



Such Sweet Sorrow

Jenny Trout

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Never was there a tale of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo...But true love never dies. Though they're parted by the veil between the world of mortals and the land of the dead, Romeo believes he can restore Juliet to life, but he'll have to travel to the underworld with a thoroughly infuriating guide.

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, may not have inherited his father's crown, but the murdered king left his son a much more important responsibility—a portal to the Afterjord, where the souls of the dead reside. When the determined Romeo asks for help traversing the treacherous Afterjord, Hamlet sees an opportunity for adventure, and the chance to avenge his father's death.

In an underworld filled with leviathan monsters, ghoulish shades, fire giants and fierce Valkyrie warriors, Hamlet and Romeo must battle their way through jealousy, despair, and their darkest fears to rescue the fair damsel. Yet finding Juliet is only the beginning, and the Afterjord doesn't surrender souls without a price...

Such Sweet Sorrow Details

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Author : Jenny Trout

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From Reader Review Such Sweet Sorrow for online ebook

Farrah says

Dark, romantic, and absolutely amazing! Such Sweet Sorrow was a brilliant YA romance/retelling. I absolutely loved this book! From the depiction of Shakespeare's characters, to the thrills, to the unexpected twist, this book was perfection.

I have to admit, I was a bit worried going in to this book. The author was taking on huge characters and changing their stories. And, because of how much I adore Shakespeare, it would only have taken one slip for me to be completely turned off from the book. But, I think she did it brilliantly. She took the characters and made them her own in an original way that still stayed true to them. So, I thought that was perfect.

All three major characters were wonderful.

Romeo was so determined and entirely devoted to the woman he loved. He proved that his declarations of love weren't meaningless, staying true to them even against death. He was very sweet and I adored him character.

Juliet was also lovely. She was strong and held her own in a dangerous world. And, she was very loyal to Romeo, determined that he should make it out of the afterlife alive, even if she had to remain dead. She fought for her loved ones and proved herself as a heroine. I really liked her.

The romance between these famous lovers were so sweet. Their feelings for each other were obvious in everything they did and I thought they were a lovely couple.

Hamlet was a little more difficult to understand. He was aloof and utterly incapable of understanding other people's emotions and disinclined to spare them. But, when he came to consider a person his friend, he would fight all the way for them. I thought he was fantastic.

The plot was fast paced and I was hooked the entire way through. There were tons of thrills along the way that kept me on the edge of my seat. I really enjoyed the story and that twist at the end left me stunned. The ending was bittersweet and I both loved it and resented it, for giving the hope of a happy ending, but not assuring it for me. There was a hint of more things to come at the end, but I haven't yet heard of a sequel. I really hope there will be one, because I'm not ready to let go of these newly imagined characters yet.

Such Sweet Sorrow was a brilliant YA read. From the romance, to the thrills, to the shocking twists, this book was amazing. I completely and totally adored this book! YA lovers, romance lovers, and Shakespeare lovers, this a book you don't want to miss.

*I received a free copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review

Jessica *The Lovely Books* says

I have never been much of a Romeo and Juliet fan. I hated beyond hated that they committed suicide over love. It made me angry and mad that someone could do that. It wasn't until I got a little bit older that I was

able to understand and acknowledge why they did what they did. I didn't agree but I also didn't hate that they both died over one another. I saw the tragedy and the heartache. I feel that same love Romeo felt for Juliet, only it's a motherly love.

Hamlet, I never got into that story unfortunately. Such a shame because I enjoyed his character in the book.

What would have happened if Romeo never died? Or Hamlet crazy?

Such Sweet Sorrow goes into depth in her own words in this wonderful retelling of beloved stories written by Shakespeare. I love retellings and this one caught my interest because it was a retelling of both Hamlet and R+J. Very creative.

The world building was fantastic. There was a lot of stuff in there about Norse gods, mythology, etc. It's all very intriguing information.

As I stated above Hamlet I really enjoyed. His personality was a bit arrogant but I liked him more than Romeo who was much more broody. I usually like the broody ones but in this case I wanted the arrogant one.

Even though I enjoyed the story, I felt like as a whole there was something missing. Passion maybe? I didn't really feel too many emotions while reading, isn't that why we read in the first place? To feel? There were parts that dragged out and got too boring for my taste.

All in all if you like retellings and R+J and/or Hamlet, this book you may find quite enjoyable.

