



The Rules of Ever After

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The rules of royal life have governed the kingdoms of Clarameer for thousands of years, but Prince Phillip and Prince Daniel know that these rules don't provide for the happily ever after they seek. A fateful, sleepless night on top of a pea set under twenty mattresses brings the two young men together and sends them on a quest out into the kingdoms.

On their travels, they encounter meddlesome fairies, an ambitious stepmother, disgruntled princesses and vengeful kings as they learn about life, love, friendship, and family. Most of all, the two young men must learn to know themselves and how to write their own rules of ever after.

The Rules of Ever After is the debut novel from Duet Books, an imprint for Young Adult LGBTQ fiction from Interlude Press.

The Rules of Ever After Details

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Author : Killian B. Brewer

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From Reader Review The Rules of Ever After for online ebook

Shanna says

What do you get when you mix an evil step mother, a troll king, several unconventional princesses, a couple of princes who break the rules and some meddling birthday fairies? You get an adventure that is rollicking good fun and one happy ending to end all happy endings. Brewer takes some familiar tales and weaves them into a masterful new tale that's entirely fresh and uniquely his. All the familiar tropes are here but Brewer deftly creates a cast of loveable characters and a tale that's light-hearted and funny. This is a modern fairy tale that manages to keep the feel of traditional tales while breaking new ground. And of course we get one awesome happy ending that breaks all the rules of ever after. I was amazed to find that this is the author's first book and if this is his introduction, I for one can't wait to see what comes next. This is a book that I can't recommend highly enough.

(I received a free ARC to read and review honestly)

wesley says

I've always loved fairy tales and to see a collection of favorite tropes told in a new light sent my imagination in a blissful overdrive!

With a tone full of wit, humor, and poetry, *Killian Brewer* gave adventure a new meaning by intermingling contemporary references with the medieval classics.

What the blurb failed to put emphasis on is that this wasn't just Prince Phillip and Prince Daniel's crusade for their happy ever after. The book was so much more than that. It introduced an array of familiar and well-loved characters spiced-up with tasteful personalities and their own profound and unique stories. And although this sounds like a standard recipe for disaster, the direction of the story was surprisingly solid and cohesive, despite the star-studded cast and multitudinous plot lines. On the contrary, all these hullabaloo only made the story grander and the twists more interesting.

If you are only expecting a clichéd boy-meets-boy fairy tale, then you are surely in for a treat because while the story followed a light and humorous tone, the underlying themes in the book sure do hit closer to the truth. I cannot help but think that while our heroes went deeper into their own epic adventures battling who knows what from one kingdom to the next, a different battle was being waged as I thought of the author raising a figurative middle finger to the many hypocrisies in our current society introduced as conundrums in the story. I thought that the author was so spot-on on his take of feminism, homosexuality, and marriage equality, to name a few. It was quite funny to see the seed planted on our minds by society today presented in the story as obvious absurdities that hinder progress and unity.

So for me, this book spoke of the needed liberation from society's oppression and the backward thinking that we still follow until today. In simplicity, Mr. Brewer gave light to the many "rules" that we follow -- originally meant to protect us and make us moral citizens but clearly only stand in the way of our own happy ever after. But the story will never be that simple! Told in a lyrical and jocular narrative and written intelligently and with excellent literary mastery, this book will put the E in the word epic. It was just that good!

And like Prince Daniel who started his travels with these four things in mind:

"One. Adventure. Two. Answers. Three. Purpose. Four. Love."

I also found these four things in this book.

Penny says

3.7

H.J. says

I adore this book. In a world that is becoming increasingly obsessed with the rehashing of classic fairy-tales, it is refreshing to read a story that, although does contain familiar tropes and tales, is both unique and imaginative. It is a story I wish I had kids to tuck into bed and read to; a story that begs to be read out-loud and retold over and over.

Cece (ProblemsOfaBookNerd) says

Maybe a 3.5? This was utterly ridiculous and probably closer to middle grade than YA but I smiled from beginning to end.

Rachel Leigh says

We expect a certain bluntness from a fairy tale; the good guys are good, the bad guys are bad, and the lesson is clear from a thousand paces. But then again, *The Rules of Ever After* isn't your average fairy tale. Author, Killian Brewer, builds upon the history of the genre, but his rendition is also marked by the deftness of his dialogue and plot. This story sings, and it isn't just because of a certain performer in the local tavern.

