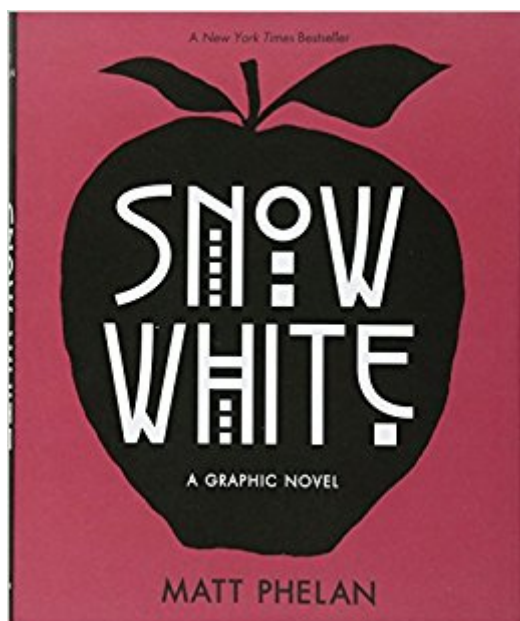


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Snow White: A Graphic Novel



Synopsis

Award-winning graphic novelist Matt Phelan delivers a darkly stylized noir Snow White set against the backdrop of Depression-era Manhattan. The scene: New York City. The dazzling lights cast shadows that grow ever darker as the glitzy prosperity of the Roaring Twenties screeches to a halt. Enter a cast of familiar characters: a young girl, Samantha White, returning after being sent away by her cruel stepmother, the Queen of the Follies, years earlier; her father, the King of Wall Street, who survives the stock market crash only to suffer a strange and sudden death; seven street urchins, brave protectors for a girl as pure as snow; and a mysterious stock ticker that holds the stepmother in its thrall, churning out ticker tape imprinted with the wicked words "Another . . . More Beautiful . . . KILL." In a moody, cinematic new telling of a beloved fairy tale, extraordinary graphic novelist Matt Phelan captures the essence of classic film noir on the page and draws a striking distinction between good and evil.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 4-8 • Spanning the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression, Phelan's noir-esque adaption of the classic fairy tale is atmospheric, clever, and touching. Samantha White, affectionately called Snow White by her ailing mother, is sent off to a boarding school as her father,

the King of Wall Street, grieves his wife's death by marrying the dazzling Queen of the Follies. Banished from her home by her stepmother, the young woman returns a decade later after her father's mysterious death. Not content with the fortune left to her in her husband's will, the menacing bob-haired villain dispatches Mr. Hunter to kill off Snow, who gets lost in Hooverville, where she encounters the Seven, a group of diverse street kids who take her in. The graphic novel plays with the source material, using the trappings of the time period to add depth and nuance to the narrative. With the dramatics, pacing, and mostly black-and-white palette of a silent film, the lush and stark watercolors showcase the good and evil aspects of the era to tell a timeless tale of love, betrayal, and family. Splashes of red are economically and strategically used to add drama to the presentation, from the drops of blood on Snow's mother's handkerchief to the scarlet of the poisonous apple. Themes of class are also explored here, making this a title worth sharing and studying at multiple levels. Especially resonant are the relationships that the heroine builds with her young protectors. The last few colorful pages will tug at heartstrings as Snow, the Seven, and an intrepid Detective Prince get their happy endings. VERDICT A stunning, genre-bending graphic novel for all middle grade and middle school collections. — Shelley Diaz, School Library Journal

Matt Phelan sets his graphic retelling of "Snow White" in 1920s New York, with both its Ziegfeld Follies glamour and its impoverished Dead End Kids. — The New York Times Book Review The visuals are deeply effective: entire sections are wordless, propelling the reader through dramatic scenes and inviting reflection during quiet, contemplative spots...Pencil, ink, and watercolor illustrations break out of loose panel structuring; sharp lines and shadow heighten tension and expanses of open white space sometimes draw the eye to a specific scene. This graphic novel will find a welcome home with fairy-tale fans who have outgrown the Disney version (or, less likely, the Grimm version) but still find the tale compelling. — Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books (starred review) Phelan (Bluffton) delivers a spectacular 20th-century update of "Snow White," transplanting the story to Jazz Age and Depression-era New York City, where themes of jealousy, beauty, and power find a comfortable home...Moody gray and sepia panels carry the story forward, punctuated by splashes of lurid red — for an animal heart, procured at a butcher's shop, or an apple tainted with a syringe. Snow's affectionate relationship with "the Seven," a group of street children, is among this adaptation's most potent elements. The boys are hesitant to tell Snow their names, but readers will want tissues on hand when they finally do. — Publishers Weekly (starred review) Spanning the Roaring

