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Princess of Thorns

Abigail Packard

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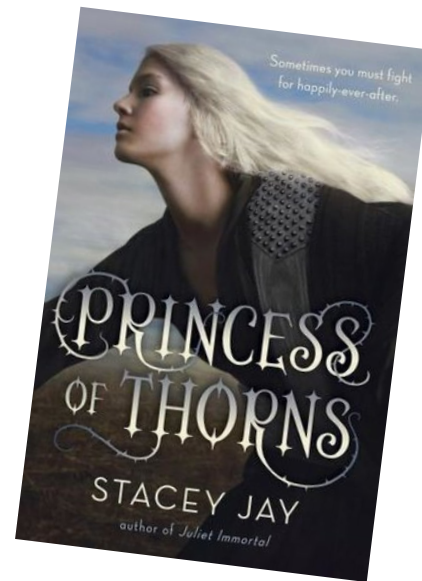
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Book Review

Title: Princess of Thorns
Author: Stacey Jay
Reviewer: Abigail Packard
Publisher: Delacorte Press
Year: 2014
ISBN: 9780385743228
Pages: 400
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Excellent



Review

Princess Aurora inherited the fairy blessings from her mother at a great cost: her mother's life and the condition that Aurora will know romantic love. Meanwhile, Prince Niklaas is cursed to turn into a swan if he fails to marry a princess. The two cross paths years after the death of Aurora's mother and weeks before Niklaas's time to marry is up. Aurora, disguised as her brother Jor, desperately searches for a way to free Niklaas and take their kingdom back from the ogre queen. Niklaas agrees to help Jor if he can meet Aurora. During their travels, Aurora's disguise is revealed and the two fall in love. They kiss, but Niklaas loses his agency and personality due to Aurora's fairy blessing. He is only freed once Aurora kills the ogre queen. Aurora convinces Niklaas to marry her in order to break his curse and the two live happily ever after.

Despite this extremely rushed and mashed synopsis, *Princess of Thorns* was actually a satisfyingly complex read. Stacey Jay's world building is simple (sometimes overly so), but precise. Her plot was filled with twists and turns, tragedies and triumphs. Rather than a direct retelling of *Sleeping Beauty*, *Princess of Thorns* is a blend of fairy tales including *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Wild Swans*, Niklaas and Aurora, the two alternating narrators of the story, are well-rounded and memorable, promoting instant support and love from the reader. Their banter was particularly humorous, if somewhat ribald, and their friendship and later romance were entirely believable. Aurora was a great female protagonist, being both strong and intelligent, yet vulnerable enough to allow for character growth. Overall, a fairy tale of fairy tales that leaves readers feeling immensely happy and fulfilled.

*Contains moderate violence, mild language, and moderate sexual content.