



2008

### Princess of the Midnight Ball

Tessa McMillan

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#### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

McMillan, Tessa (2008) "Princess of the Midnight Ball," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 29 : Iss. 5 , Article 19.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol29/iss5/19>

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George, Jessica Day. *Princess of the Midnight Ball*. Bloomsbury U.S.A., 2009. ISBN 9781599903224. \$16.99. 280 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fantasy fiction; Adventure stories;

Subject: Fairy tales--Juvenile fiction; Princesses--Juvenile fiction; Dancing--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Galen is a poor Westfalin soldier on his way back from the Analousian wars. As he walks to the capital of Bruch, he meets an old woman who gives him an invisibility cape and two balls of magic yarn. When he arrives at Bruch, Galen gets a job working in the palace gardens. While there, Galen becomes acquainted with the king's twelve daughters and the dilemma of the princesses' ruined dancing slippers. King Gregor proclaims that the man who can solve the mystery of the princesses' ruined shoes can marry one of his daughters and co-rule the kingdom. With his magical items, Galen finds out that Queen Maude, the princesses' mother, made a contract with the evil magician, King Under Stone, to bless her with children and to stop the war with Analousia. In return, she agreed to dance for him every night. The queen's death, however, passed the contract to her daughters. Galen uses various items from King Under Stone's kingdom to open the underworld portal, kill King Under Stone and several of his sons, and return the girls back home. Because of his efforts, Galen marries Rose, the eldest princess.

George bases her novel on the fairy tale of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, but George takes well-known tale a step further by adding in complex themes and an engaging plot. This book is expertly written with well-developed characters. *Princess of the Midnight Ball* is a great suggestion for young adults who enjoyed such books as *Goose Girl*, *Ella Enchanted*, or *The Tale of Despereaux*.

Volume 29, no.5 (May/June 2009)