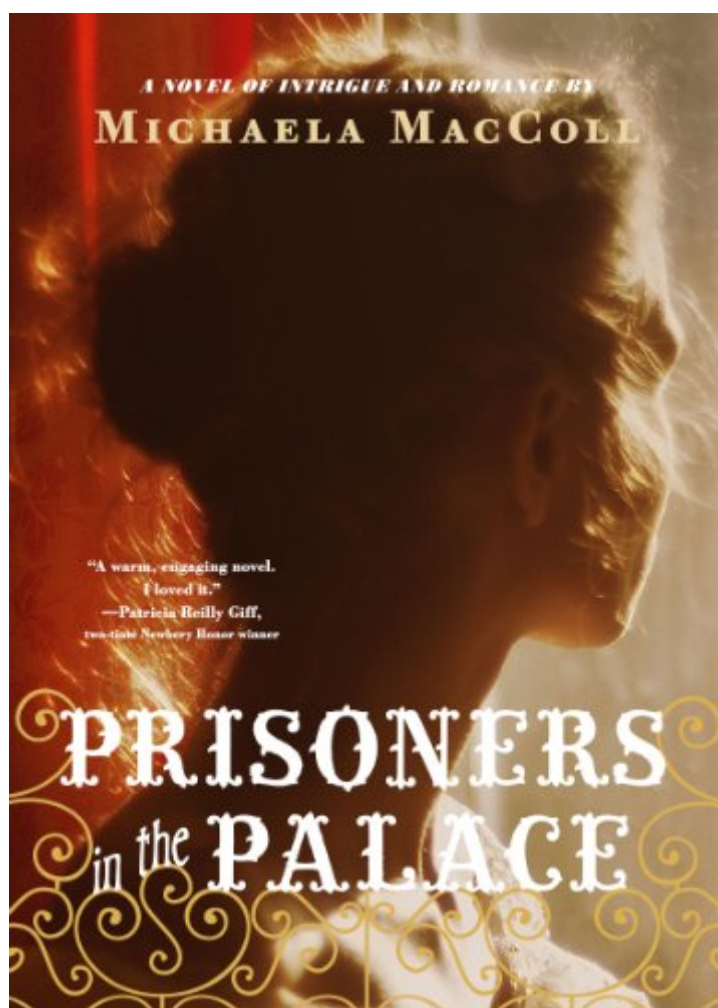


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Prisoners In The Palace: How Princess Victoria Became Queen With The Help Of Her Maid, A Reporter, And A Scoundrel



Synopsis

London, 1838. Sixteen-year-old Liza's dreams of her society debut are dashed when her parents are killed in an accident. Penniless, she accepts the position of lady's maid to young Princess Victoria and steps unwittingly into the gossipy intrigue of the servant's world below-stairs as well as the trickery above. Is it possible that her changing circumstances may offer Liza the chance to determine her own fate, find true love, and secure the throne for her future queen? Meticulously based on newly discovered information, this riveting novel is as rich in historical detail as *Catherine, Called Birdy*, and as sizzling with intrigue as *The Luxe*. Includes bonus material! - Book Club Discussion Guide- Sneak peek chapter from *Always Emily* by Michaela MacColl

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Customer Reviews

I loved this book so much, it's probably my favorite this year. I have recommended it many times.

Prisoners in the Palace is exactly what it says on the tin: a (fictitious) story about how Victoria became queen with some unexpected help. However, rather than the Princess Victoria being the

