

Three Princess Series

Bobby Cinema

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Three Princess Series is a quirky romance collection that relishes in happy endings.

In Bobby Cinema's earnest romance collection *Three Princess Series*, prestigious women meet unexpected suitors.

Serena, an Albanian princess, is a high school senior who falls in love with a down-on-his-luck professional baseball player. Amy, a British royal, tries to save her father's fortune with the help of a smart librarian. And Lorelai, an Olympic medalist in swimming, is a "Princess of Water" who meets a librarian when she gives him private lessons. Bright optimism about love ties these stories together, along with the women's desires to be known on their own terms.

However, the characterizations are flimsy. People are introduced in terms of their height and other superficial traits, and the supporting cast is wide, with people in it indistinguishable from one another. The rich princesses boast "supermodel" looks and are expected to marry men of status, while the men they prefer are deemed too "nerdy" and common. Amy's love interest, however, is fleshed out with distinguishing details as of his prowess in shooting and his alter ego as an agent.

Still, the women's dilemmas—choosing between duty and true love—are fast resolved, and their relationships develop too quickly to be credible. After only one dinner, for instance, Serena's ballplayer confesses his love to her. He then recalls their breakup—an event that doesn't occur in the story itself but that must be assumed to be true off page, along with their having shared a closer relationship than the initial date suggests. Similar gaps occur in Amy's story, which emphasizes her father's business dealings to such an extent that the people remain underdeveloped.

The stories tend to dwell on minor actions while condensing key information. A court jester who answers a phone, for instance, cues step-by-step lines that explain this process. Elsewhere, characters open and close doors to complete needless, practical sequences while getting in and out of a car. Settings and people's histories, though more relevant to the stories, are mentioned only in brief.

Grammatical errors, malapropisms, and formatting problems abound, including dense paragraphs that run for pages at a time, sometimes resulting in awkward transitions. A lack of quotation marks in conversations also leads their exchanges to blend with other events. Further, an introduction summarizes all three stories, even though each story begins with a similar synopsis, robbing the book of surprises twice over.

In the vibrant short story collection *Three Princess Series*, three pairs of lovers overcome obstacles with a sense of determination.

KAREN RIGBY (February 12, 2025)

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