



## **A Stolen Kiss**

*Kelsey Keating*

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*A stolen kiss. An unstable curse. One big mess in the making.*

Derric Harver never expected to amount to anything more than the palace stableboy, but when Princess Maria's curse keeps her from accepting a prince's proposal, she turns to him for help, and he doesn't dare refuse.

With the help of a lady's maid and a prince, Derric and Maria embark on a dangerous adventure to find the sorceress who cast the curse. Along the way they battle deadly creatures and make new friends--all the while struggling with the undeniable chemistry between them. Reaching their destination won't be easy, but the true danger peril in the truths they've fought for years to keep hidden.

A Stolen Kiss is the first in the Stolen Royals Series--an adventure with magical creatures, dangerous lies, and being true to the power within.

## A Stolen Kiss Details

Date : Published March 1st 2016 by Swanifide Publishing

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Author : Kelsey Keating

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Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Romance, Fairy Tales

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## From Reader Review *A Stolen Kiss* for online ebook

**rachel says**

**3.5 stars** - Review copy provided by Swanifide Publishing for an honest review.

If you adored *The Potion Diaries* then I've found you're next love. You're welcome. No, but seriously this book and *The Potion Diaries* share a similar writing style, and both follow friends-on-a-magical-quest plotlines. The relationships and characterization is also similar, and both books deal with royalty. The one major difference is that *A Stolen Kiss* is set in a more traditional fantasy world than *The Potion Diaries*... and I think this is where it loss some of its appeal to me. *The Potion Diaries* is set in a more modern, magical world than *A Stolen Kiss* so it felt unique and different to books that I've read before. *A Stolen Kiss* was more... can I say 'traditional' again? I think I've said it already, but it followed a plotline that didn't feel nearly as unique. I'm avoiding the word 'cliched' here because I didn't think it was cliched necessarily, just not that different either. I think I'm rambling now... so moving on.

I loved how fairytale-like the story was. It had the most whimsical of writing styles, and was fun, imaginative and easy to breeze through. But it was also a little... simple? Okay, that's a bit harsh. What I mean is that while the storyline was engaging, and even threw me a little at times with all its twists and turns, the action was never really that thrilling or gripping. The 'baddies' always got away a little too easily. The convenience of Derric/Daniel's magic was just that - convenient. The 'good guys' were always going to win. There was no urgency to the action, or doubt. And I think that made the story feel a little half-hearted at times. I never felt the emotional pull of the quest - that we could truly lose one of the characters or have something awful happen. I never felt that panic, and I really wanted to.

The relationships in this book, like a lot of middle grade books, were also the case of insta-bonding. Yes, that's a word I just made up. Bu what it mean is that everyone seemed to become best friends / 'super close' friends within days of meeting each other. I get stressful situations and near-death experiences are great bonding opportunities, but Humphrey and Daniel/Derric's friendship - while never feeling fake - was too easy. Maybe I'm just a grumpy old lady at heart, but spending time with someone before declaring them your bestie, to me, is quite important. And the romance suffered from this too. Maria and Derric/Daniel felt inevitable so I could never really get on board there romance. There wasn't much chemistry or tension between them.

With all the being said, the story truly did amuse me. I liked the characters, I cared about what happened to them. I enjoyed the world, and seeing the new creatures. The epilogue wasn't actually that bad, it wrapped things up well and I feel wholly satisfied. I'm confused at what the sequel is going to be about, but I'll be reading it anyway.

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**T.J. Burns says**

What a fun ride! What I thought was going to be a light, amusing, predictable fairy tale romance turned out to be an exciting, complex, and fun coming-of-age story, with amusing and entertaining characters, packed full of surprises.

The 4 main characters are fun, interesting, diverse -- all experience personal growth, and all are integral to

the story's charm. The supporting characters are also appealing, each in his/her own way.

I liked following Derric's coming-of-age story – watching his rising confidence, his acceptance of his power, and his recognition of his capabilities.

But also Maria and Sarah grow braver, stronger, and become more independent.

Humphrey is for me the most entertaining character. He's brave, he's understanding, he's open-minded, he's funny, and he's loyal.

All four of the main characters are heroes in my book.