I should start with the dialogue, because the characters' speech first pulled me into Brewer's world. His characters are hilarious. I found myself wanting to read lines aloud every couple pages, and I was usually reading alone. It's also worth noting that the comedy of *Rules* isn't set aside as humor. The other characters, for the most part, don't stop to laugh. Instead, Brewer simply creates a heightened version of reality in which wit and magic are never out of place.

The novel's plot is marked by a similarly light touch. I think it was Joss Whedon who said that a strong narrative could be defined by surprising twists that the audience will later realize were unavoidable. As I looked back on each chapter of *Rules*, I found moments that I didn't expect, but which were fully supported both before and after. I didn't see the twists coming, but they absolutely had to happen. In short, I felt safe in Killian Brewer's universe, because even as the action rushed from one end of his world to the other, he was

in control. Like the storytellers that populate his world, Brewer has a tale to tell and we are just lucky to come along for the ride!

Lynn Charles says

When handed a book that you know to be a fairy tale, you go in with certain expectations. You expect evil step mothers that misuse their power and magic. There will always be handsome princes on a quest for truth and justice, and beautiful princesses awaiting their prince—and possibly getting into a little mischief themselves.

You must have interfering fairies—although they mean well, of course, because doing harm would be against the rules. There will be curses and spells, blessings and magic. And of course, when all is said and done, there will always be a happily ever after.

Killian B. Brewer's delightful debut novel, a fairy tale for a modern age, has all of these things. But, in *The Rules of Ever After* your typical fairy tale rules are meant to be broken.

Prince Phillip of Bellemer has a sleeping problem. And a princess problem. But mostly, a step-mother problem. In trying to take over the kingdom from Prince Phillip and his father, King Henry, his step-mother Cauchemar, has reenacted the testing bed, a pile of mattresses with a hidden pea, as a way to vet young princesses who wish to take Prince Phillip's hand. But of course, she is manipulating the test to her favor.

What Chauchemar doesn't know, and what sets the story in motion, is that she is not the only one manipulating the test, to ensure every princess fails. You see, Prince Phillip does not want a princess for a bride. As his birthday fairy so succinctly puts it with great glee, his gate swings to "that" side of the pasture.

After many failed tests and many upset princesses leave in shame, Prince Phillip finds an unexpected visitor asleep on the bed. And Prince Daniel of Sylvania is beautiful.

Thus begins a quest to right the wrongs of the Lands of Claramer. To rewrite the rules. To set a new course for the lives of those trapped by the power of "this is how it has always been done."

In this fairytale, princesses are no longer bound by the rules of marriage and royalty, but are the masters of their own destiny. Handsome princes fall in love with each other. And the entertaining, ever-faithful companions on the journey find that even they have a hero inside of them just waiting to save the day.

The Rules of Ever After is a refreshing and enchanting read for young adults, and dare I say, middle grade readers as well. Charming humor, engaging characters, and a story that makes you hold your breath until the final, triumphant, rainbow-filled conclusion.

Tess says

3.75 stars

Enjoyable *young adult* twist on a number of different fairy tales. I liked the different take on the stories.

There seemed to be a few too many characters, though -- I couldn't keep all of the princesses, princes and kings straight!

Rebecca says

I normally don't do this much cuteness, but this is the fun re-imagined fairytale I've been wishing for in animation form, that dashes tropes and the traditional 'prince and princess' tale.

The Rules of Ever After - a retelling of The Princess and the Pea, with inspiration from many well-known fairytales - is exactly what I expected it to be - zany, fun and quirky. It doesn't take itself seriously, which was a refreshing treat after all the sweeping, darker, drama-filled retellings I've recently read. I always love seeing tropes turned on their head and this book does just that. Two princes fall in love and with royal status threatened, princesses look beyond their title and take their fate into their own hands - literally my dream diverse-with-a-difference fairytale come to life, folks.

Third person narration can be hard to pull off, but it suited this story perfectly. There's a lot of characters, with different story lines, but every character had a distinct voice. I liked how the author interconnected the stories in the end.

Adorable light fluff. Recommend.

Jude Sierra says

I definitely recommend this one!

I love YA, and this was a great one. I have never been much into fairytale books, which makes how much I enjoyed this one a testament to how good it is.

