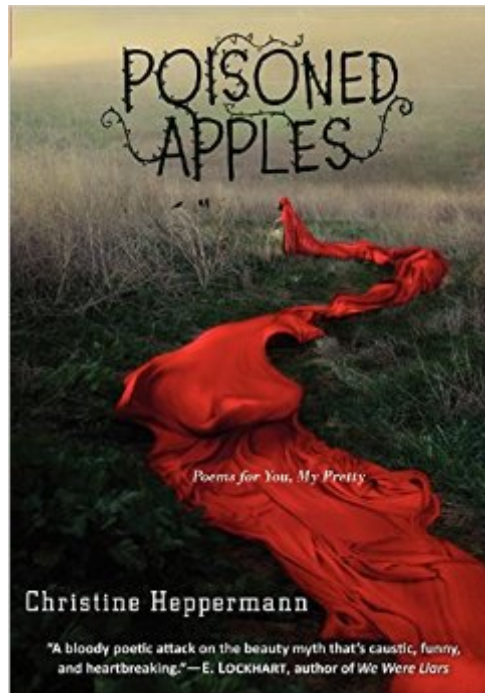


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# Poisoned Apples: Poems For You, My Pretty



## Synopsis

Every little girl goes through her princess phase, whether she wants to be Snow White or Cinderella, Belle or Ariel. But then we grow up. And life is not a fairy tale. Christine Heppermann's collection of fifty poems puts the ideals of fairy tales right beside the life of the modern teenage girl. With piercing truths reminiscent of Laurie Halse Anderson and Ellen Hopkins, this is a powerful and provocative book for every young woman. E. Lockhart, author of *We Were Liars*, calls it "a bloody poetic attack on the beauty myth that's caustic, funny, and heartbreaking." Cruelties come not just from wicked stepmothers, but also from ourselves. There are expectations, pressures, judgment, and criticism. Self-doubt and self-confidence. But there are also friends, and sisters, and a whole hell of a lot of power there for the taking. In fifty poems, Christine Heppermann confronts society head on. Using fairy tale characters and tropes, *Poisoned Apples* explores how girls are taught to think about themselves, their bodies, and their friends. The poems range from contemporary retellings to first-person accounts set within the original tales, and from deadly funny to deadly serious. Complemented throughout with black-and-white photographs from up-and-coming artists, this is a stunning and sophisticated book to be treasured, shared, and paged through again and again.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

'Poisoned Apples: Poems for You, My Pretty' is a collection of fifty poems where the author has taken fairy tale themes and stories and put a modern twist on them. These poems range from sarcastic and funny to gritty and biting. They deal with a lot of important issues that girls and women face today - eating disorders, lack of self-esteem, overwhelming pressure, judgment from others

and yourself, and everything in between. Not all of the poems deal with completely negative themes - the author includes things that females can celebrate together, including friendship, family, sisters, and the power that women actually have in the world. I'm a big fan of poetry and even write some myself. I've found it incredibly difficult to find a modern poet that I can identify with or simply enjoy their poetry. That all changed when I read this book. I didn't know what to expect at first glance - it was simply described as a book of poems that centered around fairy tales. I thought I'd take a chance on it, and I am SO glad that I did. This book far exceeded any type of expectations or hopes I may have had for it - and then it just kept going until my mind was blown. Admittedly, some readers don't like poetry as much as I do - but these are different. They are so easy to identify with (especially if you're a female) and easy to understand. The author doesn't try to sugar coat the real topic of her poems behind fairy tales or pretty words. They cut right to the bone of the topic and lay it all bare. I share almost all of the same viewpoints as the author, so each poem in the book made me do a little cheer because someone is finally speaking out about these issues that women and girls have to face in our society - and she didn't do it in a boring nonfiction book. She did it with poems and images. For each poem in the book, there was a corresponding picture on the opposite page. I adored them because not only were they darkly beautiful, but because they punctuate the point the author is trying to make. The images are a big Gothic and done without color - but I believe that this only adds to their appeal and the statement the author's making. I honestly don't know how else to describe this book. The poetry is very well done - in free verse - and I can honestly say that I loved every single one. The way that the poems present the various topics - be it eating disorders, the pressure of being what society calls "beautiful," or issues with lack of confidence and self doubt - is both enchanting yet caustic. I found myself swept away by the poems themselves along with the images, yet I was well aware of what the author was talking about in each one, and I was agreeing wholeheartedly the entire time. I have finally found myself a modern poet to adore, and I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that this will have a permanent spot on my bookshelf (or beside my bed) and I'll be re-reading it constantly. I couldn't recommend this book more - my review doesn't do it near enough justice - so just give it a shot. Even if you're not a usual fan of poetry, this unique and wholly original collection will breath life into a basically dormant genre and you will undoubtedly leave with at least one topic stuck in your head to make you think for a bit. As I said before - READ. THIS. BOOK. I encourage fans of all types of genres to give it a read - there's something for everyone to enjoy or appreciate. I am now anxiously awaiting the next book of poetry by the author! (Note to Author: You have myself and tons of other readers addicted to your work, so pretty please write another book of poetry for us!) Disclosure: I received a copy of the book in exchange for an

