



The Princess Rules

Books Reviewed:

[The Princess Rules](#) [1]

Issue:

[240](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Rebecca Butler](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Princess Florizella subverts all the established conventions of a fairytale princess. Such conventions are specified for her and all other royal princesses in the book of Princess Rules. The key rules are that princesses live largely off air, only occasionally consuming bread and green tea. Princesses must be rescued. They must never be the rescuer. They must of course marry a handsome prince.

Florizella violates all these rules. She attends a ball, along with several other princesses. Unlike all of them, when the dinner is served Florizella tucks in ? to the horror of her fellow princesses. The handsome Prince Bennett dances with the other princesses. But when he asks Florizella to dance, she replies that he must be tired so why don?t they sit and talk instead. The upshot of this unusual encounter is that Bennett asks Florizella to become his wife. She refuses. She has her own position and her own possessions and she does not wish to become someone else?s subordinate. She would prefer to become Bennett?s best friend.

There are two other stories contained in Gregory?s book. Florizella befriends a pack of wolves. She and her friend Prince Bennett disguise one of the wolves as a domesticated dog so that it can live in her palace. In the last episode Bennett and Florizella have to make spectacles for a giant. There is no end to royal duties.

This book depends upon the young reader?s familiarity with the standard conventions of a royal fairy tale ? and then turns those values upside down when the Princess behaves in her own outrageous manner. The narrative emphasises the attributes that distinguish Florizella from her more conventional peer group, her independence and feminist freedom. Yet at the same time Bennett fully shares her adventures. He is no macho sidekick but a full partner in her quest for freedom. Chatterton?s illustrations are full page monochrome creations, mostly subscribing to the conventions of the fairy tale book.

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