

[Pdf free] Swan Lake

# Swan Lake

*Mark Helprin*

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#1135076 in Books Houghton Mifflin 1989-10-26Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 .0 x .0 x .0l, #File Name: 039549858984 pagesGreat product! | File size: 37.Mb

**Mark Helprin : Swan Lake** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Swan Lake:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is an interesting take on Swan Lake. I ...By Susan V.This is an interesting take on Swan Lake. I believe it works on many age levels. The illustrations are unique in my opinion and are, along with the story, food for thought.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Matthew S.Awesum0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy dcExcellent book

The two-time Caldecott medalist illustrates Mark Helprin's enchanting story of the characters in Tchaikovsky's famous ballet.

From Publishers WeeklyIn Swan Lake Helprin spins a story as elegant and beautiful as the swan that graces the book's cover; white as pages in a book, the bird glides halfway between earth and sky where illusion and reality intermingle. In language that is wise without being didactic and musical without being affected, Helprin tells of tragedy transcended by love and memory. Unlike the recent Fonteyn/Hyman version (HBJ) that faithfully recounted the famous ballet, Helprin's Swan Lake , while retaining some of the details of the familiar story, enlarges both its plot and vision. Helprin's characters are not governed by magical enchantments but by human nature and the qualities inherent in them as individuals. The Prince, having sworn to be faithful to Odette and the world of beauty and nature she represents, is beguiled by the glitter of civilization and by "webs of obligation" to betray her. Odette is not portrayed

literally as a swan, but as she and the Prince leap to their deaths they fall "in smooth dampened curves that promised flight." Helprin's complex tale within a tale, like C. S. Lewis's Narnia books, will be a welcome challenge for young readers. The story is focused in part upon the Prince and his Odette but also upon the characters who love and remember them: the Prince's curmudgeonly tutor and a girl who discovers that she is their daughter. The tutor's leisurely narrative is sprinkled with humor and philosophy and often interrupted by the girl, who learns what it means to be "conquered by the world of the heart and all the possibilities therein." In his Van Allsburg's richly colored paintings, Van Allsburg has chosen to sometimes depict sometimes inconsequential moments from the story. The villain, Von Rothbart, e.g., is not pictured at all, while an entire page is devoted to the insignificant "academy of truffle-hunting pigs." The 16 paintings, extraordinary in themselves, mark a departure for Van Allsburg, whose picture book illustrations in the past have been integral to the plot. Here, because the text is of greater length, he follows the tradition of earlier children's book masters; the light-filled paintings are set within like jewels that ornament and reflect the text without systematically explicating it. In *Winter's Tale* Helprin describes books that are "hard to read" but "could devastate and remake one's soul"; his *Swan Lake* contains truths "that take us beyond what we can reason and what we can prove." All ages. (Oct.). Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal Grade 6 Up-- Visually this book is stunning, with handsomely designed borders, elegant paper, and an evocative small black and white illustration of two swans on the title page. Some of the 13 full-color illustrations placed throughout the book are more affecting than others. The emperor lying with his head propped on his dog and his pen between his toes, the rider standing on a galloping horse, and the two great swans with wings raised as if to dance are memorable images. The archer in the window poised to kill seems more shadowy than sinister, and the two lovers falling to their death are awkward rather than graceful. The retelling and adaptation of the well-known story is more problematic. The fragile story of a prince who leaves his childhood behind when he finds his princess, an enchanted swan held captive by an evil magician, has been adapted into a tale of the power struggle between an evil politician and naive rulers, with the lovers caught in the middle. The magician Von Rothbart is now the emperor's second in command and the real power in the land. The only enchantment is the pure love between Odette and the Prince that survives in the form of an infant daughter. The Prince's tutor, who acts the drunken fool in order to keep his post at court, tells the story to their child. The writing is skillful, with verbal images so strong that the illustrations almost seem unnecessary, but the plot is overloaded with philosophical musing about the quality of life and ironic descriptions of life at a decadent court. It is much too dense and sophisticated for children, and at the same time thin fare on which to pin so much for adults. A special purchase for large public libraries because of interest in the two creators and as a lovely example of book making. --Amy Kellman, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Helprin does not simply retell the story from the ballet, he relates, instead, his imaginings of a larger story behind it, a romantic saga spanning several generations . . . Created from soft strokes of fine-textured line shaded into contoured shapes of color, the hauntingly beautiful illustrations continue the best tradition of narrative art." (Booklist, ALA, Starred )