

READING GUIDE:

Susannah M. Smith's *The Fairy Tale Museum*

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Hello readers!

Thank you for choosing *The Fairy Tale Museum*. I hope my reflections below will give you some interesting jumping-off points for discussion.

Among other things, *The Fairy Tale Museum* is a novel about stories—the stories we learn, the stories we tell, the stories we live. Foundational stories. Transformational stories. Magical stories.

As I mention in my Invisiblog post, I started writing *The Fairy Tale Museum* to capture some of the characters that fell out of my first novel. You can read more about that here: <https://invisiblepublishing.com/2018/04/04/the-imaginative-world/>. This collection of characters began to shape itself into a narrative united by various themes: childhood, belonging, imagination, wonder, art-making and the creative process in general.

This is a book you can read in different ways. What if you opened it randomly for a message, like a deck of tarot cards? What dreams would you have if you slept with it under your pillow? How is it a novel? How is it other than a novel? How useful are these genre categories?

What purpose do you think the images serve? What effect does the mix of poetry and prose have on the narrative? What do the museum exhibits tell you about the character of the narrator? What does the book suggest about the history and purpose of museums, libraries, art galleries and other places of cultural collection?

At its heart, I think the book is about transformation. The way that relationships can act as catalysts for change. The alchemical dance between darkness and light that propels us from one state of being to another. The idea that we're always on the threshold of a new beginning. Of endless renewal and becoming.

Ultimately, I wrote *The Fairy Tale Museum* because I wanted it to exist; I wanted to hold it and know it. I hope you feel the same way and that it can be a friend and a source of inspiration that will stay with you long past your first reading.

Warm wishes,
Susannah M. Smith