(view spoiler)

Overcoming obstacles along every step of Derric, Maria, Sarah, and Humphrey's journey takes teamwork, and I greatly enjoyed watching the team dynamics as they develop throughout the entire story.

I enjoyed *A Stolen Kiss* for oh, so many reasons: The clever, entertaining, and intriguing storyline, the unexpected twists and turns, and the character development of all four of our main characters, to name a few. 5 Stars!

*I received a copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.*

BUDDY READ: Paranormal/Fantasy > *A Stolen Kiss* (Stolen Royals #1) by Kelsey Keating - Starting April 11th 2016

<https://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/...>

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## **Nathaniel Hardman says**

### **General thoughts:**

The word that keeps coming to mind is "nice". This is a very NICE book. You know how in some books, once the characters are introduced, conflicts come into view, and you feel this DREAD, this, "Oh no. That better not happen. He better not do that." And then that DOES happen, and it's devastating, but then, gradually, you find catharsis and resolution? (Think of Anna Karenina as she starts flirting with Vronsky) Anyway, you know that kind of book? Well this is NOT that kind of book.

This is a book where you think, "Oh no, he better not do that!" And then he considers doing that, decides not to, and you think, "Whew. That was close. That's nice."

Now, I'm not giving that as a criticism. Sometimes you want to read something that's pleasant and sunny and doesn't wring you out. And if you are feeling that way, this may be the book for you.

The premise is that a princess has been cursed to turn into a swan every night, and when the handsome prince

comes and kisses her to break the curse, it doesn't work. In desperation, the princess, her handmaid, the prince, and a stableboy all head out to find the witch that cast the spell and get her to remove it.

And it's all very nice. If you're interested in a more detailed critique, keep reading, but I'll sum up the review now by saying that it's fun, and I recommend it to teenage girls (maybe 11-15 year old girls) or people who like to read books for that audience. I think that group will be delighted.

### **Details:**

I think the prose isn't perfect, and every few pages, I'd grumble a little about word choice.

Derric was accustomed to hard labor, but the soreness in his legs from straddling the horse all day zinged into his thoughts.

(I appreciate the effort to not use the usual descriptions for soreness, but "zinged into his thoughts"? I don't know...)

I DO like the author's creativity with the world-building. Mostly, this is standard fairy-book fare, but she adds some fun twists. Specifically, there are some new creatures (the beornach, the melgorns), and I like this idea of fairy tales being the history of the kingdom, and a cursed princess being a hot commodity. That's great.

In the character and relationship development, the book takes some shortcuts. The group heads out together, and then we're told that the prince and stableboy have become best friends. We don't see this happen, really, but we are told through dialogue that it has. Similarly, the characters talk about how noble and perfect the stableboy is, and we haven't really seen evidence of that; the dialogue is the evidence.

Mostly, I don't mind these shortcuts, at least not for this kind of story. It's kind of like watching a play, and you just accept that that cardboard wall is an impregnable stone fortress. You just go with it. That's the character development here - I'm not really convinced, but I'll go with it.

I notice that this is marked as part one in an anticipated series. If the author is planning a series, that's fine, but I'm glad that this book stands on its own. I felt like it was satisfying by itself, and it didn't leave me hanging. So good job there. All-in-all, it's good stuff.

Review first appeared on my website [here](#).

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### **Kirsty (Amethyst Bookwurm) says**

Thanks to Netgalley and Pikko's House for giving me this book to review.

A Stolen Kiss is a nice light YA fantasy book which has a Fairytale like plot. It is fast paced, with a magical quest and a sweet romance. However, it is also predictable and a bit forgettable. Apart from Derric, the characters were not that interesting and felt flat.

Maria is a kind character who grows in independence. Derric is the most interesting character as he is selfless, clever and complex and during the book grows in confidence.

This is an enjoyable and I am looking forward to reading the next book *A Stolen Crown*. I would recommend *A Stolen Kiss* to fans of Young Adult fairytales.

This and my other reviews can be found at [Amethyst Bookwyrms](#)

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## **Larkin (Wonderfilled Reads) says**

I received this ARC from NetGalley and Swanifide Publishing in exchange for an honest review. Thank you for giving me the chance to read it!

