



2010

Prisoners in the Palace

Debbie Barr

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Barr, Debbie (2010) "Prisoners in the Palace," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 31 : Iss. 3 , Article 29.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol31/iss3/29>

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MacColl, Michaela. *Prisoners in the Palace*. Chronicle, 2010. ISBN 9780811873000. \$16.99. 367 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fiction; Historical fiction;

Subject: Household employees—Juvenile fiction; Self-reliance—Juvenile fiction; Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, 1819-1901—Childhood and youth—Juvenile fiction; Books—Reviews;

Liza, seventeen, is ready to make her debut into London society when her parents are killed in a carriage accident. Left penniless, she finds work as maid to Princess Victoria at Kensington Palace. Her job quickly escalates into more, though, when she becomes a spy and confidant to the sheltered and nearly friendless princess. Victoria's mother and Sir John (a friend of Victoria's mother) keep tight control over Victoria in hopes of remaining in power once she is crowned queen. Liza, the princess' only ally, enlists the help of a reporter and a boy living in the walls of the palace to spread gossip about the terrible Sir John. Though not all of their plans work out, Liza is eventually able to help send Sir John packing, keep Victoria an independent woman, and find true love for herself.

In this impeccably researched debut novel, MacColl weaves an enticing story of scandal, gossip, romance, and independence. The main character, Liza, is a strong-willed heroine that teen readers will love. Victoria is at times selfish and immature, but she manages to stay endearing, especially as she grows through the novel. While Liza and other characters are fictional, MacColl stays true to many of the events in Victoria's life, and portrays them all with spice and excitement. Fast-paced and charming, *Prisoners in the Palace* is a wonderful historical fiction read and a great introduction for teens wanting to learn more about one of England's most beloved queens.

Volume 31, no. 3 (January/February 2011)