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Prince Of Shadows: A Novel Of Romeo And Juliet



Synopsis

In the Houses of Montague and Capulet, there is only one goal: Power. The boys are born to fight and die for honor and-if they survive-marry for influence and money, not love. The girls are assets, to be spent wisely. Their wishes are of no import. Their fates are written on the day they are born. Benvolio Montague, cousin to Romeo, knows all this. He expects to die for his cousin, for his house, but a spark of rebellion still lives inside him. At night, he is the Prince of Shadows, the greatest thief in Verona-and he risks all as he steals from House Capulet. In doing so, he sets eyes on convent-bound Rosaline, and a terrible curse begins that will claim the lives of many in Verona...and will rewrite all their fates, forever.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

OMG! This book is wonderful.A retelling of the Romeo and Juliet saga but from the POV for Romeo's cousin Benvolio. Usually I am not a huge fan of books told from a male POV, but here I loved it, Benvolio has such a tortured and honest voice.The prose is lush and atmospheric/moody.A few examples:"I had kissed her before, but lightly, gently, and this was no gentle thing.""Rosalind Capulet tasted like all I had ever wanted in my life, and now I knew that for truth"" Then I kissed her, and I tasted tears, and flowers, fear and hope, dread and dreams. Her lips were soft and warmlike the petals of a sun heated rose.."What a lovely homage to Shakespeare. Please read this book-Benvolio and Rosaline's story has a HEA and you will love it!

Originally reviews for Vampire Book Club3.5 StarsEveryone knows the story of Juliet and her

Romeo. Rachel Caine explores further into the world of Montagues and Capulets with Romeo's cousin Benvolio taking up the story from his POV. And what of fair Rosaline, the love that Romeo seemingly overthrew for that of Juliet? Well, she piques the interest of Benvolio, our Prince of Shadows, and together they must try to stop the doom that has labeled both families as victims before everyone, including themselves, suffers. Benvolio, a seemingly Robin Hood-type character stealing from those whom he deems have done wrong, has been told his entire life that he is the "extra" Montague. His job is basically to watch after Romeo, the true heir to Montague. It was an interesting choice I believe for Caine to basically call out how often dimwitted and impulsive Romeo could be from the eyes of his (one year senior) more mature older cousin. There are many people who romanticize the love story of Romeo and Juliet when in truth they were two almost-children. The same can be said for Rosaline being Juliet's more serious mature cousin, sister of the Prince of Cats Tybalt. Ben and Rosaline seem to take up the voice of reason where the warring families are concerned. Both ultimately want peace after seeing so much death and deception already between the houses. What Caine did really well with this story is she fleshed out some of the characters, such as Mercutio, who already commanded attention in the original play, but we find him here a troubled and haunted young man who seeks revenge upon those responsible for his lover's death. This also gives background to Mercutio's famous "a plague on both your houses" quote. We get to fully understand the buildup of that moment, where this curse stems from and the magical belief that gives the curse its life. It's really interesting thinking back to the original story with this new perspective in mind. Prince of Shadows does mix in some more memorable quotes and scenes from the original play ("Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"). I found this delightful and it gave a viewpoint as to where we were in conjunction with the original story, of which I oftentimes found Prince of Shadows to drag a little in places. Where it falters is that her words don't always necessarily match up in phrase and use to that of the great Bard. So at times the writing seems to flow very well and eloquently and other times it shows signs of the modern era in which it was written. Knowing the story of Romeo and Juliet, Prince of Shadows cannot help but have moroseness hanging over it. Yet while reading, you keep holding on to hope that maybe Caine would change the ending. Regardless of what happens you are still left with a lot of senseless death and destruction, but it's kind of the lesson of the story right? See these senseless acts and mourn them, but learn from them and grow and make things better. We, at least, are left with that last bit of hope for the future.

I thought about 5 stars for this one, because it had all the elements of a book that usually really works for me. It was well written, it had interesting, multi-layered characters, it had a compelling plot that was a different take on an old classic, I love Shakespeare, etc. But I ended up on 4 stars. I think that it got a bit repetitive what with all the tragic pining and all. Nevertheless, I recommend it. It's a retelling of Romeo and Juliet told from Benvolio, Romeo's cousin's point-of-view. It fleshed out some of the well known characters from the play such as Mercutio as well as defined its own story. I felt myself wishing there was a bit more of Romeo and Juliet and the lines from that beloved play. As it is, I think we're only afforded a glimpse of Juliet. Really the story centers around Mercutio and Benvolio, and Romeo and Juliet's tale is but a sub-plot. I also thought it brave to keep the important religious and cultural contexts; I thought for sure that Rosaline would be made out to have modern-day sensibilities which might have been satisfying but is ultimately false and therefore annoying to me. Women of this era were oppressed. They were cloistered away for their own "protection" but really were often abused and neglected at the hands of their relatives. They were often forced into ignorance by withheld education, and were often used as pawns to gain wealth or prestige. I'm not a fan of revisionist history. Bound to repeat it and all that. So, to sum up--Likes: Benvolio is a likable character. The thief/Prince of Shadows aspect of his character was interesting and entertaining. I liked Mercutio and thought the whole idea of his homosexuality and the cultural response to it as an explanation for his going off the deep end interesting. I liked Rosaline and was pulling for her and Benvolio to have a happy ending after all the tragedy. Didn't work as well for me: I was hoping for more of Romeo and Juliet, as well as the Shakespearian language that makes the play it's based on so beautiful and powerful. At times it was almost melodramatic, though I realize it is a tragedy. Still a great book and recommended.

Wow! I have to confess I didn't expect much from the writer of the Morganville Vampires series, but this book exceeded all my expectations and then some. Beautifully drawing the complicated web of familial politics ensnaring the main characters growing up in Verona, Caine has written a romantic, witty, thrilling kind of book in which the famous play is made clear in relevant and current ways. The twist? It is told from Benvolio Montague's point of view. Highly recommended reading, especially if you are attending Romeo and Juliet this summer. And ABSOLUTELY PERFECT for getting your tween or teen ready to read, see or act in that play!

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