I am a sucker for fairytales. They're classic, fun, and always end with a happy ending (something that I am a sucker for). Lucky for me, this book is a brand new retelling of the less popular fairytale, *The Swan Princess*. I didn't realize that when I first requested it but in a time when retellings are all the rage, it was a pleasant surprise.

The plot line was a pretty basic fantasy story – A cursed princess runs off with a group of friends to find the one who has cursed her and force them to remove it, all the while falling in love with the peasant boy. However, being that this was a retelling of *The Swan Princess*, it was actually a surprising turn of events that I didn't expect but I won't spoil them for you. I did enjoy the fact that unlike most fairytales, the princess wasn't saved by her knight in shining armor (or prince), even if our stableboy has some other secrets of his own. I also thought that Keating did a really good job of world building, explaining things when needed and not leaving the reader confused. It was a nice touch creating a world where the fairytales were the actual history of the land.

Unfortunately, the characters fell a little flat for me. I didn't enjoy the chapters told from Maria's POV, as there wasn't much substance to her. While it was part of her story, she actually brought nothing to the book other than being the one who was cursed. She was pretty much just there, kind of a like rock. I didn't feel any connection to her, nor did I feel like her character had any depth or development. I felt the same way about Sarah as well, granted she's supposed to be only 14. Hopefully, since this is only the first book in a planned series, that may change as the series progresses.

Derric and Humphrey were more fleshed out as characters than the two girls were. They both carry secrets that threaten the stability of the group and the mission. Obviously, Derric has the biggest transformation as the book moves along and his character does have some very interesting moments where his inner struggles come to light. However, I was hoping to see more of that. We were only given a couple of situations where it became an issue, even though it was hinted at quite a bit that it was important. I guess I just wanted his dark side to play a larger role than it did, and it's disappointing that it never reached that level. I'm looking forward to seeing if it plays a part later on in the series. Unfortunately, Humphrey's secrets don't really cause him to make any drastic character changes and he pretty much rides a steady path the whole way through.

Ellis was definitely my favorite character, even if we only get to see him a few times throughout the book and never for very long. I guess that says a whole lot about how I feel about our main group, huh? Ellis is your typical grey character. He walks that line between good and evil, only helping when it benefits himself. I know he was used just as a catalyst for some characters to deal with their issues, but I felt more interested in him than anyone else. I think we will be seeing more of him in the future.

I think the biggest issue with this book is the writing itself. In terms of style and level, it was a bit juvenile and I think would be better suited towards Middle Grade rather than YA. The characters were also supposed to be around 18 years old, except for Sarah who is 14. However, Keating voiced them as though they were actually much younger, with all of them sounding as though they were 14, especially Maria. It kind of clashed with the plot line and was sometimes a bit annoying. The explanations for some of the spell clauses were confusing too. Instead of there only being a couple mentioned, we are bombarded with multiple and I had a hard time keeping them straight and understanding the differences. I felt it was a bit excessive and not really needed.

All in all, this was a fun book. It doesn't bring anything new to fantasy or fairytale novels but if you're in the mood for a lighthearted read or just need to buy something for your little sister then this book is for you.

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### **Kira Simion says**

**On-Hold for now** because my kindle is doing something where all my books either are there or disappear. I don't like to stop reading for a week.

**Edit: (5-26-16)**

I enjoyed this book and I want to thank NetGalley for graciously sharing this with me for an honest review. Thank you.

A peasant with brains goes on a quest with a girl in this adventure of a story. They work together to help a kingdom and I really enjoyed their characteristics/the characters.

Take the journey and give this a try. It's a nice light novel read.

3.5/5 stars. Lessened the stress for a big test.

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### **Shannon says**

3.5 stars

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### **✕Tabby✕ says**

**Received from: Swanifide Publishing**

**Received Via: NetGalley.com**

### **THE REVIEW**

#### **Why this book?**

It seemed like a book for me

#### **What I thought**

This book was wonderful. This fairytale adventure was filled with likable characters, magic, magical creatures and little plot twists! I liked the character development and the world building was excellent! You can tell that many other fairytales inspired this like The Swan Princess etc. It was a fun read from the beginning to the end, I enjoyed it immensely!

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## **E.F.B. says**

Edit: I just discovered this thing lost part of the content section \*frowns at Goodreads\* so I just added it back on.

