



Shadow and Thorn

Kenley Davidson

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A spellbinding romantic fantasy inspired by Beauty and the Beast...

An exiled king.

An elusive thief.

And the treasure they would give their lives to possess...

Alexei is returning to his homeland after more than twenty years in hiding. His kingdom is destroyed, his people dead or enslaved. His only hope to provide sanctuary for those few who remain is the uncertain word of a traitor, a broken man who claims to know the hiding place of Erath's greatest treasure. To find it, Alexei will have to return to the place where Erath fell, and brave the shadowed halls of a castle that echoes with the ghosts of his past.

Zara is a woman without a future—a treasure hunter, and a thief who hates to steal. Trapped by fate in an abandoned castle, she encounters a destiny she could never have predicted, and uncovers a treasure far greater than she ever imagined.

When their paths collide, Alexei and Zara may both have a chance to atone for past mistakes... unless they kill each other first. Brought together by enemies both expected and unexpected, they will plumb the depths of an unimaginable betrayal and forge the foundations of a love they would risk anything to keep.

A gripping tale of adventure, betrayal and romance, Shadow and Thorn is the fourth book of the Andari Chronicles, a series of interconnected but stand-alone fairy tale retellings.

Shadow and Thorn Details

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From Reader Review Shadow and Thorn for online ebook

Jessica says

An interesting twist on a classic tale. While this is book four of a series, I believe you could read this as a standalone fairly easily if you so choose. You will miss backstory, for sure, but it is an option. That being said, I read the four books of the series in order and liked them better for it. Even though Beauty and the Beast has always been my favorite and it took me some patience to read the other three first. :)

As many retellings as I have read, I don't think I've ever read one that addressed this tale in the way that Kenley Davidson did, and that is a compliment. An exiled king, a lonely treasure hunter, a monster of a prince, and a castle that acts like a person. Enough to keep you interested but never overwhelming. I'm glad I read this series, I'm curious about the author's other works, and I would easily recommend this book to those that enjoy fairy tale retellings.

Gretchen says

I was slightly more disappointed in this book than the first three. I felt that, somewhere along a third of the way through, the Beauty and the Beast character tropes started to be more forgotten than altered as Davidson had previously. In Goldheart, I adored how such slight changes made the largest differences in the end. Instead, this book felt that it had lost its path, and rather was content to go meandering off. Had I not come to expect a certain style from Davidson for this series, that would have been unnoticed. As it was, it was slightly jarring and disappointing. However, the story and writing itself were still quite fun.

Brittain *Needs a Nap and a Drink* says

Another day, another fairy tale re imagining under my belt. I'm back to one of my favorites, Beauty and the Beast, and this one was definitely different.

Normally, a fairy tale retelling of Beauty and the Beast will have a young, handsome, arrogant prince who is trapped in a horrible castle (with a few loyal servants) brooding in the dark and saying that he will never love again. That is not this book.

This is not faithful to the Disney plot. While there is a castle, an enchanted castle even, there is no real curse, no angry mob, no buff jackass who is excessively into himself.

Zara is a treasure hunter that gets locked in an enchanted castle, not with a beast, but with a cat. Her father is pushed out of the castle by magical means and she is left alone, at least for a little while.

Enter Alexei.

The lost ruler. He used to live in the castle where he learned his magic. However, a war pushed him out of his home and he did not return for 26 years. Alexei is blind in one eye and deeply scarred from the war and his life. He does not trust much and is numb from all of the isolation and pain that he has gone through. But he is not a warrior. Alexei is great at magic and is incredibly intelligent but he is not able to take up a sword and reclaim his birthright. He's also a bit of a silver fox, being over 40 years old.

Hey, age means experience right?

So, in order to restore her power, the castle locks them in together (with a few sidekicks) and tries to shove them together, preferably in a marriage bond. The castle's goal is single-minded, and she will stop at nothing to get her way.

There are a few flaws in this book. It's pretty slow paced and I found myself not caring sometimes. Alexei and Zara can both be a bit whiny at times and I wanted to know more about other characters. I adored Malichai (who was the warrior in the book and hysterical) and I wanted his story more than I wanted Alexei's. Also, Zara seems to give up pretty rapidly. Yes, I get that she thinks that her father has abandoned her and that it is hopeless but she just stops caring and that somehow bothered me.

But other than all of that, this book was refreshing and different. It wasn't a typical retelling and while it was a retelling of an existing story, I still didn't know what was coming next. You never know if an author is not going to give a happy ending and that's why I liked this book.