This book is definitely a feel good book. The characters are likeable, funny, sweet, etc. I laughed out loud while reading this, and looked forward to bedtime -- my reading time -- every day. I rooted for Phillip and Daniel the whole time. I loved Brewer's female characters, and applaud the way he wrote them and their stories -- he made them whole, gave them their own journeys and growth in a way that didn't make them mere devices to move the plot forward. That's very refreshing.

Carrie Pack says

Killian B. Brewer's *The Rules of Ever After* is pretty much everything I look for in a fairy tale-with-a-twist: fun, witty, and an interesting new take on a classic. To me, reading Brewer's book reminded me of reading *Wicked* for the first time. It was characters I felt I already knew but I was forced to look at them in a new light.

This is, at its heart, a tale of Prince Charming finding his own Prince Charming, but it's also much more than that. Set amid common tropes like the princess and the pea, the evil step-mother, and the royal who must marry to inherit the throne, this fairy tale includes liberated, free-spirited princesses, meddlesome fairies, and

dashing squires and scribes who leap from the page just like all fantasy characters should. Every time I try to pick a favorite character I am stumped. They're all so charming. Even the evil step-mother has her charms—that is, if you like to root for the baddie.

This tale is chock full of parallels to our own society, including modern feminism and the ongoing fight for marriage equality. But perhaps my favorite invention from Brewer's inventive mind is the way he portrays problematic media of Claramere. I won't give away how he does this, but you'll find yourself picturing Hollywood celebs being hounded outside LA restaurants while reading about the fictional kingdoms of Claramere.

Fans of fantasy, YA, and LGBT lit will adore this story, and all for different reasons. This is a richly crafted world with multiple levels of meaning, but still an easy enough read to appeal to younger audiences who are looking for a more grown-up tale.

Even more wonderful is the beautiful allegory Brewer has crafted in the final scene that ties his own brand of happily ever after to the pride flag that has come to represent the LGBT community.

I was lucky enough to receive an advance reader copy of this book and I give it a resounding five stars.

Stella ?????? says

4,5 stars. Was really good. Sweet and engaging. Review @STRW

I usually don't read young adult books, but lately I found myself intrigued by all the covers of a new publisher called Interlude Press. Their imprint for YA stories and I was really curious about *The Rules of Ever After*. I was interested by the blurb but the book was not what I was expecting, it was so much more. Not only a YA but a fairytale, just what I was in the mood for. So here I am. Moreover it is the debut novel by this new author, Killian B. Brewer. Surprisingly perfect! Well written, engaging, funny, amazing!

The Rules of Ever After tells the story of Prince Phillip and Prince David and their adventures all around the kingdoms of Claramere, looking for an evil stepmother and a cure for a curse.

My lovely main characters are surrounded by a lot of people, all of them interesting, funny and crazy too. Like Mitta and her fairy sisters, the main troublemakers with their magical wands. But they are just an example. The book is continuous new meetings, of new little enterprises to reach all that will help Phillip and David to slowly know what is in front of them.

The book is really really well written, with a delicate and precious style, intelligent and full of humour. The author chose to use various point of views, not just the MCs' ones and honestly it wasn't confusing or too much at once. On the contrary, I think it was the right way to develop the fairytale in the best way possible. Especially in the different references to our beloved bedtime (and not only) stories.

I want to recommend *The Rules of Ever After* by Killian B. Brewer cause it was an easy read, never boring and masterfully done, unexpectedly suggestive and poetic. I could see all of the adventures through Killian's words. I can't praise the author enough, I can't wait to read more by him.

Cover designed by Buckeyegrrl Designs. It caught my attention from the start, cause it's different. I like it!

Shira Glassman says

I feel like I keep inventing microgenres and subgenres within fantasy, because of the way my own books don't sort neatly into the existing ones. What I write is not, for the most part, "epic fantasy", in that I don't always deal in multi-kingdom political struggles or stories that span months, but I still write fairy-tales. So I decided to take a cue from the mystery world and call them "cozy fantasy." Well, if I'm cozy fantasy, **The Rules of Ever After** is "fantasy humor."

This already *is* a genre, populated by Terry Pratchett and the Shrek movies, so if you like either of those, I think you'll be thrilled with this one. It has their lighthearted tone and hilarious anachronistic details (sketcharazzi? They're exactly what they sound like, armed with charcoal and pads of paper) but also their complex nail-biting epic plots and their layer of sincerity in its approach to character relationships. There were also elements that reminded me of Mercedes Lackey's 500 Kingdoms, in that many of the characters felt trapped by their role in the fairy-tale universe, and part of their character growth involved learning to expand that role to fit their own personal unique desired happiness.

