

The background features a network diagram with white nodes and lines on a purple-to-pink gradient. The nodes are connected by thin white lines, forming a complex web. Some nodes are larger than others, and the overall structure is abstract and geometric.

# Stepsister

Written by Jennifer Donnelly

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Published by griefconvention

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# Stepsister

By Jennifer Donnelly

## Stepsisters Lament

Isabelle should be blissfully happy â€” sheâ€™s about to win the handsome prince. Except Isabelle isnâ€™t the beautiful girl who lost the glass slipper and captured the princeâ€™s heart. Sheâ€™s the ugly stepsister whoâ€™s cut off her toes to fit into Cinderellaâ€™s shoe ... which is now filling with blood.

## Stepsisters Lament Lyrics

When the prince discovers Isabelle's deception, she is turned away in shame. It's no more than she deserves: she is a plain girl in a world that values beauty; a feisty girl in a world that wants her to be pliant.

## Stepsisters Lament Sheet Music

Isabelle has tried to fit in. To live up to her mother's expectations. To be like her stepsister. To be sweet. To be pretty. One by one, she has cut away pieces of herself in order to survive a world that doesn't appreciate a girl like her. And that has made her mean, jealous, and hollow.

## Stepsister By Jennifer Donnelly

Until she gets a chance to alter her destiny and prove what ugly stepsisters have always known: it takes more than heartache to break a girl.

Everyone said a girl with a strong will would come to a bad end. Everyone said a girl's will must be bent to the wishes of those who know what's best for her.

Isabelle was young, only sixteen; she had not yet learned that Everyone is a fool.

First off, I want to say I really enjoyed this book. There are so many good things I want to say about it (and will), but I also think I have to admit that for the first 25% I thought I was going to love it more than I did. The opening is very strong, the writing is gorgeous and highly-quotable, and it's got that beautifully eerie dark fairy tale vibe going on. I was thinking an easy five stars.

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History books say that kings and dukes and generals start wars. Don't believe it. We start them, you and I. Every time we turn away, keep quiet, stay out of it, behave ourselves.

True to the Grimm brothers' version of Cinderella, the book opens at the end of the tale we know with the stepsisters mutilating their own feet to attempt to fit the glass slipper. Of course, this doesn't work out, and Ella and her prince get their happy ending anyway. Here, that's only the beginning. Isabelle and Tavi are left behind with their overbearing mother. Isabelle, especially, is overcome with bitterness. She's angry at a world that renders a woman worthless if she is not deemed beautiful.

Donnelly doesn't stop with something that simplistic, though. Almost all the women in this story are sympathetic, and though their actions are not excused, it is clear that the real "villain" behind it all is society and the way in which a girl's worth is determined. Ella is never dismissed as an airheaded beauty, nor is the "evil stepmother" entirely evil. It is interesting and sad how we see the way Maman's fear for her daughters drives her to horrific acts. She is deeply afraid of them being left without husbands and starving when she is gone. It's not an unrealistic fear.

"Change is a kiss in the dark. A rose in the snow. A wild road on a windy night," Chance countered.

"Monsters live in the dark. Roses die in the snow. Girls get lost on wild roads," the crone shot back.

Alongside this, there is another part of the story. A fantasy story and a game. One in which Fate, who has determined the course of Isabelle's life, plays against Chance, who wagers that he can change it. These two characters go head-to-head to see that Isabelle takes the path of their choosing. For the most part, it's thrilling, though I think the overlong and convoluted road this aspect of the plot took made it a four instead of a five star book for me. There was a definite part somewhere in the third quarter where

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it got a little too much.

But, ultimately, it's a gorgeously-written feminist fairy tale that unites women instead of demonizing them. I absolutely loved the shout-out to female military leaders of history, and the moments of perfectly-timed humour:

â€œThe feeling that you want to own someone body and soul, spirit them away from everyone else, have them all to yourself forever and ever and ever,â€• Hugo said dreamily. â€œItâ€™s called love.â€•  
â€œNo, itâ€™s called kidnapping,â€• said Tavi.

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## Stepsisters Cinderella

This is not a pretty fairytale. The story isn't pretty. The world isn't pretty. The characters aren't pretty. Even the magic isn't pretty.

It's not a story that will make you dream a thousand beautiful dreams of happily-ever-afters. I'm not saying the contrary applies that it will give you a thousand nightmares in which you die a thousand different deaths but it is indeed DARK.

