes, life has dealt Lucinda a lot of crap, but she brings a good portion of it onto herself. The rest of the female characters are wicked – filling the roles of wicked step-mother and step-sisters even though they are Lucinda's aunts and cousins. The male characters leave a lot more to be desired. I didn't want a stereotypical Prince Charming, but it would have been nice to have a male character that was at least remotely likeable.

For me, the most interesting part of the novel was learning about the origins of some of the classic fairy tales. I also enjoyed that there were historical figures woven into the storyline. That helped add to the historic backdrop of the time period.

If you're a diehard fan of Disney's Cinderella, this novel probably won't be for you. If you're open to adaptations of the fairy tale, give *SLIPPER* a try.

Jessica says

Thanks to the author and publisher for the advanced copy in exchange for my honest review

I'm a big fan of historical fiction and retellings - all thriller and horror fans have to have those books to have as palate cleansers in between books. *SLIPPER* by Hester Velmans is a combo of a fairytale retelling and some historical fiction. We are necessarily getting the fairytale version, but more so the inspiration for Charles Perrault and his story of Cinderella.

We follow Lucinda, a poor Englishwoman that is forced into working as a cinder-sweep for her abusive relatives. After receiving her inheritance, a pair of glass slippers, she flees to France to escape her evil family. She boards the baggage train of Louis XIV's army, and along the way to Paris she manages to survive a horrible massacre. Upon arriving to Paris, she befriends Charles Perrault and tells him her life story.

I loved all the aspects of this book. You get the right amount of historical fiction without it being overwhelming or boring and you have enough of a unique spin on the Cinderella story to keep it fresh. All of the hidden references were fun to pick out! If you like retellings then this will definitely be one to add to the list. Don't let the fact that it's a dash of historical fiction deter you. Velmans does a great job bringing

Lucinda to life and the pacing was perfect to keep pulling you along without any lulls in the story.

I'll be looking out for more from Velmans in the future!

I give this 5/5 stars

Anjana says

<https://superfluousreading.wordpress....>
