



# Fierce Fairytales: Poems and Stories to Stir Your Soul

*Nikita Gill*

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**Fierce Fairytales: Poems and Stories to Stir Your Soul** Nikita Gill

**Poet, writer, and Instagram sensation Nikita Gill returns with a collection of fairytales poetically retold for a new generation of women.**

Traditional fairytales are rife with cliches and gender stereotypes: beautiful, silent princesses; ugly, jealous, and bitter villainesses; girls who need rescuing; and men who take all the glory.

But in this rousing new prose and poetry collection, Nikita Gill gives Once Upon a Time a much-needed modern makeover. Through her gorgeous reimagining of fairytale classics and spellbinding original tales, she dismantles the old-fashioned tropes that have been ingrained in our minds. In this book, gone are the docile women and male saviors. Instead, lines blur between heroes and villains. You will meet fearless princesses, a new kind of wolf lurking in the concrete jungle, and an independent Gretel who can bring down monsters on her own.

Complete with beautifully hand-drawn illustrations by Gill herself, *Fierce Fairytales* is an empowering collection of poems and stories for a new generation.

## Fierce Fairytales: Poems and Stories to Stir Your Soul Details

Date : Published September 11th 2018 by Hachette Books

ISBN : 9780316420747

Author : Nikita Gill

Format : Paperback 176 pages

Genre : Poetry, Fantasy, Short Stories, Retellings, Feminism

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## From Reader Review Fierce Fairytales: Poems and Stories to Stir Your Soul for online ebook

Rachel (rachandbooks) says

**"She wears her strength and darkness equally well. The girl has always been half goddess half hell."**

Empowering. Moving. Tender. Thoughtful. This book of poems and stories is all of that and more. There are a LOT of poems in this book and I enjoyed nearly every one. Nikita Gill tackles a wide variety of timeless stories, from all different perspectives, from Rapunzel to Peter Pan to the Red Queen to Scheherazade to the Stepmother from Cinderella to Baba Yaga and much, much more. It's really refreshing to get Nikita Gill's take on these widely known characters. You realize how some of them were mistreated, how some of them are misunderstood, and how all of them just needed love. The problem comes when we aren't treated how we deserve and things can go from there. In this book, villains origin stories begin, princesses rise up and save themselves, and heroes are challenged to be better and do better. Gill teaches new lessons in each story and brings a new, bold voice to these characters. She writes about how we deal with grief and depression and awful circumstances. She emboldens us to speak our minds, to be clever, and to know our worth.

**"Trauma when left untreated has the capacity to make a villain out of you."**

It kept occurring to me that while I'm happy to be reading this now, I \*really\* wish I could have read this when I was younger, much more naive, and self-conscious. Regardless, these stories of excellent reminders of why we challenge old fairy-tale tropes that have to do with gender, race, and mental health. While reading this collection, I realized that it is a truly feminist work in the sense that it's meant for everyone and helps everyone. I think it was absolutely brilliant and I would read it again. 4.25 stars!

**"Her mother told her  
she could grow up to be  
anything she wanted to be,  
so she grew up to become  
the strongest of the strong,  
the strangest of the strange,  
the wildest of the wild,  
the wolf leading the wolves."**

TW: ED, anxiety, depression, abuse

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Jojo says

Before I even talk about the content in this book, I just want to express just how much I love the cover. It is so attractive, and I'm afraid I've ran my hands over it countless times, which obviously, I'm unapologetic about, because it's simply beautiful. I'd buy it just for the cover.

Nikita Gill has taken classic fairytales, and in these she has masterfully combined the subjects of empowerment, love, feminism, abuse and mental illness. I enjoyed the way Gill kind of climbs into these characters in the stories, whether they are villains or heroes, and enables the reader to see them in a different perspective.

I do support that fact of what many feminist writers quote today, and that is that princesses are not damsels in

distress, we need not rely on our princes, we rely on ourselves.

It was wonderful to read this beautiful and creative writing, as they are a different angle on my favourite stories from childhood. This was fun as well as being thought provoking, and I recommend it to everyone!