Okay, I want to start my review by saying that, when I started this story, I posted an update saying I thought this might be a retelling of the Swan Princess. However, now that I have both finished the book and researched Swan Princess/Swan Lake I realizes this is NOT a retelling. While the princess does turn into a swan every night because of a curse, this is otherwise it's own story with no parallels that I could see to the fairytale mentioned above. Now that that's been clarified, I'll start my review.

A Stolen Kiss is a fun and cute story with both fairytale and fantasy vibes. Our main characters include a palace stableboy named Derric who has to keep his true identity secret because his mother (for unknown reasons) cursed the princess of the land to turn into a swan every night, his adorable, spunky, half-sister, Sarah, who happens to work as the princess' ladies maid, the swan princess, Maria, herself, and then Prince Humphry who was supposed to have an arranged marriage with Maria and break her curse. Seems simple enough, right? But what happens when the curse refuses to be broken and the four of them must go on an adventure together to find the sorceress who cast the spell in the first place? Well, that's just what you're going to have to read to find out!

This being one of those rare books I bought based solely on the cover and the synopsis, I went into it not knowing much, but was pleasantly surprised with what I found. I don't want to give many details for fear that I'll ruin the surprises for others, but I'll try to touch on both positives and negatives without spoilers involved.

First off, the best part of this book for me was the main characters. The story concept was such that we could have ended up with a stereotypical angst YA love triangle, but thank goodness it never went there. The guys became good friends and didn't fighting over the girl. The girls liked and supported each other, and the heroine wasn't even confused about her feelings or unsure which guy to pick. While not perfect, they were people you could actually admire and root for as heroes/heroines.

I liked the world the story was set in as well. It was diverse, interesting, and I especially loved what the author did with Fangralee forest, particularly the culture of the centaurs who lived there. You can tell that this is a world she sees vividly in her head and she did well showing it to the reader. I will, however, note that if you don't like creepy critters, this book might not be for you. While the story doesn't revolve around the fantasy creatures, the author does seem to enjoy inventing them and the characters ran into quite a few, some of which were quite scary, so that's something to be aware of, depending on your personal tastes.

Also, the surprise twists were just...Wow! There were several to be had, and I did guess at one of them, but the rest took me by surprise and it was super fun and exciting to be sitting with my jaw dropped open like, whaaaaaaaaaat??? XD



Finally, while this story is more adventure than romance, there was a little romance sprinkled on because the curse has Maria magically bound to someone else, who is then the only person who can break the curse. (view spoiler) There was a thing or two I'll mention in the content section about this that might be of interest for those who want to know, but for the most part the romance was clean, cute, and I liked how it turned out.

While I'm talking about that^ I just have to say, I felt so sorry for poor Maria and the frustration this bound-to-someone-else loophole in the curse caused for her. I mean, can you imagine what it would be like to really truly think you were in love with someone, only to have other people INCLUDING that person continually tell you that you don't know your own feelings, but won't say why they think that? (see spoiler for details) ESPECIALLY when you've already lived your life with people who underestimate and don't appreciate you and then you start getting what seems to be the same attitude from your own friends? Gah! I would have reacted just the way she did!

All of that said, my main reason for giving it 4 stars instead of 5 was due to a smattering of profanity, which I didn't feel was necessary, or even fit with the tone of the story, and which I'll address in more detail in the content section. There were also some minor story things I thought could have been better, which I'll address now.

First off, I generally don't mind stories with lots of traveling as long as the traveling is used well and we still learn things we need to know in the process. To a certain extent, the traveling here was used well: The characters developed a lot while they were traveling, learning things about themselves and each other, and we started getting intriguing hints at what was to come. I honestly was only mildly intrigued with the story until around page 80 when the traveling began in earnest and a certain character showed up who dropped some information that finally made me truly excited to see what would happen next. However, some of the traveling stuff also felt a little bit...episodic, if that's the right word. Get to a new area, face a new beastie. Get to the next new area, face another new beastie, etc. Now, this author clearly seems to enjoy fantasy creatures, both from real-world mythology and from her own imagination, and I thought what she did with those creatures was fun, interesting, and occasionally scary, and she even managed to make me adore one critter with a particularly surprising and odd description. I just wish that these creatures had been introduced in a way that was not quite so predictable. There truly was one point where I was thinking, "Okay, these creatures are cool and everything, but could we please get to the destination already and start answering the questions that have been raised, because I'm really itching to know these answers!"