main character, the plot follows Elizabeth Hastings (or "Liza"), a recently orphaned young lady who eventually becomes Victoria's maid, and Liza's personal struggles as she becomes entangled with the lives of those at Kensington Palace. The writing is very compelling, and all the characters, from those based on historical people such as Victoria, the Duchess, and Sir John, to those who were fictional but based on people who could have existed at the time, such as Liza and Will Fulton, are very believable. They all have their flaws, but that only makes them feel more human. The pacing is very well-set, never feeling rushed, but never feeling bogged down, either. There was obviously a lot of thought and passion put into this novel, and though the author takes some liberties with the timeline (which she makes a note of in her author's notes), she clearly did her research very well, and I learned quite a bit about Victoria's young life while also getting an entertaining story. Interspersed throughout are passages from the Queen Victoria's actual diary, (fictitious) letters between various characters, and entries in Liza's own diaries. Rather than being forced, however, I found they were woven in very fluently with the rest of the story, giving the reader important information while still being interesting reads. I'd give the story 4.5 stars. I'd say five stars, but there were a few minor points that keep me from giving it a perfect score. Most notably, the beginning was a little rough. We're launched so quickly into the story that almost no build-up is given for character or setting. The author does get to that in the next couple of chapters, but because of the jarring introduction, I considered passing on this story - though, in the end, I'm glad I didn't. Another point that struck me as odd was the introduction of Liza's "selfish" thoughts. There's nothing wrong with looking out for oneself - especially for someone in Liza's position, an orphan left with her parents' debt in a strange land, one step away from being tossed onto the streets. However, the way it is written is very jarring: when she hears the Duchess and Sir John plotting against her, she feels protective of Victoria; when she sees how Sir John acts and presents himself, she instinctively feels she can't trust him; when he tries to buy her loyalty, she is appalled; and then, as soon as she's by herself, she wonders if she should be loyal to Victoria or Sir John. Why would she consider working for Sir John when she was just thinking she can't trust him? If there is a reason, it needs to be explained; as it is, it just comes out of left field. However, when she brings up the problem of who she should be loyal to in her journal entry the next chapter, it flows much better, and Liza makes her thought process very clear. The author should have left the entire discussion of Liza's quandary for the journal entry, or else tackled the entire matter when it first came up. Liza does have to think of her own situation, and I've no objection to that - I just feel it wasn't written as well as it could have been. Still, those are minor complaints, as they only come up in the beginning, and the rest of the novel flows much more naturally. I would highly recommend this story to anyone who likes historical

fiction, romance, and adventure, because this book has all three in spades. Review of the Kindle version: There were no typos that I noticed, and the page numbers total at 353. I like that it's easy to tell the difference between the narrative chapters, letters, and journal entries not only by the headings at the beginnings of each (such as "Excerpt from the Journal of Her Royal Highness," "From Miss Elizabeth Hastings to...", "A Broadsheet, Published Anonymously," or the chapter number and name of the chapter), but because each is formatted a little differently. You can't get to any specific letter or excerpt from the table of contents, but each letter and excerpt is positioned at the end of a chapter, so if you're looking for one in particular, it won't be too hard to find. There are also nice touches like jpg decorations being used to denote a scene change (as opposed to a blank space or asterisks) or mark the beginning of a chapter. I especially love the extras at the end, which include author's notes that give more details about the historical events and characters used in the book, a list of books suggested for further reading in case you're interested in the life of Queen Victoria, a discussion guide, author's bio, and a sneak peek at another novel by the same author.

This was a well-written, if rather romanticized, version of Victoria's life just before she became queen, which was not always as inevitable as it seems today. The only quibble, which seems unavoidable in a work like this, is that the author has to include events of the time without much context, which makes the work a little less effective unless you go and do some further research on your own. While I enjoyed the book, I found the information a little unsatisfactory (despite the author's note at the end) and felt compelled to read further. This enhanced the enjoyment of the book considerably, as I then had several 'aha!' moments when the references in the story became more clear. So this story stands up quite well as a story on its own (with a very good sense of time and place) but is considerably enhanced if you already know some background. Perhaps that is what a good book is supposed to do - make you want to learn more!

This is an interesting story and look into the early life of Queen Victoria, obviously fictional it still is entertaining and light enough to keep the most bored reader curious about what happens to the characters. It has a comical character to lighten what might be some dry spots and there is an underlying truth per the history books.

When I first started reading this book I realized that it didn't read like a YA novel and that I had ordered it in error. However once I started to really enjoy it. It certainly became engaging as the writing was excellent. Ms. MacColl is commended especially for her ability to hurl the reader forward to each

chapter. It was relatively easy reading but the plot was very clever by intertwining the lives of the different social classes, their fates, and the strict restrictions placed on women during the Victorian era. It would be educational for some not acquainted with the era. As historical fiction the author included in the end a revealing summary of the true basis of some of the book and explained each character. I thoroughly enjoyed this read even as an a mature adult.

I found this book fascinating. It was generally historically accurate. Was interesting to learn about the social structure in England at the time and the palace intrigue that was going on.

The topic of the book is interesting. This is a fictional account of Queen Victoria before she is crowned Queen of England. The book outlines Victoria's life the year before her 18th birthday, the death of her uncle, the King, and the meeting between Victoria and her future husband, Albert. The story displays the beliefs and customs of the time. The story is written mostly in dialogue and short journals, with very little detailed description. Again, the topic is interesting and the writing is not detailed as this is a fictional account of Victoria.

It is incredible that people will do the things they do or did, all for power. The death of the King was delayed just long enough. Amazing story, amazing history. Enjoyed and couldn't stop reading.

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