*Review copy provided by Entangled Pub via NetGalley for an honest review.

Gwen Wolverton says

This book is bizarre, I struggled to read through it. Where is the creativity in naming the characters in this book Romeo, Juliet and Hamlet? The first part of the book, the characters Romeo and Hamlet wander around cluelessly through Afterjord, it got boring rather fast. I struggled through the rest.

This book is very twisted, it integrated two well known classic books into an extremely bizarre tale, almost like a continuation of 'Romeo and Juliet' and oh yeah, let's throw in 'Hamlet'.

The ending leaves you wondering if there is more to come.

This book was a boring and detached read for me. It would make an excellent video game.

Mutmainna says

I've never liked Romeo and Juliet much. Though I have a huge likeness for romance books, but the story of Romeo and Juliet wasn't really for me. Unlike that though, this one was far better.

The story started off quite well. Romeo's determination to find Juliet was really described very nicely. Although the characters of Romeo and Hamlet felt a little flat at first and was hard to relate to, the storyline

covered it up well.

The theme of underworld was really interesting. I always have a fascination for stories dealing with underworld. This story was no exception. Though the starting seemed a bit stagnant to me, once the story moved forward I could easily enjoy everything about it.

I liked the character of Juliet for a change. She seemed strong, unlike the original version of Juliet. And her willingness to make sure Romeo is alright was really good.

Hamlet seemed fine too. I wasn't totally in love him or anything, but then again, I was NEVER in love with the real Hamlet. SO I didn't expect that to happen here either :P

The writing style was pretty good. I was afraid it might be one of those heavy-weighted-dialogue books, but thankfully enough, it wasn't.

One good thing about the plot is that it's a mix of everything, romance, bromance :P, adventure, trouble and to top it off- underworld. I was hooked from the later half. Plus, all of it comes wrapped in a really pretty cover, what more can you ask for?

Sophia (Bookworming Thoughts) says

I received this book for free from Publisher in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review. *Such Sweet Sorrow* is quite literally an unwritten sequel to *Romeo and Juliet* coinciding with *Hamlet* with a dark twist, or in other words, a bridge between the end of one Shakespeare play and the beginning of another.

I personally liked Trout's version of Romeo as he journeys to Denmark in the quest to save Juliet from death - he's much more spunky, but he has his romantic elements as well that Shakespeare originally placed in him. Hamlet is just as cheeky as his original counterpart, if not more cheeky (*Hamlet* is my favorite Shakespeare play, and it's not actually because of the ending). Juliet, like Romeo, also has another side to her Trout creates - she's more badass. (*Romeo and Juliet* is my least favorite - interesting combo going on here honestly.)

But *Such Sweet Sorrow* can be overwhelming. Trout doesn't just have *Hamlet* mashed with *Romeo and Juliet* - she's got Norse mythology and Greek mythology and who knows what else (some reviewers on Goodreads say anything you can think of... Essentially). Regardless, there is definitely a mess of things going on throughout and I just decided to go with it rather than question the book in its entirety (like what other mythological aspects are involved).

For the first half of the book, Romeo and Hamlet are, for the most part, wandering around cluelessly through this place called the Afterjord - it can get boring pretty quickly, but there is so much going on with the creatures they come across, it's not actually boring (I'm too busy trying to keep track of what's going on so I'm not lost). *Such Sweet Sorrow* doesn't actually pick up until after Romeo and Hamlet finally rescue Juliet and try to make their way back to the mortal world.

But while there is so much going on throughout, I actually liked this strange little book in all its weird complexities. However...

I'm disappointed that a cliffhanger is involved and nowhere on Goodreads does it say *Such Sweet Sorrow* has

a sequel in the works.

This review was originally posted on Bookwyrming Thoughts

Mitchii says

I'm always been intrigued with all these Romeo and Juliet retellings. I haven't read the original and I'm bit intimidated to start tbqh; so to compensate with that I decided to try retellings. **Such Sweet Sorrow** by Jenny Trout sounded really intriguing. The concept of meshing two popular novels is a very grand idea. And we all know how tragic the ending for couple of Shakespeare's famous work. With all these things in mind I decided to try.