J.M. Stengl says

What a unique and intriguing story this turned out to be! I love the links between plots and characters from book to book, and this one was possibly even more satisfying than the last. It was obviously inspired by Beauty and the Beast, yet in some ways it seemed more like a set-up for a Beauty and the Beast plot. Rowan is far more beastly and awful than Alexei!

This said, I thoroughly enjoyed the story, especially the characters. Rowan is perfectly awful, Zara is a strong heroine, and the cat . . . :-) The Rose and Athven Nar were marvelous plot elements, and the fantasy themes are original and fascinating.

Well worth reading!

Gabrielle says

[One who happens to be very familiar—hello, Rowan. We were all waiting for you to show up again. *sharpens guillotine* (hide spoiler)]

Amanda Hagerty says

All I can is I enjoyed this book so much. The writing is amazing the plot and the world building. This the

fourth book in the andari series.

Lydia Staggs says

Beauty and the Beast is my favorite fairy tale (original not Disney) and so, I am often critical of new versions. Shadow and Thorn is one of the best retellings I have read. Incorporating both old and new, the symbolism from the original story is enhanced by Davidson's imagination. A delightful read and a job well done.

Shasha says

Deep feelings

Loosely related to beauty and the beast, this was fresh and unique. The characters are fantastic! The deep emotions of guilt, abandonment, and others are keenly felt. The trueness of the heroine will bring me back for rereading.

Angela says

Wonderful! Such a creative story with the Beauty & the Beast background and the characters were great. Love the way it ended, too.

E.J. Hill says

I dove into this book not knowing what to expect, but it didn't take long before I was wholly and utterly captivated. The first thing that caught me was the writing. To me, it had a certain grace about it which danced with elegant steps across the pages. And it took me by surprise, I had not anticipated such charm when first I turned to "Chapter 1."

To put it bluntly, the characters were amazing! I think Zara has slipped into my top ten list of female heroines. She was strong and witty and smart enough not to fall for Rowan's silky charade. Alexei was rather bitter at first, but as the book progressed, his faults allowed for some lovely character growth.

Now, this is a retelling of Beauty and the Beast; however, it is twisted in many very appealing very innovative ways. Most retellings stick closely to the Disney version of Beauty and the Beast, but Davidson allowed her imagination to take different pathways along the journey and I loved this. It was new and exciting and wonderful.

Lastly, this was a clean read. I was waiting for that one part or that bad word, but it never came and so, I was able to fully enjoy this story. I definitely recommend "Shadow and Thorn" to all those who love a fairytale retelling or a clean YA fantasy.

Cindy says

Amazing retold fairytale of an enchanted castle, the woman caught by it and the man coming home to try to restart his country with the magical missing rose. Don't expect the usual retelling of Beauty and the Beast as this was very different. At different times it seems the prince, woman or even the castle are the Beast. Only complaints are that it is very wordy in describing inner thoughts and motivations which I feel slow down the action or romance (very light on romance) and the cussing (mild by most people's standards, D--n, h---, b-----d). I got used to the inner monologues as some info was important. I like the side characters too. Copy given to me free as I won a work by the author thru a FB event. Older teens and up.

Barbara Douglas says

Shadow and Thorn is an enjoyable addition to Kenley Davidson's Andari series, each of which is structured by a different fairy tale -- Beauty and the Beast, in this case. Like the others, this is a well-written story with engagingly believable characters that uses its source material very imaginatively, which means that you're never quite sure what's going to happen (though a happy ending is a pretty foregone conclusion, it doesn't take quite the form one might have expected). Most curiously, the book ends with a curse on another 'beast'...

Megan says

I have a hard time calling this a Beauty and the Beast re-telling with an ending like that. It seems like the next book should be Beauty and the Beast. I have no small dislike toward Rowan, but I feel like Kenley Davidson could take him and make a Beauty and the Beast re-telling out of his story and I'd like him in the end. And I wouldn't even be surprised.

Cannot wait for the next book. And I so hope there is one. And I want everyone to be in it. I've loved all of her characters and stories and this wasn't any different.

Haley says

2.5 stars

I really enjoyed this author's Cinderella retelling and in conjunction with the high average rating, I had such high hopes for this book. It was mostly a disappointment. :(I loved the creativity with this retelling and the shaking up different attributes that typically are "the Beast" and trading some with attributes that are usually "Beauty." I also loved the other characters, so things started off really well! Where it fell flat for me: I didn't believe that Alexei and Zara fell in love, I wanted to know more about the history of the characters and get to know them better, the pacing dragged, and by the time I got to the climax of the book, I found that I was bored instead of excited by the events at the end.

Mo says

3.5 stars