Twenties and the Great Depression, Phelan's noir-esque adaption of the classic fairy tale is atmospheric, clever, and touching...Especially resonant are the relationships that the heroine builds with her young protectors. The last few colorful pages will tug at heartstrings as Snow, the Seven, and an intrepid Detective Prince get their happy endings. A stunning, genre-bending graphic novel for all middle grade and middle school collections. — School Library Journal (starred review) Phelan masterfully shifts a tale heavily reliant on magic and fantasy into a realistic and historical setting without compromising plausibility. Creating sweeping and dreamy watercolors that play with emotion and color, Phelan is an exquisite visual storyteller, and he lets expressive, wordless sequences carry a large portion of his interpretation. With a keen historical slant, a bit of action and intrigue, high visual interest, and the fairy-tale leaning, this will awe a wide readership. Brilliant. — Kirkus Reviews (starred review) Pencil, ink, and watercolor images (in mostly sepia tones, with occasional spots of color: red for the poisoned apple, for example) move readers' eyes across each page, providing an appropriately cinematic noir sensibility. This cinematic effect is further enhanced by the feel of constant movement, the varied panel sizes, and a judicious use of text. Some scenes are wordless; for others, Phelan uses varied fonts to enhance the drama. By the final wordless all-color sequence (spoiler: there is a happy ending), it is clear that this is an original and darkly beautiful take on the classic tale. — Horn Book In a series of silent-movie-like vignettes, Phelan puts a Jazz Age spin on the classic tale of Snow White...Readers hungry for graphic adaptations of fairy tales will find their appetites slaked here. — Booklist I don't think I've ever actually enjoyed the story of Snow White until now. Hand this book to graphic novel fans, fairytale fans, and any kid who's keen on good triumphing over evil. — A Fuse #8 Production (blog) Fans of Snow White will enjoy this new take on the beloved tale — a graphic novel set in Depression-era New York...All of the illustrations are full of emotion, propelling the story forward quickly with minimal dialogue. — School Library Connection How Phelan manages to tell this nail-biter of a story with so few words in comic-strip panels is a testimony to his great talent, and his murky pencil, ink and watercolor artwork elegantly captures the ominous mood. Dark, gorgeous and ultimately heartening. — Shelf Awareness for Readers Phelan's wonderfully expressive and realistic faces do most of the storytelling, and readers will linger on the dynamic structure of each page, as the artist's characteristic soft edges contrast with interesting page layouts...Fans of Brian Selznik's books will enjoy this one. — VOYA With atmospheric, largely monochrome watercolors, Mr. Phelan reworks the old story with chilly elegance but also tenderness of heart. — The Wall Street Journal Film noir and fairy tales each offer their own unique escapes into worlds that dramatize our fears and

fantasies. In *Snow White: A Graphic Novel*, Phelan draws from the best parts of each form to create both a hardcover hideout and an artful homage to be read and revisited panel by panel, frame by frame. [Boing Boing](#) Featured/recommended in Holiday Gift Guide [Publishers Weekly](#)

I was very excited for this novel. The setting was unique. But the art style let me down a bit. I was expecting something more inked than watercolored or ink washed. It was a little unsatisfying because the art style didn't match up very well with the cover, but I'm keeping it because I enjoy the uniqueness of the setting.

Re-write of *Snow White* in 1920s New York City setting. Interesting in that many parts of it are wordless. There is dialog, but it's surprising how little. Award-winning graphic novel being on the Notable Books of the English Language Arts 2017 and the Notable Social Studies Trade Books 2017.

This was a very different take on *Snow White*, and I thoroughly enjoyed it! The art style was amazing, and I read the whole book in a single sitting!

I really love this book. As a teacher it is great for the kids to see stories like this.

I fell in love with this book, and may the gods of Caldecott honor it in January 2017!

I am always on the lookout for a great graphic novel to add to my classroom library. *SNOW WHITE*, by Matt Phelan, will be a great addition. I love the fact that this fairy tale of a story is set in the depression era. It reminds me of the greed that drives our society and motivates people to do the unthinkable. Yet, good will always prevail. We can find the kind, true-hearted people everywhere, if we look hard enough. I cannot wait to share this story with my daughters and my class of fifth-graders.