On the flip side of things, the pace did pick up when they reached their destination and was in a good place for a little while, but when the climax came...Wow. Things went fast. That was good to a point, and the climax certainly had me on the edge of my seat, but especially after the more relaxed pace of the rest of the book, I almost wished less time been spent traveling and more spent building that up just a teensy bit more slowly.

While I'm on the topic of the climax, if you're the kind of person who likes complex villains, you're not going to find that here. I personally don't mind sometimes having a villain that is just straight up evil, but it's also kind of nice to know that they weren't always that way and here's the reason why they became who they are now. We don't get that here. There was no reason that I recall given for the villain's badness other than the individual was quite simply a psychotic megalomaniac, and it felt like the individual had always been that way. Honestly, there were times when I felt like the hero's goodness was oversimplified as well, from the standpoint that we're literally told several times that he's good, and he does behave like a nice person, but we're never really given a reason for it, other than...he's good. When I really think about it, it would have been nice to get a little more background about the way he was raised because, other than his sister, it seems the poor kid was surrounded by not very nice people through much of his growing up years and it just

makes you wonder how he managed not to grow up being bitter, and from whence he got his sense of morality and the respectful way he treats others, especially women. It sure wasn't from his father, and his mother abandoned him at 9 years old, so...?

Those complaints aside, I still enjoyed the story as much as, if not more than I had hoped to. I also understand that this was the author's debut novel, and all things considered, I feel that the positives and negatives balanced themselves out, and this was a great debut. I think this author continues to hone her skill and improve, she will go places, and I am definitely interested in checking out the other two books in this trilogy.

#### **Content Advisory for those who want to know:**

**Profanity:** Four uses of d---n. About four or five uses of "What the h---" though I'll note that both the words heaven and hell were always (except once) used in plural form and I'll address that a little more in the Worldview section. One use of the British profanity bl---y. Two uses of b-----, once from a young woman who swore several times, and once from a fourteen-year-old girl who did not swear during the entire rest of the story. "Blasted" used as a modifier a couple of times.

**Sexual Content:** As is implied by the title of the story, there is some kissing (One on the forehead, one on the cheek, one on the wrist, one kiss on the lips in a dream, and three or four real-life kisses on the lips) but overall it is either not descriptive or only briefly described in a single sentence. ("He savored the feeling" and stuff like that.) I personally did not have a problem with any of the kiss descriptions as, like I said, they were very brief.

There is also attraction between characters. Maria several times admires Derric's physical appearance, generally just his face, but once, after he (view spoiler) he, without thinking, removes his wet shirt while she's still present and she admires his "nice physique". (This is literally the extent of the description). Maria then realizes that if someone found them together in that state, they might think the wrong things and when she points this out, Derric is immediately embarrassed and apologizes before Maria leaves.

Maria thinks of Humphrey's handsome face at least once, but is not attracted to him in the same way.

When Humphrey goes to propose to Maria early on, he makes a speech, starts to say something about Maria's heart and this leads him to (I think accidentally) look at her breasts instead. He looks away quickly.

We discover early on that Derric and Sarah are only half-brother and sister because their father slept with Derric's mother while he was betrothed to Sarah's mother. (Not described or shown.)

One character, while under the influence of a poison that poisons the soul and makes its victim act REALLY evil, makes a couple of suggestive comments towards Maria by saying her nightgown was see-through when wet, and a double entendre about having the ability to turn her on and off. When this character is cured of the poison he is extremely embarrassed, but because he was not in control of himself at the time Maria and the others forgive him and don't mention it again.

There are another couple mentions of people who are not the main characters having slept with someone they were not married to and becoming pregnant. I can't go into detail about their identities without massive spoilers, but again, these incidents are not described or shown.