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## Barbara (The Bibliophage) says

Nikita Gill puts an adult, mostly feminist spin on common fairytales and legends in her collection, titled *Fierce Fairytales: Poems and Stories to Stir Your Soul*. For me, though, the content wasn't as stirring as promised.

Gill uses various points of view, including main and sideline characters from traditional tales. And she draws from tales around the world, which is a positive. The primary angle on the retelling is advice for young women from one who's somewhat older. For example, *Cinderella's Mother Sends Her a Message from Heaven*. Even when Gill uses her own voice, she takes that same attitude of both cautionary tale and sage advice.

I think the crux of the book is contained in these poetic lines from, *Question the Fairytale*. (ebook, location 1336)

“What if fairytales aren't as innocent  
as they sound and even princesses  
aren't perfect?”

### My conclusions

I'm not much of a retold fairytale reader. This was a backup choice to fulfill a reading challenge prompt, after DNFin my first choice. It's just 175 pages long, but still dragged on too long for me. I'm 100% in favor of encouraging young women, but her advice became repetitive and ponderous by the twentieth tale.

My regular readers know I'm not a young woman. Therefore, I'm likely not the author's target audience. On the other hand, I have granddaughters so the ideas matter to me. But Gill could have drawn me in with a more magical writing style. Although the tales aim for the fantastical, they mostly fell flat for me.

Given that there's not much here for women “of a certain age,” I was happy to find the reworked story of *Baba Yaga*. Gill makes it into a tale about what it's like to be an “invisible” older woman. And—hooray—Baba Yaga revels in it!

Her advice for young women struck me as a moment from Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth*.

“Remind each and every girl out there that youth and beauty are not her shackles, nor her only currency.” (ebook, location 833)

*Fierce Fairytales* is just so-so for me. But if you enjoy empowering retellings, you may love it.

You'll find more reviews like this at my book blog, [TheBibliophage.com](http://TheBibliophage.com).

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## Carla Johnson-Hicks says

I am not sure what I was expecting when I requested this book, but what I read was definitely not it. I had

never read anything by Nikita Gill, yet I understand she has quite a following. In this collection, Nikita Gil addresses some of the biggest problems in the fairytale genre: women in fairy tales are often beautiful and silent and if they are not then they are villians, men are either pawns or abusive.

Nikita Gill rewrites the stories we are familiar with in poetry or prose that makes them often unrecognizable except for the names of the characters. From classics, like Cinderella, to folklore like Baba Yaga, and even literary ladies like Wendy Darling, Gil has left nothing untouched.

I understand that the purpose behind this is to empower women and minorities, but this was not something I related to. I did not see these as fairytales so much as her personal conviction being shared using the same characters and settings. I did enjoy some of the poems, but overall, I was disappointed by this collection. I am sure others would love this collection, but it was not for me. The publisher, Hachette Books, generously provided me with a copy of this book to read. The rating, ideas and opinions are my own.

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## **Carlene Inspired says**

Find this review and others at [Carlene Inspired](#).

I have read many of Nikita Gill's poems and works of prose, so of course I couldn't deny Fierce Fairytales when I happened upon it. The promise of poetry and prose mixed in with my favorite fairy tales drew me in right away. I loved that this book skipped around, talking of the universe and Rumpelstiltskin with just a page turn separating them. Like always, Nikita Gill tells stories of strength and empowerment, eschewing traditional definitions of femininity to give readers more battle cries than woeful ballads. Right away I fell in love with Once Upon a Time II and just a few pages later I bookmarked The Miller's Daughter so I could find it again easily. The stories are reminiscent of those we know well, just told in a new voice, from a different perspective.

Nikita Gill's voice is one that is constant, which means many of the poems will start to feel and read the same. Some are similar or even borrow from her previously published works. Like all great works of poetry, Fierce Fairytales becomes a bit mind numbing, the poems losing their brilliance as each page is turned. I've learned to not read poetry books in one sitting, rather choosing a few based off name or even just selecting a random page. This is the same, I suggest you keep it on your shelf or table to reach for when only words will soothe your thoughts or inspire you when all feels lost.