Do you keep track of the different publishers and imprints of the books you read? I

didn't for the longest time, even when I started blogging. I thought that the good books would rise to the top, and I'd find them no matter what. Well, my feelings have changed a bit. I have imprints or publishers that I

know will put out good books, or that I can trust for a certain kind of experience (arty, dreamy, plot-driven, and so on). When I figure this out, I end up paying a bit more attention to their catalogs, their tweets, and I'm more likely to put their books on hold at my library. I know from experience that Candlewick publishes thoughtful, beautiful books, so that's how Matt Phelan's graphic novel *Snow White* ended up on my to-read list. Well, that and I'll read almost any fairy tale retelling under the sun.

As you might expect from a book called *Snow White*, this graphic novel is a fairly faithful retelling of the popular fairy tale. The back story will be familiar:

widowed father raises his daughter alone, then remarries to a beautiful woman who becomes increasingly jealous of the daughter. A

"huntsman" is dispatched to kill the girl, but has a change of heart (punnnnnnnnnnn). The daughter (Snow/Samantha), alone now, falls in with a group of seven little men (orphan boys), etc., etc. It's all recognizable, and the ending is assured. So, why read this book? The art, of course! Matt Phelan's past work is award-winning, and he is no less talented in this volume. The mix of watercolor and pencil/ink line work is subtle, dark, and atmospheric. It fits this 1930s, noir-ish iteration of the fairy tale very well. While there aren't any true plot surprises, the enjoyment is in the subtle changes, differences, and the play of dark and light through the lens of Depression-era New York City. I also LOVED the Art Deco typeset used on the front cover — actually the simplicity and design of the front cover may be my favorite thing about the book. From the story, I liked that

there's a hint of uncertainty about whether it's actually magic that the stepmother uses, or solely allure. I also thought the use of the ticker tape instead of the mirror on the wall was a clever substitution. The evil queen reimagined as the star of the Ziegfeld Follies fit the time period, but the Follies and their context might not be familiar to readers in the intended age group. In some cases, that's fine, because it will prompt research, but in this case it's doubtful (tweaks to a familiar plot may trump interest in context). Things I didn't like: this story is very light on dialogue. Since this story will be familiar to many readers already, not a fatal flaw, but in parts it simply feels quiet, rather than menacing (which I'm going to hazard a guess is the intent of some of the panels, but certainly not all). The second (and more substantial) criticism I had was from the point in the story where Snow White referred to opulent Christmas-time department store window displays as a demonstration of the magic of the city. The beautiful magic of the displays in itself was not a problem

As a matter of fact, that window dressing is famous (and now traditional) and rightfully so. My issue was Snow White's audience: homeless boys who must huddle around a trash can fire for warmth, and to whom she was not offering (or able to offer) and real change in their circumstance. This juxtaposition lacked nuance and verged on needlessly cruel. Snow entreated them to find magic and beauty in something they could not have and would not have (at that point of the story), while they were struggling for survival. Some readers may not notice this scene, or dismiss it given later developments in the story, but to me it struck a tone of privilege. In the end, Snow White is a beautifully illustrated, if not innovative, take on the popular fairy tale. Recommended for: die-hard fans of fairy tales, and those with an eye to beautiful graphic novel design and illustration.

This graphic novel is set in New York City in 1928. A young girl named Samantha White, also known as Snow, has tragically lost both of her parents and is now under the care of her rotten step-mother. When the step-mother hires someone to kill the girl, Snow runs. Before she can find safety, she is cornered by two men. Right in the nick of time, a group of young boys appear and fight off the two men. These boys tell Snow that they are "The Seven." But can these boys help protect her? I was blown away by this graphic novel! It is so different from any other that I have read! It is a graphic novel that is driven by the artwork rather than text. In fact, there is very little dialogue included at all. The story begins outside of a Macy's window. There is a man in a hat and coat asking a young boy who "she" is. The tearful boy only says, "White as snow..." From there, we jump back to 1918, and then the story continues until we reach that same scene outside of Macy's. I LOVE when stories do that! The tone of the artwork was incredible. The dust jacket states that it has a "moody, dramatic feel reminiscent of film noir" and that is the perfect way to describe it! The texture used in each of the panels is so distinct; it looks like you could actually feel the textures on the page if you ran your fingers over the paper. The rare use of color was very interesting. For the majority of the graphic novel, the artist only used shades of red and green. But he used them very sparingly. So in a panel where color was added, it really stood out! This held true right up until the last few pages. There was one part of the story that actually made me tear up!

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