Well, the thing is, it's just good. It wasn't mind blowing and I might have expected more intense since the ideas were truly interesting. The pacing was little slow and the delivery of the idea is not really intact to me. I might have wanted something from Romeo. He done this magnitude of an effort to reclaim the woman he loved but I was felt detached the whole time. And I liked that I have connection to character so I can understand his behavior and motives more—on why he did what he did. Anyway, it definitely wasn't bad read. It was just all fine to me. I feel like there's more to ending and if ever there's a sequel, I'm not sure if I'll give a try. But if you want some paranormal twist to one of Shakespeare's most popular albeit tragic plays then I would suggest giving this one a try.

2.5/5

Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says

Here is a fact, I love retellings. Another fact? I love Romeo and Juliet. I know what you are thinking, why in the world do you love a tale so full of foolishness and woe? Why love something that only ends in heartache, despair and death?

The simple answer, love. I love a good love story. I eat them up. I devour them and I can never get enough of them. I love a good tale about star crossed lovers and while I normally love a happy ending, there is just something to be said about Juliet and her Romeo. Another truth? Shakespeare was a genius and his writing, while usually tragic, was also beautiful.

I never pass up a chance to read a retelling of his most beloved tragic tale but to combine not one, but two tragic tales is another sort of genius all it's own, throw in some paranormal and even better.

What if Romeo didn't die in the tomb with Juliet? What if Hamlet wasn't crazy? What if, what if, what if?

I really loved the mythology in this, Greek, Norse, Roman, it has a little bit of everything that any lover of mythology could really appreciate and enjoy. Monsters, sirens, ghosts, witches, seers, warriors, tests, sacrifices, friendship, true love, yep, it had a little bit of it all and honestly, for that alone I had fun reading this. Sadly this didn't quite live up to the adventure I was hoping for or the love story I was hoping it would tell, nor did it exactly have a bright and better ending than either tale told by the master himself.

And while the original tales of Romeo and Hamlet lost something in translation (or better yet, in the

adventure) this was still a fun, wild read full of all things mystical, maybe not a favorite or one I would even re-read in the future but still something different and fun to contemplate after the story had ended but sadly one that I probably won't remember years from now.

Katie Bodden says

I really enjoyed this book. cool way to twist Hamlet and Romeo and Juliet together. I thought it was interesting how they took pieces and meshed it together. Was hoping there was another book in the series, but guess not. I really loved the Viking mythology in it too. Really fun book!

Anne says

Also reviewed for Addicted2Heroines

The beautiful cover sucked me in...I admit it.

And really, it's got such an interesting premise, that I couldn't help but want to read it. Romeo and Juliet *plus* Hamlet? Cool! I didn't even realize that it would be incorporating Norse mythology, but that was also a bonus!

So why only 3 stars?

Hmmm.

I'm not sure really.

The author is talented, and if you've ever read her blog, you'll probably agree that she's quite a funny lady.

But for some reason *this* story just didn't click with me as much as I wanted it to. It took me several days to finish it, simply because it was so easy for me to put it down.

I *did* like the way that Juliet was portrayed as a strong character, but neither Hamlet or Romeo evoked much emotion out of me. Romeo leaned toward the *slightly annoying* side, but not enough for me to hate him, and Hamlet was likable...but not *lovable*.

The journey to find and rescue Juliet was kind of the same way. There was something missing in it that I can't put my finger on. I normally love retellings, but I couldn't seem to get into this one.

Maybe it's just me?

I'm not much of a Shakespeare groupie, so perhaps this particular story was meant to be embraced by a different kind of reader?

The kind of reader who wasn't sending sidelong glances to her copy of BatGirl while trying to get through this one...

So.

The author is good and the premise is good.

It wasn't my cuppa, but it might be yours?

In case you were wondering, I received a digital arc from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Jacquie Bolton says

O... M... G! How could you NOT love that blurb!? I literally freaked out trying to get on Netgalley to request this. When they approved me, if I had been ABLE to do cartwheels, I would have been cartwheeling all over the place like a cheerleader on crack. I mean, c'mon, Shakespeare, Mythology, JENNY TROUT! OMG!

And of course, it's Jenny Trout, and she does NOT disappoint. I absolutely adored this story. The whole concept of Romeo not dying and venturing into the Afterjord to find Juliet is interesting enough on it's own. Then she throws in Hamlet too, and it's like awesome overload. Hamlet is, beyond question, my favorite character out of all of Shakespeare's work. Jenny Trout totally does him justice in this book. He's still that intelligent, snarky persona that I loved so much in Hamlet.