I liked it a lot. I believe the world and the stories in it do not need to be one thing only. They can be good and evil, This is not a pretty fairytale. The story isn't pretty. The world isn't pretty. The characters aren't pretty. Even the magic isn't pretty.

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I liked it a lot. I believe the world and the stories in it do not need to be one thing only. They can be good and evil, beautiful and ugly, hopeful and fatal. That's how people are, aren't they? You want to believe that someone is all good or all evil because it'll be easier to predict their reactions and judge whether they are right for us or not.

But that's called being one-dimensional. You don't want one-dimensional people in your life, do you? And you don't want to read about one-dimensional characters either, right? No one in this story is just one thing. In the beginning it may seem that way—Cinderella is purely good, Isabelle is pathetically subdued, the stepmother is absolutely evil—but that's exactly why the author has written this story! To change all of that.

It is a well-developed feminist retelling. It's a powerful and surprising story that asks to be read carefully instead of rushed through to get to the ending. The ending is not at all the most important part. What matters most is the path that leads to the final chapter, and boy oh boy what a hard path Isabelle has to follow.

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I started reading Stepsister on 4/19/2019 and finished it on 4/23/2019. This fairy tale retelling is an excellent read! I like that it started out with the Cinderella story and expanded further after Cinderella went off to her happily ever after. I love that this story focus on the stepsister's perspectives of how it all went. I love that the stepsisters are portrayed as intelligent and brave, more tomboy than girly. There are many types of girls and this book hit straight on the nail's head by I started reading



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This book is told in the third person point of view following Isabelle, 16 as she does what her mom wants, to cut off a few of her toes so that her foot can fit into the glass slipper that the Prince of France brought. Isabelle's mom told her she's ugly and she thinks if the Prince marries her she'll be a Princess and someday will be Queen and no one will dare to call her ugly again. Unfortunately that plan didn't turn out in their favor and instead backfired. The two stepsisters are Octavia, 17 and Isabelle, 16. Ella is 17. The second view is of Chance. He believes he can change the path for Isabelle after her failed attempt at stealing the Prince from Ella. But Fate is in the way because she already has Isabelle's life mapped out. She thinks Isabelle is selfish and mean and should keep the path chosen for her. Then there's the fairy queen who comes to Isabelle's rescue when Isabelle's heart asked for help.

Stepsister is very well written and filled with Fate and Chance that make you think about yourself. Fate tests you with negative feelings of self doubt and Chance gives you the opportunity to think again and try again. I love the humor in this book, especially toward the end with the "sweaty dead dog". I like when Isabelle is mean to Ella to turn around and experience how it feels when someone else is mean to her. I like that this story is not a smooth ride. There are many ups and downs and opportunities to change the course of life. I like Felix and the bits of romance. It's cute. This book is definitely a plus and I highly recommend everyone to read it!

Pro: fast paced, page turner, humor, stepsisters, fairy tale retelling, adrenaline rush

Con: none

I rate it 5 stars!

\*\*\*Disclaimer: Many thanks to Scholastic for the amazing and beautiful book mail. I appreciate the opportunity to read and review. Please be assured that my opinions are honest.

xoxo,

Jasmine at [www.howusefulitis.wordpress.com](http://www.howusefulitis.wordpress.com) for more details ...more

Stepsister

## Stepsister Shrek

Kind of want to read this, but am simutaniously annoyed at how this story is being marketed as if Cinderella wasnâ€™t feminist to begin with.

My homegirl survived an abusive household, became queen, snagged herself someone who truly loves her and showed that beauty was always about whatâ€™s on the inside.

Plot still sounds interesting enough tho lol.

I mean, when you say â€œa feminist retelling of the darker versions of Cinderellaâ€• you should know that now you pretty much own my pocketâ€”and also all the money in it. Seriously. Here. It's all yours! :/

Stepsister takes up where Cinderella's tale ends. We meet Isabelle, the younger of Cinderella's two stepsisters.

Ella is considered beautiful; stepsister Isabelle is not. Isabelle is fearless, brave, and strong-willed. She fences better than any boy, and takes her stallion over jumps that grown men I mean, when you say â€œa feminist retelling of the darker versions of Cinderellaâ€• you should know that now you pretty much own my pocketâ€”and also all the money in it. Seriously. Here. It's all yours! :/

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Ella is considered beautiful; stepsister Isabelle is not. Isabelle is fearless, brave, and strong-willed. She fences better than any boy, and takes her stallion over jumps that grown men fear to attempt.