Fierce Fairytales is filled with refreshing retellings, some short and some longer, each addressing a pivotal fairytale character, experience, or misconception.

ARC provided.

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## **Divine says**

I DNF'd this one by page 107. This collection was a pretty great rep for villains we love to hate in our stories. This talks about abuse, superficiality, heartbreak, and has this recurring feminist theme. HOWEVER, This was just too freaking repetitive and dare I say unoriginal? I felt way too uncomfortable reading the cheesy poems and the predictability of it all, sometimes I feel like it tries so hard to be an aesthetic self-help book Hahahaahhh. YES, THE MESSAGE IS QUITE RELEVANT and I think a younger audience would have appreciated this. For me, not so much. Although, here are some excerpts I really love in this collection.

*"We traded the woods for high-rises,  
the wolf became the boy next door,  
soft brown eyes and close-lipped smiles  
to hide the flash of fangs instead of teeth.  
The huntsman became the 'nice' man*

*that happened to live down the street  
whose laugh never quite reached his eyes,  
and the beaten track gets hazy  
between grandmother and beast.  
I wonder where the wildest things go  
when the devilled copse is no longer there."*

It's nice right? But it also doesn't elicit any profound emotion from me other than "Oooooohhhh." Gahd I feel horrible because this was actually a nice concept but just wasn't executed well for me xc

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### **Bekka says**

Was pretty good until halfway through when I noticed it kept recycling its own ideas over and over again. Also one story in here perpetuating the idea that women cannot be their own person while also being a wife and/or mother? Yeah um fuck that?

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### **Schizanthus says**

*Content warnings* include abuse, mental illness, trauma, alcoholism, betrayal, abandonment, bullying and eating disorders.

In these short stories and poems you'll find well known fairytales with insights into characters, backstories and different endings. Sleeping Beauty doesn't wait for a Prince to awaken her; she does it herself. Jack is willing to face a giant to escape his abusive mother. Tinkerbell embraces her anger.

My absolute favourite was this empowering gem:

#### *Once Upon a Time II*

But the universe never promised  
you this would be easy,  
after all, you are the hero here.

And heroes are meant  
to be forged golden  
from the blaze.

It is up to you to rise again  
from the fragmented shards  
your foes left of you.

You must lift a sword  
with reborn strength and take on  
the demons in your ribcage.

You must devastate the chains  
every violent person  
has brutally placed on you.

And you must show them all  
how *they* were simply  
characters in *your* story.

But you, you are the author  
of this spellbinding tale  
built of hope and bravery.

Out there may be monsters, my dear.  
But in you still lives the dragon  
you should always believe in.

Each time I read it I can feel myself sit up straighter and the resolve to rise up gets stronger. I don't usually quote an entire poem but I had to here. **I love it!**

Towards the end of the book I began to wonder if the author had run out of fairytales and was simply fuelled by anger. Poems like *The Modern-day Fairytale* and *Ode to the Catcaller Down the Street* felt like I was suddenly reading another book altogether, one that wasn't enchanting and empowering, just mad. Perhaps if there were two sections in the book the shift would have been easier to process.

Some stories and poems fuelled my hope, showing me victims becoming survivors and villains humanised. Others left a bitter aftertaste. Life's like that though. While we want our happily ever after, it's not guaranteed. When we think we have nothing left we find reserves of strength we didn't even know we possessed. Some things life chooses for us but it's our choices that define us.

I'd give this book 3.5 stars but am rounding up.

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## **Beatrice ~ Confessions of a Pinay Bookaholic says**

*Thank you Hachette Books for providing an ARC in exchange for an honest review.*

Trust Nikita Gill when she turns classic fairytales in verses and her take about feminism, abuse, mental illness, love and empowerment. The poems are creative and beautifully written. I'm carried away with her words. Nikita Gill digs deeper into each character's personalities -- both villains and heroes. Our princesses aren't damsel in distress, they do not rely on their princes. It's refreshing to read my childhood stories in a different perspective. I enjoyed reading the villains the most because it's fascinating to read what caused them to be vile.