I wasn't such a huge fan of Romeo and Juliet back in the day, however, I was a huge fan of Juliet in this story. Jenny Trout transforms her into a very strong female character that I can identify with and appreciate. Romeo didn't really do much for me. His love for Juliet was admirable, but he was still whiny and annoying. However, it didn't stop me from enjoying the book at all.

The end is a bit of a cliffhanger, but I haven't heard anything official about a book two... so... FINGERS CROSSED!

All in all, I absolutely love it, and I would totally recommend it to anyone who has a soft spot for Shakespeare or mythology... or just awesomeness in general.

Rebecca says

In a twist on the classic story, Juliet died, but Romeo didn't. Consulting a witch about how to get Juliet back, Romeo learns that he must find a northern land with a murdered king--and surprise, surprise, Hamlet's dead father has just shown him a gateway into the underworld at Elsinore. Hamlet didn't intend to go with Romeo--they disliked each other on sight--but Romeo pulls him in and then they're stuck in the bizarre and deadly realms beyond, searching both for Juliet and for a way out--and sniping at each other along the way.

The positives: The author is either really creative or really did her research about the Norse afterworld (I'm not familiar with it myself so don't know which it is), and it's full of disgusting and terrifying creatures/monsters/adventures. The book is well-structured, and balances action and quieter scenes well. The idea of the characters meeting up is also an interesting one with possibilities.

The negatives: The characters didn't work for me. There was just too much telling--what they were thinking,

what their personality traits/ personal histories/ character flaws and strengths were--rather than letting those things come through their actions. It felt as though they were paper dolls, with their personalities carefully folded on like paper clothes. I didn't buy any of it. I also didn't buy that an Italian Christian would end up in a Norse afterworld--I mean, seriously? Is there only one afterworld, and it's the Norse one? Why? Contrived. To me this just felt like an attempt to capitalize on the popularity of Rick Riordan's 'House of Hades,' in which his characters make a nightmare journey through Tartarus that is still not completely without humor. He's Rick Riordan, though--of course it worked for him.

And I thought of a much better ending.

books are love says

Received in exchange for a honest review.

This is imaginative and amazing. I love that Hamlet leads Romeo into the underworld that is based on mythology and we see love rule out. I can honestly say I felt so bad for Hamlet. He begins more as a selfish cad but during his journey to help Romeo find Juliet and bring her back he grows and matures. He realizes what it means to be king and a friend. He learns that he has been selfish in many ways and he learns friendship and trust. Yes he had a little knowledge of this with Horatio but it is the bonds that grow between him and Romeo in the underworld as they have to rely on each other for survival that this really is learned.

Romeo and Juliet are fated to love over all boundaries. He goes into the venture wanting to bring Juliet back to life but learns more about what love and sacrifice is. At the end it is Hamlet and his trust and loyalty and friendship that helps Romeo but also Juliet and her courageous moments at the end where she sacrifices for love and friendship that brings Romeo from his funk and into wanting more. Juliet is stronger than she realizes and it is Hamlet and Romeo that help her see this. Romeo's love and devotion helps her to want to live again and want to survive and not just exist but it is also her love that brings life back to Romeo. Hamlet helps them both see loyalty and friendship and how much it should be valued.

When Romeo starts this trip he is focused on a singular thought-bringing Juliet back with him. As he fights and struggles by Hamlet's side and at one point makes a decision that weighs him down for Juliet, he learns more about love, life, friendship and who he is. He learns that not everything is black and white. That it is okay to rely on someone and let go sometimes. He learns to let someone in and embrace a friendship that isn't for gain. Juliet learns she is strong and what love needs to survive sometimes is sacrifice. She learns about friendship through Hamlet and learns to trust.

Hamlet has the greatest journey but also the most lost. He learns to trust and let others help him. He learns to be humble but that friendship is a two way street. He learns loyalty and who he is. He gains strength and wisdom but also is in more danger. In the underworld and real world. His uncle is a snake of epic proportions and Hamlet doesn't get to follow through on some aspects which I think leaves things hanging. He does though gain a valuable friend in Romeo and he fights for him no matter what.