Okay, enough AP English blather. What's this book about? At the heart, it's about two gay princes, who have chemistry from their first scene together (that's important, with a fictional romance! The key to writing good romance is to make the reader want something before you give it to them. That first bit is not as easy as that second bit.) But it's also about friendship, adventure, fighting against usurping throne-stealers all over the place, and an ensemble cast that includes more than one woman! (Hear that? There are multiple female leads on the good-guy side.) Plus, the plot took a lot of twists and turns that I didn't expect, and sometimes the author psyched me out by leading me down a path of a fantasy trope and then saying "nope! I'm cooler than that."

I also have to give Brewer props for one of the most awesome uses of Checkov's Gun I've ever seen. I'm a HUGE sucker for Checkov's Gun. I don't know why; I've always been that way. I've been known to slap my space bar to pause a movie just so I can squee around the room for a few seconds when I realize a TV episode has done that. So when it happened in this book I literally put the book down and squee'd to the cat.

Brewer, in the voice of one of his princes, shows what it's honestly like to be queer in today's changing social climate:

Daniel wasn't sure what his future would bring. Life as the whispered-about secret lover of the king. Life as the uneasily accepted consort of the king. Life ruling upon the throne beside the king and beloved by the citizens. Daniel didn't care, as long as his life included Philip.

Some other little notes I enjoyed for personal reasons: when one prince's friend rushes up to both princes and says "Your Highness!" and then has to explain which one he meant, it reminded me of my mom saying "Honey" and both me and my stepdad saying "Which one?" (Welcome to the South. The writer is Southern, too, so it's possible he got the idea from that.) I also loved the way the birthday fairies, each responsible for royal children born on their assigned day of the week, have somewhat Germanic names. (Mitta is the Wednesday fairy from Mittwoch, for example.) My origins are half from Germany so it's nice to see that stuff in English-language fantasy, which is often very "fake Welsh" or at least somewhat UK-ish in general. (I mean, they come by it honestly. They've given us JKR and JRRT. And Lewis.)

This book is flippant, but expertly crafted and full of truths. As one of the princes tells the other in the middle of a scene straight out of Roald Dahl: “Come on, Daniel, surrender to the ridiculous!”

Inked Reads says

FiveStars

I don't know how to describe this book in a way that captures its grandeur. Every adjective I come up with is diminishing. Fairy tale. Humor. Adventure. Trope-bending. Epic. It's more than the sum of its parts. Though, per "epic" it is quite long. Too long to be a light romp. This, my friends, is a novel.

It has multiple plot lines that all come together at the end! Different perspectives that are so fluid they aren't jolting. Puns that evoke happiness, not despair.

Anyway, Prince Phillip is living a Hamlet-esque existence with his evil aunt-turned-stepmother, who's trying to marry him off to various princesses for Reasons, and he keeps thwarting her for Other Reasons, and then halfway through the book everything's New Reasons, which, spoiler. When Phillip finds a man-prince in his bed instead of another woman-princess, he gets an idea.

Which, right there, isn't that our secret fantasy? Marrying a royal of our appropriate gender and living happier ever after? I mean, it's mine.

Anyway, Prince Daniel, meanwhile, is living a Prince Harry-like existence. He decides to go wandering about with his bros all over the kingdom. Also, he has Insomnia. THIS IS IMPORTANT.

Everyone but the villain is nice, affable, funny, and heroic. This is a "light" novel, but it is not a "shallow" novel. It is escapist in the best sense.

Killian states in his bio that it took 20 years to produce this novel. Which 1) shows in its glorious tight details and his GRRM world-building, and 2) is an international tragedy, because he should be writing one a year. I was given this in return for an honest review by Inked Rainbow Reads.

C.E. Case

C.B. Lee says

Brewer skillfully weaves a fun, lighthearted and fast-paced tale that draws inspiration from well-known fairy tales such as "The Princess and the Pea" and many, many more. Daniel and Phillip are both princes, brought together after a misunderstanding about a "test" on a stack of mattresses and a pea. Not only are the princes' both likable with working flaws, their character development throughout the book and their developing relationship truly makes the story wonderful. In addition to our main romantic pair, *The Rules of Ever After* features an amazing cast of princesses and more characters who all define their own stories.

An absolute joy to read.