It doesn't matter, though; these qualities are not valued in a girl. Others have determined what is beautiful, and Isabelle does not fit their definition. Isabelle must face down the demons that drove her cruel treatment of Ella, challenge her own fate and maybe even redefine the very notion of beauty ...

Cinderella is about a girl who was bullied; Stepsister is about the bully.

We all root for the victims, we want to see them triumph. But what about the bullies? Is there hope for them? Can a mean girl change? Can she find her own happily ever after?

Expected publication: May 14, 2019

â€œIn an ancient city by the sea, three sistersâ€”a maiden, a mother, and a croneâ€”are drawing maps by candlelight. Sombre, with piercing grey eyes, they are the three Fates, and every map is a human life ...â€• ...more

Stepsister

## Stepsisters Into The Woods

It took me a little while to get into it, but I LOVED THIS BOOK. The message is so important, so relevant, and it had me in tears more than once. The author did such a wonderful job making the point that not every girl is the same, and we shouldn't all JUST want to be liked and pretty... we're so much more than that. This sentiment is beaten into our heads from the day we can understand, and it shouldn't be that way. Not anymore.

Not only is it a beloved story we all grew up knowing, it shows a d It took me a little while to get into it, but I LOVED THIS BOOK. The message is so important, so relevant, and it had me in tears more than once. The author did such a wonderful job making the point that not every girl is the same, and we shouldn't all JUST want to be liked and pretty... we're so much more than that. This sentiment is beaten into our heads from the day we can understand, and it shouldn't be that way. Not anymore.

Not only is it a beloved story we all grew up knowing, it shows a different side from the "ugly" stepsisters and what happened after Cinderella rode off into the sunset with Prince Charming. I'm a huge fan of fairy tale retellings, and this one was awesome.

Read this book. If you have a daughter, or granddaughter, have them read it too. You won't be disappointed.

Girl power! ...more

â€œGo now, girl. Remake the world.â€• Â

I never really liked Cinderella....

Review pending

Stepsister

## Stepsisters Lament Karaoke

Holy shit, guys, this book is flying under the radar right now but it shouldn't be!!

"I wanted books. I wanted math and science. I got corsets and gowns and high heeled silk slippers. It made me sad [..]. And then it made me angry. So no, I can't make myself likeable. I've tried. Over and over. It doesn't work. If I don't like who I am, why should you?"

Expect a gushy-ish review on the blog on Wednesday!

4.5 stars

\*\* I received an ARC from the publisher (thank you!) in exchange for an honest review. Holy shit, guys, this book is flying under the radar right now but it shouldn't be!!

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When you are little, you watch a lot of movies. For us girls, life is filled with princesses and happy ever afters. With castles and knights in shining armours. And it's always that the beautiful girls get their princes. Only beautiful girls get to be happy.

In this book, we get to really see the reality of what I have said above. It is all true. Only beautiful girls get the happy ever after. But beauty doesn't always mean pretty.

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Stepsister

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In a world of prejudice and bullying, Stepsister by Jennifer Donnelly shows people, especially girls, that it is okay to be different. It is okay to be brave and follow your dreams. It is okay to be wild and strong willed. The people that truly love you, will always be by your side.

Meet Isabelle "Cinderella's ugly stepsister. The girl that cuts her toes to get into the glass slipper. For those who didn't know, the original Cinderella story by the Grimm brothers indeed has a scene where both ugly stepsisters cut their heel and toes, just to fit in the slipper and marry the prince.

The little toe was the hardest. Which didn't come as a surprise. It's often the small things that hurt the most " a cold glance, a cutting word, laughter that stops when you enter the room.

Isabelle has never really wanted to be evil, but jealousy and mum's pressure have been doing their own thing. When she gets a second chance in life though, she goes for it. She must complete an impossible task to find her happy ever after. And while doing so, she will find her true self.

Most people will fight when there is some hope for winning, no matter how slim. They are called brave. Only a few will keep fighting when all hope is gone. They are called warriors. Isabelle was a warrior once, though she has forgotten it.

Be prepared to feel all emotions, and cheer for Isabelle, when she is fighting against the world. Relive the magic of an amazing retelling and be ready for an unforgettable adventure. What Jennifer has done to bring the Grimm feeling into a powerful story is to be admired. I will admire and cherish this book forever.

I am not a fan of re-reading books, but this will definitely be one book I will always come back to.

Algebra comes from Arabic. From al-jabr, which means "the reunion of broken parts". Al-Khwarizmi believed that what's broken can be made whole again if you just apply the right equation.

• If only there was an equation that could do the same for people. •

Thank you to the team at ReadersFirst, for sending me a paperback copy of this book, in exchange for my honest review.