This book is a intriguing imaginative and fun take on Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet and the underworld. I like the colliding of Shakespeare and how they help one another to grow and learn about one another. The adventure in the underworld brings us through mythology and shows love and friendship be tested and win. We get intrigue and danger at every turn in this alluring and addictive book that has you riveted and wondering if love will win out and if Hamlet finds what he is looking for as well. The ending wow.. Jaw dropping and makes you want the next book.

Tati says

This is, essentially, two pieces from Shakespeare meeting, namely, Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet. I've never read them, but I am familiar with them (Romeo and Juliet more so than Hamlet). The synopsis also looked promising, so I decided to request this book. It turned out to be an okay read.

I don't really know why, but it just didn't click with me. It was not lack of action, as this book has plenty of action. It also has plenty of mythological elements, which I usually love. Maybe it was just too much, for me, to take established characters and put them in an extremely fantastical setting. As I've already said, I couldn't get into the story nor create a link with the characters.

By the ending, it felt like there should be a sequel, but I don't know if there is actually going to be one (Goodreads is silent on this). If there is, I'm not sure I'll read it.

Rating: 3 out of 5

Kelly Sierra says

This sounds like it can go horribly wrong... like a train wreck, but I can be wrong, so I am going to read it.

EDIT: 2/3/2014

The premise of this book scared me. Imagine being told that someone took Hamlet and Romeo & Juliet and created an alternative story... what would you honestly think. My first reaction was to be nervous, it was going to be a train wreck or possibly very unique. I was both surprised and also disappointed.

Such Sweet Sorrow takes place a couple of days after Juliet sought the sweet relief of her love's dagger. Romeo is alive, after the poison he purchased ended up being of weaker constitution than originally advertised. Devastated that his love, Juliet, is now in hell (Catholic belief of suicide damning the soul to hell) Romeo (with the help of Friar Lawrence) goes in search of a witch. The witch tells Romeo that if he wants to save his Juliet he must go North to where there is a throne with a murdered king; enter Hamlet.

Hamlet's father has just been murdered. The day he meets Romeo, is the same night his uncle and mother are wedded. Hamlet's father's ghost has issued Hamlet with the responsibility of taking care of the veil between the world of the living and of the dead. As the story progresses Norse Mythology begins to make an appearance (Hamlet is from Nordic ancestors). Together Romeo and Hamlet enter the world of the dead, battle ancient creatures, meet gods, and try to rescue the damsel.

Overall I enjoyed Hamlet, he was hilarious, and so were Romeo and Juliet. The story and the intertwining of the two plays, along with Nordic Mythology was done pretty okay. My problem was the ending. What happened to Romeo at the end? For those who read this book, you might agree that the ending was a bit fuzzy. Romeo is charged to be at Hamlet's service, so whatever happened to him when Hamlet died?

3 out of 5 stars. Thanks Netgalley

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

There is so much going on in this book. You have your main cast of **leading Shakespearean characters** (Hamlet, Juliet, Romeo to name a few), throw them into a **bizarre underworld** filled with **Norse mythology**, **Greek mythology**, and elements of **Celtic mythology** and **Jewish mythology** and what you have is a mess. But it's a really interesting mess.

Valkyries, Frost Giants, Fire Giants, the Washerwoman, the Norns, Fenrir, the Sirens, berserkers, shades. You name it, you've got it. This book also takes a liberal interpretation with its Shakespearean characters, too. This is not to say that the characters were horrible, they're not: but neither do they feel authentic.

It takes Romeo's worst qualities and amplifies them, his anger, his impetuosity are amped up to the nth degree. I absolutely loved the character of Juliet in this book...the problem is that she's not Juliet. She is a Shakespearean heroine who all of a sudden becomes a sword-wielding, kick-assing character out of fucking nowhere. **Juliet's got spunk. I loved her character in this book, but she is just not William Shakespeare's Juliet!**

This was truly not a terrible book by any means. It doesn't have a single one of the tropes that I hate so much in YA fiction, and it is light on the romance. Hell, despite my fear at some points that there would be a little hmm-hmm going on between Juliet and Hamlet, there was no love triangle at all.

So why did I give it a 2? Simple. The book itself was just way, way too ambitious. It is a very, very interesting premise---but it ultimately lost its focus on the main plot. **This book far overreached itself.**

The Summary: It is days after Juliet's death. Romeo is sick, ill from the poison he has ingested. Furthermore, he is sick in spirit. He is heartbroken. His beloved wife, Juliet, is dead, and he will do nothing to get her back.