**Violence:** There are several instances of violence and threats of violence throughout the story, but none of it

is described in disturbing or icky detail. As I said in my review, there are several scary fantasy creatures in the story and many of them are violent and attack our main characters. One fantasy creature is said to kill its victims by flaying them open and drinking their blood, but this never actually occurs. A character is scratched by a creature with poison and we're told the wound is bleeding and the person is in pain. During a battle between the centaurs and some spider-like critters there are both injuries and casualties. One person is injured in the shoulder and there is mention of blood. The worst description in the entire story comes when an individual involved in this battle is slashed in the gut and it is said Derric could see more of their insides than he was supposed to. Many of the spider beings are set on fire (not graphically described) and unfortunately some centaurs are burned accidentally as well. The smell and appearance of burnt flesh is mentioned, but not described in more detail than saying the skin was red or black and those burned are in pain.

Other violence includes a brief flashback where we're told a woman's face is bruised and bloody and it becomes apparent that a man abused her, though the act of abuse is not shown or described. One character has the ability to inflict intense pain in people without touching them and does so several times to several people. Two people are killed with a blast of magic and the result is a singed spot on their clothes above their hearts. One evil person is killed by a large fantasy creature. The only thing described is that he met his end with a "crunch." An evil person is killed during a magical battle and the only thing left of them is a singed spot on the floor.

**Magic:** I personally found the magic system in this book creative and interesting. Those with the ability to use magic are called sorcerers and there is no way to gain the ability other than to be born with it, and the ability gets passed from parent to child no matter what. We are told in dialog that all sources of the magic itself comes from Fangralee Forest. "Magic courses through each and every tree right down to its smallest root. It all originated here." We are also told in dialog that the magic itself is neutral, not good or evil. "The user is the one in control, just as with any other power source, like money or nobility." Fangralee forest itself actually reflects how sorcerers are using their magic. If the majority are using it for greed/control/other evil purposes, Fangralee turns dark and dangerous. If the majority are using it for good, it's bright and beautiful. At the time of the story Fangralee is very dark with only a few bright places hidden within. We later find out that much of this current darkness is due to the villain and the way he is using his magic. The bright spots that are present are there because there are still some sorcerers who use their magic for good things.

**Worldviews/Spirituality** There was nothing in this book that, as far as I could tell, paralleled any specific real-world belief systems or religions and there is never mention of any deity or deities. However, as I said in the profanity section, both heaven and hell are referred to in the plural throughout. I can't say how we learn this due to massive spoilers, but we also find out near the end that those who die don't just disappear into nothingness. Their spirits go somewhere and the heavens are very much real. This is mentioned only briefly and is not brought up again.

In light of the above content, I would recommend this book to older teens and adults who enjoy fantasy and fairytales.

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## **Marie Allcock says**

I received an ARC in exchange for an honest review and from page 1 I was gripped, the characters are so real and alive yet the story is pure fantasy. I was reluctant to have to stop reading and carry on with daily life. Without introducing any spoilers, this book shows that you can do anything if you learn to stop being led by

the expectations of others.

Don't get get me wrong - it's not a moralistic book - just pure enjoyment, adventure, humour, friendship and love all rolled into one.

I can't wait for book 2

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## **Bailey Skye says**

### *4/5 Stars*

*A Stolen Kiss* is a delightful read if you're looking for something light and fluffy. This book worked its way into my heart with it's every detail. First I fell in love with it's cute cover, then with the story itself. While the book reads at more of a middle grade level, I quickly accepted that fact and kept reading knowing that ultimately the story was going to be a bit fluffy. That didn't hinder my enjoyment. I think perhaps it was more of the fact that I stumbled upon this book at the right time.

The characters aren't perfect, but each one is still interesting. While they aren't developed in much depth, they still grow throughout their adventure. Maria is the princess who was cursed as a young girl with a spell that turns her into a swan at sunset. She is betrothed to Humphrey, the prince of another kingdom. When the two finally meet and Humphrey asks for her hand, Maria finds that no matter how hard she tries, she cannot physically accept the proposal of marriage. Startled, she has her lady maid Sarah fetch her brother, Daniel (AKA Derric), a stable boy at the castle. Daniel knows a thing or two about curses and magic, and ultimately these four set out on a journey to find the woman who placed the curse on Maria.