honest review.

I got a copy of this to review through NetGalley. I was drawn by the premise of poems merged with fairy tale retellings, since I love both. It was okay, but in the end it just felt like something was missing here...the imagery just wasn't there and the poems focused on the same theme over and over. This was a very short collection of poems that talk mostly about teenage life and girls and the expectation society has of them. Some of this is related to fairy tales that have been given a modern twist. There is a lot of focus on how girls look externally (requirements of beauty, anorexia, etc) and how this can hide and cause some serious problems. These problems aren't discussed subtly or with some sort of parallel imagery to fairy tales like I had hoped. They are pretty in your face...I like a little bit more subtlety and beauty in my poetry. While the book does deliver a commentary of female position in society, I thought the poetry was a bit immature sounding. The imagery wasn't very good and the poetry didn't flow all that well. The whole collection ended up being more poetry light for the teen feminist than a revolutionary social commentary. It didn't really shine as fairy tale retellings either. There are some very eerie photographs throughout (I did not see all of these because they were not all included in the ARC I received). I actually enjoyed these gothically creepy photographs more than the poetry. For me those and the afterward were the best parts of the book. The afterward was actually a lot more interesting than the poems themselves. Hepperman goes into a discussion on how fairy tales reflected the treatment of women in the societies that the fairy tales come from. She says fairy tales were women's way of having a say and telling about the torments they endured when they really didn't have a way to speak out. She also discusses how there is a fine line between fairy tales and what people actually have endured. Overall the poetry here was a bit disappointing. That being said I really enjoyed the photography throughout and I also really like reading the Afterward. This was a very quick read of feminist fairy tale poetry. Unfortunately the poetry is lacking some in depth, creativity and doesn't flow all that well. This was more of a light fairy tale feminist read aimed at the teenage reader. I was not overly impressed.

General comments: Great cover with the river of red fabric for the cloak worn by a young woman. Symbolic and powerful. Stunning artwork alongside Christine Heppermann's poems. Bite and taste Poisoned Apples stuffed down girls throats by society, advertisement, the clothes on mannequins selling sexuality, diet aids, beauty. Rebel against stereotypes, Stand up for feminism. Take a good long look in the mirror, mirror on the wall who's the fairest queen of all. See

how we're brainwashed to believe so little about ourselves as girls, women. Thank you very much fairy tales. Damsels in distress we're NOT! Welcome to the real world filled with Poisoned Apples. Poisoned Apples is a brilliant must-read, critical for both male and female young adults. I hope teachers in upper middle school and high schools will have the courage to put this in the hands of students and utilize it for a strong social discussion of society's pressures caused by stereotypes and negative self-image. A clever, revealing, heartbreaking, honest window into beauty and society through a retelling of fairy tales.

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