



## Shadow Swans

*Laura Thomas*

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Credenza R, a shockingly beautiful and well-read young woman, has lived inside the New York City subway system all her life; she has never been aboveground. Ruby Cooper, a filthy rich misanthrope, lives in an abandoned building adorned with hundreds of hummingbirds she has sculpted out of colored wire. Their lives collide, enabling them to find magic in the underground. When they discover a series of government-constructed tunnels connecting all the major cities on the Eastern seaboard, Credenza and Ruby embark upon the greatest, and most dangerous, adventure of their lives.

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## Shadow Swans Details

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Author : Laura Thomas

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## From Reader Review Shadow Swans for online ebook

### Nancy says

A dark book about a habitually unhappy woman who grew up in privilege and yet is discontent with life and her friendship with a woman who has lived in the abandoned subways of New York. I wish I remember who recommended this... hmmm

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### Patricia says

First of all this is not "A must read for fans of The Hunger Games" like the back of the book states. I won this book on Goodreads. "When they discover a series of government-constructed tunnel connecting all the major cities on the Eastern seaboard, Credenza and Ruby embark upon the greatest, and most dangerous, adventure of their lives." Sounds pretty good. In reality, they drug a security guard, break into the tunnels and then end up in closets full of meals ready to eat-MREs, cots and toilets where they do much of.....nothing. When they aren't doing that they are in caves licking the walls to see if they can find a special substance to make hallucinogenic tea. I thought Den had sworn off drugs? I guess tea is somehow different. While the back cover states this, much of the story doesn't even deal with the tunnels. It deals with Den and Ruby and The Trap. Why the idea of tunnels and caves under New York City, are mentioned as playing a great role in the story is beyond me. Perhaps it is what the tunnels and caves represent when it comes to writing? If so, they felt forced and were an addition that was unnecessary and detracted from the heart of the story. The story teller, Ruby is a brilliant but unlikable angry "little girl" who is twenty something. She comes across as condescending, arrogant and hypocritical. The back cover does get that right when it describes her as "a filthy rich misanthrope." Just why she hates people so much---especially the ones who live life on the nice, sweet side,---especially her Mother-- is beyond me. She prefers the company of homeless druggies and perverts in The Trap. Den isn't any more likeable, even though she suffers from a disease that doesn't allow her to be in the sun. She too, is hypocritical. Smart, but dumb. Ruby asked her to go up into the world and live with her, but she always refused--only to find out later in a letter that she did want to go live with Ruby and leave the world of mere survival behind. In the end Den dies because they are discovered in the tunnels just as they are about to exit in Washington D.C. and she is taken into the sun where she goes into shock. There is some good writing in this story, but overall, I found many cases where it was illogical. Infatuation does not equal True Love. There are also many metaphors used that do not make sense and a case of overkill cliches when it came to painting a picture of how bad it must smell and how big the rats must be. Several close calls ---the last one with Den when she fainted felt forced. Parts of the story were well-developed, but others that would have benefited from more development were not. The tossing in of very intellectual words when simple words would have sufficed did nothing for the story and made Ruby and Den all the more arrogant and not likeable. The last chapter really killed it. It felt forced and flaky. Destroying America so that Ruby could return to the tunnels and so that she could remember her hummingbirds felt really trite and contrived.

My favorite part of the story was reading the hummingbird facts. Unfortunately, I look for that kind of information in an encyclopedia and not a novel. Overall, this story did not live up to its potential.

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### Scott Cole says

I really liked this book from the first page and it just got better with each progressive chapter. I found myself really caring about the small cast of characters (keeping the cast small was a great decision IMHO) and the end! Wow. I found myself hoping that the author would be bold enough to end it the way she did, but doubted she would do it, so when she ended exactly how I wanted I was thrilled!

The book is thematically similar to *Neverwhere* by a certain Mr. Gaiman, but definitely establishes its own voice. Highly recommended

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### **Aleta says**

This is a very beguiling tale of friendship between two young women. Ruby is a depressed techie geek who chooses to live in an abandoned building despite her six-figure salary. Credenza "Den" is one of the "mole people" - denizens of the New York subway tunnels, and has never seen the sun. This is a book that deserves to be read.

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### **Deborah says**

Laura Thomas's book "Shadow Swans" is about two young women, Ruby lives in an abandoned house; although she has the money to live in any life style she could choose, and is obsessed with making Hummingbirds out of wire. She is discontent about her life until she meets Den. Den was born and raised in the underground tunnels of New York. She has never been to the surface as she is physically allergic to the sun. Together they explore the hidden government tunnels.

Thomas brings to life sights and smells of the world of the underground and Ruby's world as well. I do feel the ending was a bit rushed but plausible.

All in all "Shadow Swans" is a remarkable book.

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### **Destiny says**

Very interesting characters & a fascinating story made for a book I had trouble putting down.

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### **Susan Kasza says**

The only word I can use to describe this book is "weird".

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### **Theresa says**

Well Done! Very believable! A world beneath the streets of New York! A labyrinth of tunnels under the eastern United States. All unknown to the populace above. Incredible! Hard to put the book down...I was up all night!

I loved *Neverwhere* by Neil Gaiman where the character is in the tunnels below London. This reminds me of it.

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Now...how do I learn to make those hummingbirds???? :)

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### **Jd Guinn says**

I failed to mention that I received this free as a GoodReads First Read. My apologies to the author, my fellow readers, and the site! this was a truly excellent read - loved every minute of it! This book still haunts me but in a good way. I often dream about it and am reminded that small talents can make a difference!

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### **Lee says**

I loved this debut book by Laura Thomas. She has taken us on a journey with captivating characters to a world most people wouldn't dare to explore. This was a real page turner.

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### **Adriana says**

What a flair for words Ms. Thomas has. Ruby, the narrator, was so beautifully crafted as the rebellious outcast misfit, that despite the fact that she is nothing like me, I was able to completely empathize with her. The author was able to take a squalid and dingy setting, and without sugar-coating it (the descriptions of the filth and stench were quite vivid), managed to romanticize it.

Ruby goes about pretending to live a normal life, and one day when she decides to blow off work, she is accosted by Den, a resident of a hidden underground community. The two strike up a friendship, and while Den is unwilling to let Ruby show her the world above, it is just as well because Ruby is full of curiosity about Den's hidden world. When the two stumble upon secret government tunnels, they embark on what will be a life altering adventure for both of them.

The entire story was captivating, and the ending was particularly surprising. I thought I had a pretty good idea where she was going with her story, and although I was not entirely wrong, I was still caught by surprise.

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