I actually didn't mind Maria as a character because she was a little bit of an underdog. The only child of her parents, she was quick to be betrothed to a man who could ultimately rule the kingdom. Maria has such strength within her that she doesn't even begin to realize until she embarks on this journey with her companions, and I admired her tenacity to tell her parents she would rule the kingdom without a king at her side at the end of the book. Derric's character was alright. It bothered me that he kept secrets from everyone even though they weren't always things worth being kept secret. It was interesting to see his development, though. I also really enjoyed Humphrey. Though the dialect in this novel (especially Humphrey's) isn't true to any specific time era, it didn't bother me when it came to Humphrey's comic relief.

"Why must you wait for a man? End your own troubles, Princess. You are the future ruler of your people - if you can't make decisions for yourself, what makes you think you have the right to make decisions for them?"

I also really liked the underlying theme of "girl power". Which is, again, why I really enjoyed Maria's character. It's even reflected in Sarah, Maria's lady maid. The struggle to embrace who we are, and accept ourselves. To be independent and think for ourselves. You don't *need* no man.

A Disney-esque Swan Princess rendition, *A Stolen Kiss* is the perfect lighthearted book to sit and read in one sitting.

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## Jessi ? says

This was a quick cute innocent read. This fairytale story was different from what I expected, I enjoy so much seeing characters grow, and this happened with every one of them. Granted we didn't go that deep into their thoughts and who they are, but you learn to care for them as the book goes on. The plot was interesting enough, you can guess the "big reveals", I mean, it's a fairytale! Anyways, it isn't an iconic book that I'll spend hours obsessing over and I probably won't think much of it in the future, but I enjoyed reading it.

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## Katerina Kondrenko says

5.5 out of 10

This is a Disney-like story about mature characters inside a fairytale-ish world with fairytale-ish stuff which is told from different POVs, has a few twists (one is predictable, one is not) and is rich with humor and wits.

You'll travel through magic lands with a cursed princess who's falling for a stable-boy, her funny and charming betrothed prince who's in love with another girl, the stable-boy with a gift for magic and forbidden love for the princess, and his sister-in-law who at the same time is our princess's maid and (thank god!) isn't in love with anyone. Each of them is longing for freedom, courage, friendship and happiness. After all, this is a tale and they are aware of it, so everyone needs his or her happy-ending.

Adventures in this book are too teen-ish for my liking, but the characters' thoughts and feelings aren't. It's a bit confusing, but kinda unique too. The ending is in the best cartoons' traditions and you know what? I'd love to see *A Stolen Kiss* on a big screen.

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## Aoife says

I received a free digital copy from the author/publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest feedback.

In *A Stolen Kiss* Maria, the princess of Opea, was cursed as a child by the sorceress Gilda. Now, Maria, with the help of her maid Sarah, Sarah's brother and stableboy Derric and her betrothed Humphrey set off on a mission to find Gilda and get the curse reversed. This ends up in an adventure full of secrets to be revealed, magical creatures like centaurs and shapeshifters plus one epic showdown with an evil sorcerer.

This was what it says on the tin - a fluffy, fun, romantic fairytale. Most of the story was fairly predictable but it was easy to read and fun while it lasted. I enjoyed most of the characters who were all generally honest and good people. I liked the bromance between Derric and Humphrey and the fact that Humphrey wasn't a cliché preening poncey Prince (though I did vomit every time he said 'Mumsy') but someone with a good heart and a firm good head on his shoulders. I would say that the writing was certainly not the best I'd ever read and

the dialogue did suffer a bit from the 'too much being said all the time' thing which ends up in it sounding very forced and unrealistic in my view. Some of the rules about the magic and the curses were a bit confusing at times for me as well but I did enjoy the threads of magic Derric found and how he could use them and how they responded. But for a debut novel, this was a good one and I'd recommend it for anyone looking for a princess/fairytale read.

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### **Lucija The Reader says**

When I just saw this book on Netgalley, I thought that it will be really fun and amazing, but unfortunately, it wasn't. To be honest, I didn't love the characters but I didn't hate them. I didn't care. Then, the story was kind of slow and I just wasn't interested and I didn't want to continue on with this book. I am really sorry that I haven't finished, but I'm sure that it will take me forever and I just don't have any interest. By what I've seen, how other people have reviewed it, I just feel bad for not liking this book.

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