Romeo consults a witch, a Strega. She tells him that Juliet is stuck in hell. Her soul is in torment.

His Juliet stood before him, or at least, the shape of her, frozen in blood, monochromatic crimson, but unmistakably her. Thick chains bound her across neck and waist; manacles clasped her wrists. Her eyes were the worst of all, open, bloody, blank and unseeing, yet somehow still accusing.

Romeo is desperate to rescue her. The witch tells him that the person he seeks is in the North. She gives him a cryptic clue:

"You must go north. You will find the man who can help you there."

"Farther. Farther than you have ever traveled. Over the mountains, to a castle by the sea. The seat of a murdered king."

The man Romeo seeks is Hamlet.

Hamlet sits in a pub in Denmark. He is drowning his sorrows the best way he knows how: by drinking himself silly. His mother is getting married to his uncle the day after tomorrow, and he knows that his father

has been murdered. His father's ghost has come back to talk to him, the late King Hamlet warned his son of his uncle's treachery, and tasks Hamlet with the charge of **protecting the corpseway**.

What is the corpseway? It is a passage into the underworld.

...the unearthly portal that divided the realm of the living and the dead.

Against all odds, Romeo finds Hamlet. They don't exactly get along at first. Romeo is distrustful of this drunken prince. Hamlet suspects Romeo of being in league with his uncle---who else knows that his father has been murdered. Finally, they overcome their differences: **together, Hamlet and Romeo descend into the corpseway, down into the Underworld.**

What they find there isn't exactly Hell. It is the Underworld, only not the Underworld they imagined. It is Valhalla. It is Sheol, it is Hades, among others. There, they find lost souls, creatures from many mythologies, bizarre monsters---and Juliet.

And this is where the book lost me. I wish I could tell you that there was a point to this book that I could put together to tell you in one sentence to end my "summary" section.

I can't.

It is just a journey through the underworld. It is action-filled, it is pretty interesting at times, but it was just completely pointless; **the point is to rescue Juliet...but this book seems to be an exercise of in aimless extravagance because there is so much going on without a visible purpose.**

The Plot: Filled with **holes**. There are so many unanswered questions. For example, just from the beginning of the book...

- How the FUCK did Romeo and Friar Laurence travel all the way from Verona to Denmark?
- How in all the living hell did Romeo find out about Hamlet in the first place? Verona is a long fucking way from Denmark.
- How the fuck do they communicate so well? Romeo only speaks Italian. Hamlet learned Italian at University, but as I very well know, it is one thing to learn a language, it is an entirely different thing to SPEAK it. They communicate flawlessly. I don't believe it.

Deus ex fucking machina : There is so much of this going on in this book. Whenever something inconvenient happens that places them in danger, they get through it just by sheer fucking luck. Romeo about to die? OH NO PROBLEM, THE MONSTERS ABOUT TO KILL HIM WAS JUST AN ILLUSION!

*But they were gone, the hillside, too. Romeo found himself in a strange, barren wasteland.
He was alone.*

HAMLET'S ABOUT TO DIE! LET'S END THE CLAPTER ON A CLIFFHANGER.

*He plunged into the spectral river on the maggot's back, and when it surfaced, screaming its
rage from its horrible, rotting mouth, he saw through the portal.
And he knew Romeo would not save him.*

A chapter later, oh, why there he is, reappearing out of thin air.

"It's me."

All safe and sound with no explanation whatsoever. HOW THE FUCK?!

The three of them get separated. Despite the vastness of the multi-tiered Underworld, they always manage to find each other again. They go from one version of an Underworld to the next, from Valhalla to Sheol to Hades, with pretty much the snap of a finger. **There is no transition, there is no subtlety.**

Romeo: This book utilizes Romeo's worst qualities: his grand, romantic gestures, his impetuousness, his youth, his anger. Romeo is SO angry throughout the book. Despite his need for Hamlet's aid, he keeps snapping at him. He keeps blaming him for dragging Hamlet into the mess that Romeo wanted to go into in the first place.

"I don't care!" Romeo could not hold back his anger any longer. "You're mad, and I'm a fool for letting you lead me here."

Romeo is bitter, he is self-pitying, he is a whiny git, and I wanted to punch his lights out. Hamlet feels much the same way.

