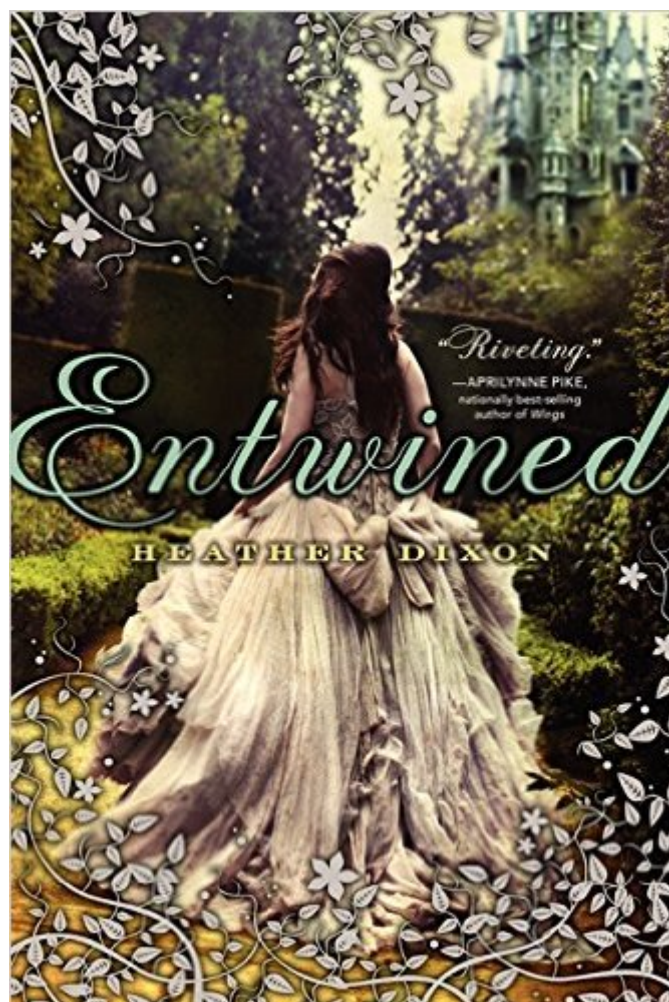


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# Entwined



## Synopsis

Come and mend your broken hearts here. In this retelling of the classic tale "The Twelve Dancing Princesses," the eldest princess must fight to save her family—and her heart—from an ancient dark magic within the palace walls. "Full of mystery, lush settings, and fully orbed characters, Dixon's debut is both suspenseful and rewarding." —ALA Booklist Just when Azalea should feel that everything is before her—beautiful gowns, dashing suitors, balls filled with dancing—it's taken away. All of it. And Azalea is trapped. The Keeper understands. He's trapped, too, held for centuries within the walls of the palace. So he extends an invitation. Every night, Azalea and her eleven sisters may step through the enchanted passage in their room to dance in his silver forest, but there is a cost. The Keeper likes to keep things. Azalea may not realize how tangled she is in his web until it is too late. "Readers who enjoy stories of royalty, romance, and magic will delight in Dixon's first novel." —Publishers Weekly Supports the Common Core State Standards

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Entwined is a delightful retelling of the Grimm's fairy tale The Twelve Dancing Princesses. While my taste in fairy tales typically runs more to the evil witch or flesh eating ogre variety, I was quick to recognize all the basic story elements from the original. The book takes place during the year of mourning following the death of the Queen, mother to twelve daughters all named after flowers. The eldest daughter (Azalea), is the primary focus of the tale which details her efforts to take care of her sisters after their mother's death. Azalea is a wonderful character. First seen at what is essentially

her "coming out" ball, we follow her growth from a girl most concerned with balls and dancing to a girl with a strong sense of family and loyalty. All of her sisters are also well portrayed, each having characteristics that will endear them to readers and easily enable them to differentiate between each girl. Clover and Bramble, the two who are next in line following Azalea are each as well developed and eventually have their own roles to play in the story. There are so many things going on with this story that readers will be entranced from the beginning. The dancing, balls, gentlemen suitors, and gowns will appeal to any young girl who ever fancied herself a princess. There are also elements of magic and adventure, and a villain who provides some genuinely creepy moments. The author does an excellent job creating a believable environment, and while there's not a lot of world building going on, it doesn't detract from a story that is expertly plotted and paced. This is a great fantasy that transitions well from light moments to chilly moments of genuine peril that will keep the pages turning. There are romantic elements that are not overdone and left me with a big smile on my face, and sinister moments that made me stay up late so I could finish. The entire book has a cinematic quality to it that guarantees a great flow and makes this one a perfect recommend for young fantasy lovers. This is a fantastic choice for grades six and up, or any adult who wishes to remember what reading a great fairy tale feels like. Don't pass this one up. Recommended.

The Twelve Dancing Princesses has always been my favorite fairy tale. While the gorgeous cover is what initially made me see what Heather Dixon's debut novel, *Entwined*, was all about, the fact that it retold this tale made it a Day One Buy for me. Lush and descriptive, *Entwined* brings the tale to life like never before. I loved the way Dixon extracted the best parts of the story and tweaked other aspects, making the story fresh and vibrant. It manages to remain true to the original tale while still becoming its own entity, which can be hard to pull off when creating a new version. Despite the fact that there are twelve princesses involved in this tale, Dixon uses a creative way of allowing readers to remember who's who by naming them alphabetically. Our main character, Azalea, is the crown princess, followed by her sisters, Bramble, Clover, Delphinium, Evening Primrose (Eve), Flora, Goldenrod, Hollyhock, Ivy, Jessamine, Kale, and Lily. Not only are they all named after plants and flowers, the very fact that they're named such reveals the way their father the king leads a very structured lifestyle. This trick is also good for readers. The girls are all about a year apart; Azalea is fifteen at the novel's start and baby Lily is a newborn. If readers are confused about why Ivy is acting like a child, for example, it's easy to figure out that she's one of the youngest princesses. The book starts off with Azalea getting ready for her first yuletide ball now that she's finally of age. We immediately see how important dancing is to her. I love the way Dixon fleshes out this interest and

turns it into an entity of its own. Even the novel's title, *Entwined*, is based on a dance called the Entwine, which is a clever twist (that taught me something new, no less!). In the original fairy tale, we never know why the princesses go dancing each night or how they found the enchanted forest in the first place. In *Entwined*, however, we're with the girls every step of the way. We see how they're no longer allowed to dance after their mother passes away during childbirth. They feel stifled during their year of mourning. They find the enchanted forest within the walls of the castle quite by mistake, but through it, can cherish their mother's memory through dance, a need no one but the princesses can comprehend. Love interests are introduced early on, allowing time for love to blossom. The man in charge of the enchanted dance, Keeper, is mysterious and written in such a way, my arms got goosebumps as I read. The forest itself is gorgeous and I could see it in my mind's eye. Because Dixon focused on making the fairy tale's nemesis so dark, she maintained a light balance in the "real world." Unlike in the original, men aren't put to death if they're unable to discover how the girls manage to dance the night away. I appreciated this aspect and loved meeting all of the potential suitors. Lord Teddy and Mr. Bradford were my favorite characters. Lord Teddy stole the show every time he appeared on a page, creating many laugh-out-loud moments. Overall, I love the way Dixon kept to the traditional tale while still giving us something new and unique. *Entwined* is almost five hundred pages, and when I first picked it up, I wondered how it could take so long to tell the story. The pacing remained even and never dragged. Once the story sucked me in, it was impossible to put down. *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* is still a favorite of mine, especially this version of the classic tale.

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