My top ten favorites are:

- *Beauty and Bravery*
- *The Stepmother's Tale*
- *An Apology from Rumpelstiltskin*

- *Two Misunderstood Stepsisters*
- *Wonderland Villain*
- *Rapunzel's Note Left for Mother Gothel*
- *The Looking Glass*
- *Hunger: The Darkest Fairytale*
- *Metamorphosis*
- *Four Spells to Keep Inside Your Mouth*

I recommend this collection to everyone. It's good for the soul.

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## **Eunice Moral says**

### **Great premise, mediocre execution.**

I've read her previous poetry book *Your Soul is a River* and quite enjoyed the same. I remember tabbing few poems that resonated with me more than the others. It has a theme of self-love, self-healing, love, loss and heartbreak, which I appreciated. Now comes her newest poetry book *Fierce Fairytales: Poems & Stories to Stir Your Soul* which delves on a different take on our most loved fairy tales. Incorporated herein, are the same themes she's been actively advocating -- feminism and self-love. And while I enjoyed some of the poems and stories in this collection, I found them to be repetitive to a fault. There are stories that could have been executed better. Some of the poems were too literal leaving less imagination to its readers. This collection of poetry is great for beginners, for those who just ventured out into the genre, but to those people who have been exposed to poetry, this book can be another mediocre one. While I appreciate the message this book was trying to convey, I just felt like it could be so much more. It had a great potential and premise but just wasn't maximize to its full potential. Would you believe that it took me almost three months to finish this? Because to be completely honest, it didn't hold much of my attention. I felt like I have read so many similar poems contained here, that it has become too overrated already. It doesn't serve anything new, but only made a different spin on stories we knew by heart. While there is nothing wrong with that, but it could be a tricky one. An author should be able to incorporate newness in a familiar thing for it to work, but that isn't the case here.

I was expecting something different, something more profound, something that would pack a punch - but didn't get any of that here. I was trying to love it because of the feminist theme, but I just couldn't bring myself to do just that. This book was trying to put some twist on our most-loved fairy tales and at first that excited me, but half way through the book all the magic was lost on me. It was meh. I just finished the book just so I could move on to better books. I guess this book just wasn't for me.

Still thank you Hachette books for sending me a copy!

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## **Sayo says**

After reading the first few pages, I thought for sure that this book was not for me. By the time I got to the end of "The Fable in Thermodynamics" I was officially a Nikita Gill fan.

This book is full of incredibly brilliant, and beautiful verses. Verses that will stay with you, verses that you will want to share with your friends, or just read to yourself over and over again.

Nikita Gill takes the fairy tales we were all told as kids, and turns them completely around. She turns the helpless heroine into an empowered, free woman, and turns the villains we all loved to hate, into a flawed human being who is simply misunderstood. Maybe Little Red Riding Hood doesn't need a woodsman to save her. (The Red Wolf gave me goosebumps) Maybe Captain hook is a scared little boy whose only friend left him.

She also writes moving original stories about why the sun sets, or why the leaves change color in Autumn.

This book was beautiful. I could not get enough.

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### **Heather says**

I really enjoyed what she did here. Well known (and some not so well known to me) fairy tales, turned ass over teakettle, with a feminist twist. I can totally dig it.

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### **Krissy says**

Beautiful. Unique. Inspiring. Nikita Gill is probably my favorite poetry artist. This was an amazing book full of self love, understanding, healing, and loving one another. Absolutely perfect.

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### **Clemlucian (the brooding witch) says**

*"These days, falling in love is letting your soft, innocent heart get into a car with a dangerous stranger and just praying nothing dreadful happens to it."*

??????? stars

Beautiful book filled with beautiful tales. It just gets a bit redondant after a while.

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### **Kristy K says**

2.5 Stars

I wish I could say I loved this more. I follow Gill on Instagram and while I've enjoyed her posts there, these longer stories didn't have the same oomph that her shorter ones do. Many just fell short for me.

"Seven," "Trolls," and "In The Old Days II" all resonated with me though.

\*A big thank you to Hachette Books and Nikita Gill for a free copy of this book.\*

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