Hamlet groaned. "Oh, stop pitying yourself. You were desperate and unhappy at home, you're desperate and unhappy now. Nothing has changed, except that now we're closer to your goal."

He never, ever stops fucking whining. Hamlet isn't my favorite character in the world, but he has my compassion, because he actually tells Romeo to, well, **shut the fuck up and grow some balls.**

"Have you listened to a word you've said? You're miserable without your true love, and you've come here to find her. You are closer to rescuing a loved one from death than any man has ever been, and now all you're doing is complaining."

Hamlet: Well, to be fair, Hamlet is kind of intolerable sometimes. He is by far the most level-headed of the two, but he has a few inappropriately snarky moments where he could be a leeeeeeeetle more sensitive to poor Romeo. They're plunged from the normal world into Valhalla, they're about to get **stabbed by a Frost Giant**. Naturally, it's neither a good place nor time to make light of things.

"I thought you said it wasn't terrifying!" Romeo shouted, his eyes wide with fear. Hamlet shrugged. The bastard actually shrugged as he lay there on the stone. Romeo would have punched him, but there were more pressing matters at hand than the prince's maddening attitudes.

Yeah, I'd say so!

Hamlet is rather nonchalant about things. He is TOO chill sometimes. Like stepping through a portal to the world of the dead is nothing at all. It's just the Underworld, maaaaaan.

"I don't know. I never stepped completely through the corpseway." Hamlet's thought trailed off as he moved through the light, sliding his feet cautiously along the floor. "Seems safe enough. Come on."

Oh, it SEEMS safe enough. Well, that's just fucking dandy now.

Oh, and HOW do you know that the corpseway is safe for humans to travel through, Hamlet?

"I stuck my head in," Hamlet argued. "It came out again. And my father's ghost was able to traverse the corpseway. I see no reason that it might not work exactly as I've described."

That makes perfect sense.

Juliet: My favorite character in the book---and the most inconsistently portrayed. **This Juliet is NOTHING like Shakespeare's Juliet.**

Somehow...this:

Turned into...well...this:

Don't get me wrong, Juliet is pretty kick-ass. She confronts Hamlet and Romeo with the cold, hard facts of their idocy in their knight-who-say-NI quest to rescue her.

"Was there no way to find out, before you did this to me?" Juliet asked, her large brown eyes full of hurt. "The two of you never thought that a bit more preparation might have been required before tampering with the forces of life and death?"

She can wield a sword, but HOW THE FUCK?

Juliet proved tireless with her blade, to Hamlet's surprise and delight. He could not imagine the ladies of his uncle's court taking such bloodthirsty delight in defeating monsters.

Well, that's just awesome, but HOW?! **How the fuck did Juliet learn to wield a sword so capably? She has not been fighting in the underworld, she has been a prisoner, chained, suffering from partial amnesia.** In life, she was a pampered, loved noblewoman. How the FUCK did she get so competent?

But Romeo had seen this fire in her from the very instant they'd met, though it had been only a small spark then. Set among the tinder of conflict, she was now ablaze.

I love Juliet in this book, I really do, but this is not Juliet!

The Setting:

Well, not really.

Cause we're in Valhalla. We go into the Afterjord. We meet the Valkyries. We meet Berserkers, Frost Giants, Lava Giants. Fenrir, Odin's ravens (who are really cute). There are the Nordic Norns (the Fates). And then we meet the Irish Washerwoman, who launders the clothes of the people who died. And then we're in Sheol, with the Shades. And then we're in some Greek mythology, with pretty pretty sirens. Then we're in some hall with maggot men. Some of the monsters are pretty gruesome, and awesomely so.

The cloth fell away from the thing's face, revealing no eyes, no nose, just the sightless, round

countenance of a maggot and a circular mouth full of teeth in endless rings.

But it's just way, way too fucking much because as entertaining as it is, the plot is completely lost in it.

The Romance: No love triangle, thankfully. I found the romance to be completely acceptable here, although I did disagree with the portrayal of Ophelia (a character who barely appears) as a marriage-mad chick. I was afraid that there would be a love triangle...

Something in Juliet's voice bothered Romeo. There was a smirk to her tone that was too comfortable with the prince. She spoke the way she had spoken to Romeo that night at her father's party.

But thankfully, this book was without.

Overall: a solid, entertaining book that just completely fell short on the plot.