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## Stepsisters Lament Chords

"...the price of forgiveness is forgiving."

Rating: 4.5 stars

A beautiful tale written about Isabelle, Cinderella's ugly stepsister. Was she ugly? Was she mean? Did she deserve what happened to her? Step Sister started out from where the Cinderella story left off. With Ella riding the royal Carriage with her Prince, leaving behind her step sisters, one bleeding at her heel, Tavi, and another one bleeding at where her toes had been, Isabelle. They're left behind to suffer the consequences, with the "...the price of forgiveness is forgiving."

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In desperation, Isabelle had unintentionally called out for Tanaquill, the fairy queen. When asked what she most desired, she had said she wanted to be pretty. Despising her on her actions to Ella, Tanaquill said she'd grant her her wish but only if she could find the missing pieces of her heart. She handed her 3 items, saying that those would help Isabelle.

Well of course I'm not telling you what the three things were, as it'd spoil the whole plot, but Isabelle's life was meddled by Fate, who was determined that humans should not be given a choice in life and should only follow what they're fated to do, and by Chance, who was determined that everyone deserved a chance or two in life to change their fates.

The plot was okay, it started out fast, then got a little draggy with details that seemed unnecessary to me, but once Isabelle had gotten the hang of what she ought to look for in order to find the lost pieces of her heart, the story picked up its paced again. It was a rather moving story, not quite emotional but still managed to touch my heart. The writing style was good but maybe the author could slow down with the metaphors. Sometimes it could be confusing.

The main character, Isabelle, was fierce, strong and brave. I'm not going to justify her behaviours towards Ella, but it was somehow redeemed, given the circumstances. Tavi, on the other hand, was not quite evil. She just despised life so much for being born as a girl who had to conform to society's norms, to dress pretty and entertain men, when all she wanted was proper education and to voice out her opinions without people telling her that she's a girl and she shouldn't have opinions. They're not the

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usual kind of girls. They have courage and they were bold, and they're ugly not exactly because of their looks, but simply because they're not to be tamed by men. Having sweet, beautiful Ella as a step sister wasn't helping. Perfect Ella who could charm anyone she talked to without causing anger or trouble. But Ella, despite her perfect demeanour, had her ugly side too. One's actions have consequences and this story showed the domino effect of all the choices they made in their lives.

This was my first fairy tale retelling so I'm not quite sure if it's the best one out there, but it's good. I enjoyed reading it and I particularly liked the last 50 pages or so of the book. I really thought my heart would be broken but thank God not much damage was inflicted. To all the insecure girls out there, perhaps you can try to read this book and pick up some of the advices in it. Be strong. Be bold. Live bravely. Beauty isn't always pretty.

I would like to thank Pansing for this lovely ARC in exchange for my honest review. Step Sister is set to be published in May 2019, and it will be available at all good bookstores. ...more

A beautiful cover saying read me. When I was younger being very girly I loved reading the Cinderella story and I'm sure that many women now will remember that excitement. Even seeing Cinderella in pantomime is so magical and enjoyable. I found it thrilling for a change to read this fantasy magical powerful fairytale retelling of Cinderella in Stepsister. Just like in Cinderella in the Stepsister the prince searched for the girl who had worn a glass slipper. He had danced all night with a beautiful girl at a masquerade ball and fallen in love with her, but as we know by the stroke of midnight, the girl had to run away, but a glass slipper had been left behind. And the prince vowed that he would marry the girl who had worn it . Isabelle had a pretty face and dainty feet, if she marries a prince she will be a princess and then one day a queen. I didn't know that Jennifer Donnelly is the author of thirteen novels and a picture book for children.

...more



## Step Sisters Musical

Advance copy provided via Netgalley\*

öŸ I was lucky enough to have an ARC and this is my honest review\*

This isn't a Cinderella tale, one about sweet pretty girls who, through all the troubles in their lives, find prince charming and become a princess. No, this is the tale of a girl who is brave and strong and defiant, an "ugly" step sister. Isabelle doesn't like to sit by and let the men do all her thinking. She rather ride horses and play pirates and be her own woman. She loses her heart and tries to fit in with the "pretty" women. öŸ I was lucky enough to have an ARC and this is my honest review\*

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This was an interesting story, full of magic and feminism. I really enjoyed it and think it's a great read. This was definitely a unique take on the classic Cinderella story. It shows that being pretty isn't everything.

"She was fearsome.

She was strong.

She was beautiful." ...more