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Wildwood Dancing



Synopsis

High in the Transylvanian woods, at the castle Piscul Draculi, live five daughters and their doting father. It's an idyllic life for Jena, the second eldest, who spends her time exploring the mysterious forest with her constant companion, a most unusual frog. But best by far is the castle's hidden portal, known only to the sisters. Every Full Moon, they alone can pass through it into the enchanted world of the Other Kingdom. There they dance through the night with the fey creatures of this magical realm. But their peace is shattered when Father falls ill and must go to the southern parts to recover, for that is when cousin Cezar arrives. Though he's there to help the girls survive the brutal winter, Jena suspects he has darker motives in store. Meanwhile, Jena's sister has fallen in love with a dangerous creature of the Other Kingdom--an impossible union it's up to Jena to stop. When Cezar's grip of power begins to tighten, at stake is everything Jena loves: her home, her family, and the Other Kingdom she has come to cherish. To save her world, Jena will be tested in ways she can't imagine--tests of trust, strength, and true love. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (132 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

I am a huge fan of Juliet Marillier's Sevenwaters trilogy and was so excited to hear that she was delving into a more light-hearted, young-adult style with her latest novel. This is one of those rare

books that captures you instantly and keeps you reading late into the night just so you can find out how it ends. *Wildwood Dancing* is a whimsical twist on the story of the twelve dancing princesses. Juliet Mariller has chisled away at seven of the sisters and left us with a faerie tale about five young sisters who, on the night of the full moon, venture to the wildwood forest, a place of faeries and other creatures, where they can spend these nights dancing and being merry. The heroine of the story is Jena, the second eldest of the sisters and the one who seems to be the most in charge. Jena's best friend is her pet frog Gogu, who she can communicate with. The story has many themes and issues that are all very adult in context. The story starts out with Jena and her sisters being left alone as their father travels far away to do business. The girls are left to care for the castle and this is something they are fine with...until their conniving cousin Cezar comes into the mix. Cezar is one of the BEST villains I have loathed in a long, long time. He wants power, and when the girls get news that their father is ill and may not return, Cezar moves himself into the castle and decides he is in charge. The elements of sexism and women not having rights is strong and I was very irritated at the way the girls were treated by Cezar just because they are female. There is plenty of magic and romance in this novel and it is beautifully written and elegantly paced. I relished every last page of this book!

I was charmed with the idea of the "Twelve Dancing Princesses" set in Transylvania. Oddly enough this book suffered because it was well-written and probably because I read 'Cybele's Gift' first. I kept expecting more of the plot, the characters and their interactions and was disappointed at how maddening and tiresome this story was. Jena raved throughout about how capable she was of taking care of her father's business but stayed helpless as her obnoxious cousin Cezar gradually took over, and then she kept needing male support to rescue the business and her sister. And if Jena was supposed to take care of the finances, the eldest sister was supposed to take care of the family. Instead, that responsibility also landed on an already overburdened Jena when Tatiana fell in love with a man whom we never actually get to know. Now, if one of the main characters was going to starve herself to death over love, at least the reader should know why the man was worth dying for. But very little is ever revealed of Sorrow. Furthermore, if she really loved him, Tati should have waited for actual word of Sorrow's death before pining away since he was on an impossible quest partly so they could have a future together. Imagine succeeding on such a quest and being unable to claim your reward because she has starved herself to death over you. It was also stretching credulity that everyone considered it acceptable for the eldest to waste away and shift her obligations off to Jena and to expect Jena to manage everything. No one thought it ironic that they

were all making demands of someone who kept making poor decisions based on faulty judgment. There were some bright points that didn't, however, make up for the protracted tedium of the rest.

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